Transcript, Civil Action No. 06-7185(C), Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, et al, v. St. Bernard Parish, et al., pg 29, line 12 – pg 31, line 17

**Q=MR. ROOSSIEN, ATTORNEY**

**A=MATT HARRIS, APARTMENT DEVELOPER**

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12. Q. Let's move to the August 26th meeting with the parish

13. officials. Who set up that meeting?

14. A. Sidney Torres.

15. Q. Who is he?

16. A. He is a member of the Meraux Foundation and one of the land

17. sellers and one of the four sites that we have under contract.

18. Q. Why did he set up that meeting?

19. A. He set it up --

20. MR. MULHALL: Objection, your Honor. Again, that calls

21. for speculation of what was in somebody else's mind.

22. THE COURT: Sustained.

23. BY MR. ROOSSIEN:

24. Q. What were you told about why the meeting was set up?

25. A. In reaction –

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1. MR. MULHALL: Again, your Honor, that calls for hearsay.
2. THE COURT: I don't know why it matters. What matters is
3. having the meeting.
4. MR. ROOSSIEN: The question that I had was whether or not
5. he was down there at that point to deal with opposition that was
6. building.
7. THE COURT: Let's just go to the meeting and what he knows
8. about of his own knowledge, not what he was told.
9. BY MR. ROOSSIEN:
10. Q. Who did Sidney Torres gather for that meeting?
11. A. He gathered for that meeting the, several key leadership of the
12. St. Bernard Parish community. Some of the people there were parish
13. president Craig Taffaro, there was the school superintendent, the
14. head of the community economic development, the sheriff was there,
15. the guy who wrote the article in the editorial Ron Chapman was
16. there. About 15 or 20 people, most of the prominent leadership of
17. the community.
18. Q. And were there questions at that point from folks assembled
19. there as to who might live in these developments?
20. A. Yes.
21. Q. What were the nature of those questions?
22. A. A lot of concern focused on the lower income part of the -- the
23. lower income units.
24. Q. And after you had finished your presentation and there had been
25. questions, what happened next?

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1. I was asked to step out of the room awhile to let them talk
2. amongst themself.
3. Q. What explanation was given to you as to why you needed to be
4. excused?
5. A. They wanted to talk over just between them and it was a big
6. decision as to whether or not they would want to stand behind this
7. going forward and they needed to talk and just asked me to leave
8. and step out and come back at a later time.
9. Q. And when you came back in, what were you told?
10. A. I was told that they think we can go forward with the
11. development, they thought it was a positive thing, that this is
12. something that looked like could happen and we could work together
13. to get it done.
14. Q. What did they tell you as far as -- well, did they tell you
15. anything with respect to whether or not there was a risk that they
16. were taking?
17. A. Yeah. They viewed the decision as a risk.