
VCPORA's Weekly Vieux Saturday, March 25, 2022 - Hot Advocacy Items!

1 message

VCPORA <info@vcpora.org>

Sat, Mar 26, 2022 at 11:30 AM

Reply-To: info@vcpora.org

To: "info@vcpora.org OFFICE" <info@vcpora.org>



VCPORA's Weekly Vieux Saturday, March 25, 2022

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841 Bourbon Zoning Change Request

We need your help to protect Vieux Carré zoning - please send a letter to oppose this application!

An application has been filed to change the zoning of **841 Bourbon St. & 804-808 Dumaine Street** from VCR-1 (Vieux Carré Residential District) to (VCC-1 Vieux Carré Commercial District). Though on Bourbon Street, it sits in the residentially zoned portion. After operating as the Washing Well for decades, the business closed prior to the pandemic and lost its grandfathered business license. According to the CZO [Article 25.3.C](#), to maintain its “Legal Non-conforming Use” status, it cannot cease operations for longer than six months without reverting to its underlying residential district.

The owners wish to lease the space to be used as an Italian-style gelateria and **the only way to reintroduce a business use is to rezone the parcel to commercial**. VCPORA is adamantly against this zoning change, and you should be concerned too.

What’s so bad about an ice-cream shop?

Nothing, really. But a zoning change is permanent and ice cream shops aren’t. The VCC-1 zoning designation allows a lot of other uses, including a Standard Restaurant. Standard restaurants are allowed to sell alcohol by right, and do not have any limits on operational hours – they can be open all night long. We have seen numerous applications for a Standard Restaurant that end up operating more like bars. Here are some examples – every Willie’s Chicken Shack, Pat O’Brien’s, 30°/-90°, and Maison on Frenchmen.

Furthermore – this is a SPOT ZONE – meaning it has “the effect of singling out a lot or other relatively small tracts of land for treatment different from similar surrounding parcels. These zoning changes have the effect of granting

preferential treatment to these parcels which is not also granted to surrounding similar properties.” In short spot zoning undermines the predictability of, and therefore faith in, land use regulations.

The City Planning Commission is scheduled to review this application on **Tuesday, April 12 at 1:30 p.m. We urge you to send your comments to City Planning by April 4 at 5:00 p.m.** (See below for a sample email to the CPC.) After being heard by the City Planning Commission, the zoning docket will need to be heard by City Council.

Sample language:

To: cpcinfo@nola.gov

Subject: ZD 025-22 - 841 Bourbon St. & 804-808 Dumaine Street – Public Comment

Dear City Planning Staff & Commission,

I am opposed to the spot zone of [841 Bourbon Street](#). [The French Quarter](#) is already the most mixed-use neighborhood in New Orleans and has also been losing its residential base for decades. Many former commercial buildings have been successfully converted to homes for long-term residents. When citizens contributed countless hours to the new Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, they were told that if non-conforming businesses ceased operations for six months, the property would revert to residential. This spot zone would not only be the first permanent disruption to the Vieux Carré zoning maps, it could also have the effect of allowing a business to morph into a “restaurant/bar” in a residential zoning district and would set a precedent, paving the way for similar applications for more intensive businesses.

Sincerely,



Parklets – Moving from Temporary to Permanent?

Also on **April 12**, as directed by Council motion [M-22-1](#), the City Planning

Commission will take up recommendations for the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) to make the temporary parklet program a permanent fixture in New Orleans. Again, we urge you to send comments to the CPC staff before the meeting on April 12, 2022. You can do so by emailing City planning at cpcinfo@nola.gov by **5 p.m. on April 4th, 2022.**

VCPORA agrees that temporarily expanding outdoor dining during the COVID-19 epidemic, when health measures prohibit or limit indoor dining, made sense. However, we are opposed to any permanent implementation in the French Quarter for the following reasons:

They are no longer necessary. Currently, there is not a dearth of dining options in the French Quarter. Additionally, the incoming numbers demonstrate that street life is not a problem. There is no longer a demonstrated need for them.

Commercial business in residential areas: these are bringing the bars outside in the streets, much like Bourbon Street. Many bars and restaurants are located in residential areas, some in grandfathered spaces where such commercial uses are otherwise no longer allowed. Expanding a “legal non-conforming use” in size or intensity is prohibited in the CZO.

It Impacts the Quality of Life in the French Quarter: Outdoor dining and drinking establishments have shown, in the French Quarter, to significantly increase the noise impacts, crowding, and litter on adjacent residential uses.

Privatization of Public Space: Outdoor dining also involves a taking and privatization of public space, such as sidewalks or streets. That is space, which is shared by many users for residential parking, loading and unloading, and passenger zones, has now been specifically designated for the private usage of a sole business entity.

Public Safety & ADA Accessibility: Crowding and safety become an issue when establishments take over the often narrow and crowded public right of way that separates a business from its adjacent parklet dining area. In some situations, this may make a bad or difficult situation worse, with a variety of potentially negative effects for pedestrians, diners, and businesses. This is especially problematic for ADA accessibility.

Aesthetic Considerations: As we have observed, and predicted, the aesthetic considerations have not been adequately addressed. The existing parklets bear little resemblance to anything that could contribute to our historic streetscapes. Even if their designs were improved, the parklets will still mask and obscure our carefully preserved architecture.

And perhaps most importantly, there has been no record of enforcement for the ones that are operating. Some have been in place for nearly two years without a valid permit. Some have introduced exterior speakers and furniture/equipment on the sidewalk, including tents, which are specifically prohibited. There has been no effort to enforce any of these built-in regulations and no indication that they will be in the future.



Homer Plessy – Our school will stay!

Just before Mardi Gras, we started hearing rumors about our beloved Homer Plessy elementary school moving out of the French Quarter. A petition quickly circulated to “Save our French Quarter School” gathering more than 1,600 signatures – it was clear the community wanted the school to stay. We shared the residents’ and neighbors’ concerns. Our school contributes to the viability of the French Quarter as a neighborhood and is an integral part of keeping the residential areas thriving.

As of this week, the Homer Plessy has decided to stay put – after the School Board offered them some additional resources for updates. We are thrilled that we will continue seeing our “Quarter Kids” around St. Peter and Royal streets and want to thank the community for the hard advocacy work!



How to help Tornado Victims

Donations & Assistance

As many of you know, an EF3 tornado hit New Orleans and neighboring parishes on March 22, 2022. Whether you have visited New Orleans or live here, what makes you fall in love with this place is its people. As a cultural institution, we would be nothing without this community. If you are looking to support tornado relief efforts, the following organizations are on the ground serving impacted communities. Find additional information [here](#).

Donate Supplies

NOLA Ready is working with community partners to collect, sort, and distribute much needed items to survivors in New Orleans and neighboring parishes.

Junior League of New Orleans

What: Diapers, feminine hygiene items (pads & tampons)

Where: [4319 Carondelet St, New Orleans 70115](#)

When: Today - Sun, Mar 27, 9 AM - 3 PM

Second Harvest Food Bank

What: Cleaning supplies, non-perishable food, water

Where: [700 Edwards Ave, New Orleans 70123](#)

When: Today - Weekend, 7:30 AM – 3:30 PM

Donations can be dropped in the marked bins outside of operating hours.

Donate Funds

After a disaster, the most effective way to support survivors is by donating to groups on the ground, and directly funding response operations. This allows for flexibility in response, and maximizes your support to impacted individuals.

[The Greater New Orleans Foundation \(GNOF\)](#)

The Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF) will accept donations to its Disaster Response & Restoration Fund in response to the Emergency Declaration for New Orleans and other parts of Southeast Louisiana.

[Hands On New Orleans](#)

Hands On New Orleans is operating a state-wide multiagency warehouse to receive and distribute much needed supplies and goods into every impacted parish.

[Imagine Waterworks](#)

Mutual aid is one of the best ways for disaster affected individuals to receive help. Imagine Waterworks oversees a Mutual Aid Response Network.

[Junior League of New Orleans](#)

The Junior League of New Orleans is sending supplies to Southeast Louisiana. The Junior League of New Orleans (JLNO) founded its Diaper Bank in 2014 to help families from the bottom up.

[Rebuilding Together New Orleans](#)

As one of the largest home rehabilitation non-profit organizations in New Orleans, RTNO works to ensure homeowners receive help following disasters. This

includes cleanup and rebuilding.

[Second Harvest Food Bank](#)

Thousands have been impacted by tornadoes that struck St. Bernard and the New Orleans region. Every \$1 donated helps Second Harvest provide 4 meals to our neighbors facing hunger.

[Team Rubicon](#)

Uniting the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders, Team Rubicon works toward immediate response and long-term recovery. Team Rubicon is on the ground in Southeast Louisiana right now.

[SBP](#)

Donations made to SBP's Tornado Recovery will go directly to their on-the-ground efforts.

[United Way of Southeast Louisiana](#)

All proceeds will fund immediate relief efforts already underway and long-term rebuilding and community grants to partner organizations providing direct services to assist with recovery.

 Photos by WDSU, Max Becherer, and Sophia Germer.



**JOIN
SOS**

**Movement for
PEACE & CULTURE**
at Louis Armstrong Park

SUNDAY, APRIL 3RD at 3PM

SPEAKERS • MUSIC • FUN



Save our Soul – Movement for Peace & Culture event in Armstrong Park

The Save Our Soul (SOS) Coalition will be hosting our Peace & Culture event at Louis Armstrong Park on Sunday, April 3rd, 2022. Come out and get updates from SOS about where we are in the process of preserving the past and planning for the future of the Municipal Auditorium and Louis Armstrong Park. SOS is an alliance of more than 30 neighborhood (including VCPORA),

community, arts, education and social justice organizations and advocates united to protect the sacred spaces of New Orleans.



COVID-19 Mandate Update

The City of New Orleans announced on Monday, March 21, 2022, that **the public health guidelines requiring proof of full vaccination or a recent negative COVID test to enter certain establishments have been lifted**, effective 6 a.m. on March 21.

Residents and visitors are no longer required to provide proof of full vaccination or a recent negative test to enter bars, restaurants, event spaces, and other businesses previously covered under the regulations.

Reported cases in Orleans Parish remain at very low levels, and hospital capacity is robust. Wastewater testing results correlate these findings of low viral transmission. Residents should prepare for the likelihood of future surges by continuing to assess risk levels for themselves and loved ones and relying on proven mitigation strategies: testing, masks, and staying up to date with COVID vaccinations.

The City encourages all residents and visitors to get vaccinated if they have not already done so, including booster shots. Mask requirements will continue where federally mandated, such as on public transportation and healthcare facilities.

Find more information [here](#).



#BourbonStThenAndNow

Happy Friday! We're closing the week with a brand new series - [#BourbonStThenandNow](#) - where we take a look at the passage of time on the world's most famous entertainment strip - Bourbon Street.

As preservationists, we care deeply about the continued viability of all French Quarter buildings and places of importance, particularly when they fall into disrepair. According to the VCC, "when maintenance is not performed regularly, the condition can worsen to the point that other materials or systems are affected and the condition reaches a point of Demolition by Neglect." With that being said...

This week we're taking a look at [410 Bourbon Street](#)! On the agenda for the March 29, 2022, VCC-AC (architectural review committee) meeting, [410 Bourbon](#) is one of two twin 3-story Greek Revival townhouses constructed c. 1840 for the Irish merchant, Randall Currell. The first picture shows the building in 1959 when it operated as Chez Paree and the second picture shows the building in 2022. The [current citations](#) against the building include but are not limited to: stucco, brick and mortar, trim, cornice, balcony, and lintel damage, as well as overall deterioration. On March 29th, at 1pm, the VCCARC will hear from the owners of the building to discuss the future of this building and how the owners can help save their building from further decline.

Check back next week for a new [#BourbonStThenandNow](#)!



Helpful Resources

Safety

The NOPD 8th District *Non-Emergency* Line **(504) 658-6080**.
Watch the weekly NOPD 8th District MAX Meetings [here](#).
Download the French Quarter Task Force "Blue Light Patrol" App [here](#).

Quality of Life

See a public works issue or have quality of life complaints regarding construction, sanitation, illegal business operations, sound, and all other factors? **You can report these by dialing 311 or by submitting violations [here](#). It is imperative that we continuously report quality of life issues so as to provide further support in future cases and it will furthermore help to keep the reports on the authorities' radar.**

Filming in the French Quarter

Questions and concerns regarding filming in the Vieux Carré can be sent to:

Carroll Morton
Director, Film New Orleans
(504) 658-4341 (office)
(504) 240-9504 (mobile)
cgmorton@nola.gov

Isabella Renner
Production Manager
(504) 658-4355 (office)
(504) 295-7734 (mobile)
isabella.renner@nola.gov

5G in the French Quarter

For information regarding 5G installation in the Vieux Carré, please see our website [here](#).

Questions and concerns regarding 5G can be sent to:

mayorcantrell@nola.gov
Ramsey.Green@nola.gov
Jonathan.Rhodes@nola.gov
bdblock@nola.gov
erinholmes@vcpora.org

Vieux Carré Resources

Apply for a permit or find an existing permit [here](#).
Find Vieux Carré Commission Design Guidelines [here](#).
VCC and VCCAC meeting schedules and past meeting materials can be found [here](#).
City Council and additional City Council Committee meeting schedules can be found [here](#).

Historic Research Tools

[Vieux Carré Virtual Library](#)
[The Collins C. Diboll Vieux Carré Digital Survey](#)
[Louisiana Digital Library](#)



VCPORA is a nonprofit organization that advocates for the preservation and protection of the Vieux Carré as an international historic treasure, a major cultural and economic asset, and a living residential neighborhood that is valued and respected by all.

Your generosity **today** helps preservationists and advocates create strategic and powerful campaigns to defend and elevate the French Quarter and surrounding neighborhoods **tomorrow!**

[Donate](#)

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