

Store

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lower prices because they have a chain of stores," said one woman in the audience.

"Mario's does a lot for the community," one man said.

"I am excited to be here today," said Megan Rice, West Las Vegas resident and ACORN member.

ACORN has been at the forefront pushing for a grocer since Vons, the area's only store, closed in the fall of 2004. Monday's meeting was the most recent in a long series of rallies, town hall meetings and neighborhood walks since the Vons closing.

"ACORN is an organization that really cares about the community's needs," Rice said. "Unemployment, poverty, hunger are all legitimate problems that must be dealt with. Having a place to buy food in your community is a necessity. And, finally, it is being dealt with. I was impressed with the energy and methodology of this organization, so I became a member," Rice added.

The evening began with Councilman Barlow stating the purpose: "I welcome you all to today's town meeting. Today, you will be presented with a few development plans, one by Agora Realty & Management Inc., and the other by Laurich Properties Inc."

There was an audience question period after the presentation of both business proposals. Scott Adams from the City Office of Business Development handled community members' questions and comments on specifics of the plans at the conclusion of

the meeting, in addition to his opening visual presentation aided by charts, tables, graphs and other demographics and data illustrations.

Incentives for developers were detailed. In the ongoing pursuit of a grocer, the City of Las Vegas has committed to a hefty package of tax-reducing inducements, rebates, deferred costs and other economic support to attract developers.

"We've considered a few possibilities. A new grocer can be placed at the Owens and H Street location, where the former Vons grocery store used to be," Adams said. "And of course, shops can be built around the existing building. Or we can build an entirely new center at the southwest corner of Lake Mead and Martin Luther King [boulevards], creating an entirely new center with a larger grocer, like Wal-Mart, Save-A-Lot, and Smith's, or possibly consider the expansion of Mario's Grocery Store to accommodate the needs of the community. As of now, a few stores have agreed to move into the area. So there are a number of possibilities."

The general community dialog from previous meetings has shown a resistance to a superstore like Wal-Mart.

And although many residents have expressed favor for restoring a grocer to the Vons site, movement organizers reported there was more interest in the target parcel adjacent to Enterprise Park.

Agora Realty's CEO Cary Lefton began to explain his

company's intentions for the West Las Vegas shopping center at the conclusion of Adams' visual presentation.

Lefton said, "We aren't used to attending town hall meetings or getting this much media coverage. Nevertheless, we are here to see how a new marketplace will fit into Mario's marketplace, which is more like a convenience store than a grocery store. The reality of the matter is that it is a difficult challenge to bring major corporations into a neglected area. But the area in question is a high traffic area and can be very beneficial to the community."

"We want to add a bank, gas stations, hardware stores, drug stores, hair salons, and household names like Starbucks and Subway. My company has put a lot of thought into this area. We want each site to be a success. But above that want, is the community need — and that is what we plan to deliver."

Co-presenter, Laurich Properties' president, Richard Gordon, spoke very briefly about his company's intentions for the space.

"We want to build a 70,000 sq. ft. Food 4 Less in the area. Neighborhood grocers are all we do. I don't need to try and impress you all with a lot of talk. Let us show you what we can do."

The audience seemed unimpressed by the management strategies placed before them. Many in the crowded room began to whisper, others began to raise their hands, prompting Barlow's interjec-

tion.

"We want to hear your concerns. I'll have my liaison pass around the microphone, and we'll listen to anyone who has a concern," he said.

NAACP's Watson asked, "Have we located businesses to occupy the smaller shops, or will we just end up having pretty, abandoned buildings? And in regards to adding drug stores, we have plenty in the area already; three to be exact. We would like you to look into other possibilities."

Agora Realty claimed they are careful with tenant selection but that they must wait until the project contract is obtained. Laurich Properties said that it simply built anchor stores.

"We allow the community to choose what goes into their centers," said Gordon.

After minutes of comments and concerns, Barlow ended the meeting calling for residents' input.

"All of your comments are important. I know you want to tell me what you want here at the meeting. But I need you to call my office, send me an email or fax to let me know which proposal you prefer and why. I'm not trying to stall the process, I just need to know in a detailed fashion why you feel one way or the other about your decision."

He guided those interested: "Think about what you want in a grocer for your families — delis, florists, pharmacies, and so forth. Let me know and my team know, so we can make it happen for you. Whatever choice is made, however, will bring jobs to many who need them, while beautifying our neighborhood, as well. I know that great things will come from this project."

In about 30 months from now, Historic West Las Vegas is projected to have a Food 4 Less at its busiest intersection, according to plans. It will fill an urgent need in an area that has been without a store in the immediate vicinity for nearly three years.

With the collective work of the area's longtime former Councilman Lawrence Weekly and Ricki Barlow, the longtime then-liaison to Weekly who was recently elected councilman following Weekly's appointment as county commissioner representing that district; ACORN activists, residents of the Historic Westside communities and other concerned citizens, the area will finally get its own grocery store.

Bond: NAACP to retool, revamp

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - NAACP Chairman Julian Bond, while pointing to the ills of America that he says have been exacerbated by the administration of President George Bush, told the NAACP annual convention this week that the organization must now prioritize its own refueling and growth for "grand victories" over injustices.

"There is nothing more important for us to be doing right now than ending felony disenfranchisement elsewhere and registering voters. If you don't believe one vote counts, look at the Supreme Court!" Bond told the audience of thousands in prepared remarks at the 98th Annual NAACP Convention, themed "Power Beyond Measure," in Detroit.

"But there are other things we must do too. We must make strengthening our branches and state conferences a first priority, building membership where it is low and insisting on activism where branches are moribund. We must expand our outreach to and collaboration with our coalition partners — the time has long passed when we were the only soldiers in this fight. We cannot and should not go it alone."

The Detroit convention hosted by the nation's largest NAACP branch, comes on the heels of a national appeal from Bond for the public to "show some love" to the NAACP by giving money.

Interim CEO Dennis Hayes, who stepped into leadership after former Verizon executive Bruce Gordon stepped down abruptly, has announced that the organization had to cut its Baltimore headquarters staff from 119 to 70 people. He said the organization had used more than \$10 million in reserves over the past three years to cover shortfalls. Gordon cited disagreements with the organization's 64-member board as a reason for his resignation.

Despite financial woes, Bond, who kicked off the convention with his speech on Monday, said the civil rights battles ahead underscore the continued need for the NAACP.

"As we find ourselves re-fighting battles we thought we had already won, we are reminded that the NAACP is as needed now as ever," he said, citing surveys that show increasing belief in the work of the NAACP.

"A 1993 leadership study by Brakeley, John Price Jones Inc., showed 75 percent of Blacks believed the NAACP the leader among groups with civil rights, so-

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School

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The Clark County School District's empowerment schools, in contrast, still have a centralized administration composed of staffers, administrators and trustees at the school board level. The CCSD has in recent years established area superintendents. No local plans to disband that core has been announced.

Also, in the model, each school enlists a parent liaison. Mathis told the parents that such a position has been created in her empowerment school. "It's a seven-hour work day," she said.

"The position is running."

A parent expressed concerns about the new empowerment model. Dell



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Principal Beverly Mathis of the Kermit Booker Elementary School explains the advantages and differences of an empowerment school to parents during last week's informative meeting.

Ray Rhodes told Mathis, "I'm concerned about the full scope of empowerment schools."

McCormick-Lee responded again, "Empowerment includes teachers and the community."

Mathis said, "great things are going to happen."

Although Cooks and others remain cautiously skeptical, the meeting came to a close on an upbeat note.

True Love Missionary Baptist Church

Rev. Willie Jacobs Jr., Pastor

33rd Year Church Anniversary/Homecoming

July 19-20, 2007 and July 22, 2007

Theme: "THE POWER OF A CHRIST - MINDED CHURCH" - Matthew 16:18

What a joyous time we will have when we all get together. The True Love Missionary Baptist Church will be celebrating their 33rd Church Anniversary/Homecoming Services on Thursday, July 19, 2007 starting at 7:30pm and Friday, July 20, 2007 starting at 7:30pm. The services for Sunday, July 22, 2007 will begin at 11:00am with evening service starting at 3:00pm. We are looking for all past, present members and friends of True Love to come and celebrate with us.

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