

Eldridge/West Oaks Super Neighborhood Council Meeting  
Final Minutes (Corrected)  
July 14, 2010

The meeting of the Eldridge/West Oaks Super Neighborhood Council (EWOSNC) was called to order at 7:02 PM, July 14, 2010 by President Diane Guillerman. A quorum of 11 delegates was present.

**I. Speaker**

Mrs. Guillerman introduced Vince Ryan, Harris County Attorney. Mr. Ryan represents and handles legal affairs for the County. He is a former city councilman and Viet Nam veteran. He was the first assistant county attorney for Mike Driskoll whom he praises and continues to emulate. He is a proponent of a strong mayor form rather than a city manager form of government where a majority of city commissioners can fire the mayor. The legislative authority of City Council is diminished by the power of the mayor. City Council can pass laws over the Harris County commissioners. Houston is unzoned. The special prosecutors unit of Harris County can enforce deed restrictions for neighborhoods. Because of no zoning, it is necessary for the city to enforce deed restrictions. There is currently a hiring freeze at the county level. Mr. Ryan praised the mayor's recent reaching out to Harris County Commissioners to meet with each one individually. This signals a new era of cooperation between the City and Harris County. He hopes to see things move forward.

Bob Sumicek asked if City Council could sponsor a workshop with attorneys talking about deed restrictions. Mr. Ryan agreed that would be a good idea. He wants everyone to understand the authority of the city attorney's office. Jay Taylor said the County got involved in deed restrictions because the City did a poor job of it. Mr. Ryan stated that Mayor Parker cares a great deal about deed restrictions. With the Super Neighborhoods, it is easier to get the City to pay attention to this issue, The mayor can fire civil service employees, except Mayor Parker will allow subordinates to make reasonable mistakes. At the County level, city sheriffs, constables all do law enforcement. Vince Ryan thinks the County has a better form of government than the City. His office recently closed down a liquor store near a school in the Washington street area. A competing liquor distributor wants to open a distribution center near a school in the area. Harris County is saying no; the City is considering a variance. City government is completely different from that of the County.

There was a question about deed restriction violations such as members of a subdivision building driveways without permission. After too many incidents, often the deed restrictions go away. That is because they have been waived too many times. For example the issue of massage parlors, as one is closed, 2 more pop up. The City Attorney will be discussing how to build a case of nuisance against these facilities. The County went after Spec's because of its several locations.

Jay Taylor asked how does un-zoned Harris County govern unincorporated areas. The County has the authority on issuing permits and disallowing junkyards and other undesirable places. Flood control is run by the County as a parallel Board.

Bob Sumicek said there is a problem with neighborhood by-laws. The neighborhoods would like a template to re-look at by-laws, Oliver Pennington, our super neighborhood City Councilman, said the City Attorney is looking into standards for deed restrictions. A question was raised about what Harris County would do with the domed stadium. Mr. Ryan said that is difficult due to the bad economics at this time. Commissioner Radick who is our neighborhood commissioner, is strong, knowledgeable, and well able to address this and other issues for our group.

## **II. Guest Introductions**

Ms. Guillerman introduced Xavier Herrera, the new SN liaison from the mayor's office. She offered thanks to Kevin Knopf, the Eagle's Trace representative to the SN, for allowing the SN Council to use the meeting room at Eagle's Trace. He gave a description of Eagle's Trace facilities. It currently has 494 residents, and it will have its 5 year anniversary in October. The company wants to expand into skilled and extended care.

Oliver Pennington was also introduced. Mr. Pennington is the District G representative on the City Council. He is currently working on construction issues. He addressed crime and said the City has to find a violation in order to shut down a business within the City. He said that he and Vince Ryan work well together. The biggest problem is dealing with department heads. Their staff is too big and they become too concerned with the process, not goal oriented. The speed bump program is ramping up again and neighborhoods can now file a request for speed bumps. Traffic management is also a big problem. The applications on file will now begin to be processed. A recent project was adding 3 miles to widen Turkey Creek Drive. He wants the police department to be more cooperative with super neighborhoods and property associations to speed up communication. On July 25 there will be a meeting with the Houston Police Department and the presidents of the super neighborhoods. Briar Forest wants a police storefront on Wilcrest and Briar Forest. The City may put up cameras there to help alleviate crime in that area.

The City is working on flood control in Memorial. The Kendall Library is now open and has extended hours. A SNAP request for the overlay of Dairy Ashford is still being considered. Mr. Pennington encouraged residents to call his office and make requests. City revenues are down 60 million dollars. The mayor has made up the deficit, has reduced operating costs, and reduced the workforce. She is currently looking at police and fire dept unions and negotiations. Questions came up concerning the number of trees on Dairy Ashford toward Westheimer. Who is responsible for recycling at Carillion? Right now that is Westchase Management, but the City would like to get in to it. If more residents are interested in conservation, more would happen. The City is looking at new technology which can separate items from one collection can. The super neighborhoods are looking at pursuing a recycling center in the West side of town. Mr. Pennington will look into recycling for this area. The City now is using recycling trash bags which is keeping costs down.

Virgie Manning stated she is having a problem communicating with 311 and making a report. She wants to report a billboard violation. Mr. Pennington advised her to call neighborhood protection. There was a question about who to call about

cutting grass in a city owned area. There is a problem with the hike and bike trail, not being maintained properly by the City.

### **III. Old Business**

A. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved and accepted.

#### **B. Committee Reports**

1. Security-- There have been PIP meetings, information is available on the website. There are no meetings during the summer. In the last 30 days there have been 5 robberies, 17 aggravated robberies, 51 burglaries, 72 reports of theft, 14 auto thefts. House insurance for the 77077 zip code has gone up. State Farm says it is due to the increase in crime. Bob Sumicek will continue to monitor these issues.
2. SNAP (infrastructure) absent
3. Beautification—New Chairperson, Virgie Manning. She would like a speaker on beautification for the next meeting.
4. Flooding and Drainage—Billie Long attended the committee meeting of the Public Works Dept which includes maintenance of sewer systems. Mowing cycles have been cut back due to expense. RENEW Houston program was discussed. 22,000 signatures were received for the ballot item. It will be on the November ballot.
5. Legislative Committee (absent)
6. Speakers Committee—next months speaker are from the City and will discuss enforcing deed restrictions and updating them. (Luis Risotto and Rudy Velasquez)
7. September speaker will be on Keep Houston Beautiful, and Keep Houston Safe, which promotes cameras at intersections.

**IV. Mission Statement**—Jay Taylor updated the mission statement.

**V. Website**— Everyone was encouraged to sign in and receive communications for their neighborhoods.

**VI. New Business**—The Board was asked what projects we would like to work on as a superneighborhood.

A. Announcements—Bring ideas for crime prevention to the next meeting.

Next meeting will be August 11 at 7 PM at the Eagle Trace AC Classroom.