

Minutes from the meeting of JUNE 8, 2016 – Super Neighborhood 17

- I. Call to Order at 7:01 p.m.
- II. The Boy Scouts from Troop 993 were in attendance, working on their merit badge.
- III. Representatives' Announcements:

A. Rhonda Sauter – COH Department of Neighborhoods –

Ms. Sauter explained that she had been absent from recent Super Neighborhood meetings due to surgery. She noted that due to budget issues, the Department of Neighborhoods (“DON”) has had personnel cutbacks, so she will not be able to attend all SN meetings going forward but wanted to convey to SN 17 that she is available to help.

Ms. Sauter noted that the DON will be operated a little differently under Mayor Turner. She stated that the DON was used as community liaisons under Mayor Parker. That will continue under Mayor Turner, but Mayor Turner wants the DON to be more involved in the community. Mayor Turner is very community oriented and wants the DON to be more involved in communities experiencing issues. She stated that the City’s department of Inspections & Public Services (“I&PS”) is now under the DON. Ms. Sauter will contact Takasha Francis, the head of I&PS to come and speak to the SN about the department.

Jack O’Connor asked Ms. Sauter if the homeless issues facing the City will be handled differently under Mayor Turner than under Mayor Parker. Ms. Sauter stated she did not know the answer to that question, but the City knows it needs to do more regarding the homeless. Mr. O’Connor asked if Maddie Provost was still working at HPD. Ms. Sauter said she was not aware Ms. Provost was transferred or no longer with HPD, but would find out. Ms. Sauter later advised the SN that Ms. Provost was still with HPD and was still a chief.

Ms. Sauter can be reached at Rhonda.Sauter@Houstontx.gov.

B. District G Representative, Councilmember Greg Travis -

Mr. Travis noted that Mayor Turner decided to keep the trash reimbursement (sponsorship) program for the next year. He stated that our voices were heard by the Mayor and it means the City and neighborhoods will save money. Mr. Travis asked that we write to the Mayor and thank him for his decision.

C. Mark Kirschke – with Councilmember Travis’s Office -

Mr. Kirschke noted that there was no guarantee the trash sponsorship program would continue beyond this fiscal year. He noted that Mayor Turner is going to try and get help from the State regarding pensions. He also noted that there is some push for a separate garbage fee, meaning it would not be paid for out of the general operating budget (taxes). If this goes through, the trash sponsorship program will end. He advised that as the fiscal year ends, HOAs may want to consider a 60-day “out” clause or other language when renegotiating their trash contracts.

Mr. Kirschke noted the number of calls regarding pot holes has dropped and the program may end. If it does, that means those assigned to that task will be reassigned. He suggested getting the 311 app, which allows you to take a picture of any pot hole without even knowing the address. He also noted that there is \$12.5 million in the budget for panel replacement. So, if you think it's a pothole, take a picture. Potholes are no larger than 5 feet by 5 feet. If the hole is larger, still report it and it will go on a list for panel replacement.

Mr. Kirschke noted that the deadline for applying for federal assistance regarding storm relief is June 24, 2016. The deadline for assistance in raising houses has passed.

Mr. Kirschke noted that the same precautions he discussed last month regarding the mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus are still being urged: get rid of standing water where mosquitos breed, including trash where water can accumulate. The City does not provide mosquito control. You can contact Harris County Mosquito Control at 713-440-7800 if you are having problems with mosquitoes.

Mr. Kirschke noted that the traffic management system for neighborhoods has been amended to speed up the process: an application gets filed, notice goes out to homes within a certain radius (1/2 or 1 mile) allowing for anyone noticed to demand a public hearing; if no hearing is requested, temporary measures are put in place. Following that, if no public hearing is requested, council approves and the temporary devices will be made permanent. Although the process will be speeded up, there is no additional money for the program. There is a possibility the District G services fund may pay for traffic management devices but if that happens, those requests that have been in the cue for 6-8 years will be addressed first. Mr. Kirschke stated that neighborhoods can use the same forms as previously used to apply. Know whether you're applying for volume control or for speed control because they have different alternatives.

Mr. Kirschke discussed the HPD "active shooter" video. It's called "Run, Hide, and Fight." If an active shooter situation presents itself, first, try to run away if possible. If not, you should try and hide and, if you cannot, you should fight. The video is the brainchild of Steve Daniel. He gives presentations to community organizations. His number is 713-308-3246. The video is used by law enforcement agencies all over the country. Crime Stoppers also has their own "active shooter" video. It is being presented on July 16th. For more on formation, call 832-849-1588.

Councilmember Travis noted that the District G twitter feed can provide valuable, real-time information regarding emergencies. He noted that he was on sight following the Memorial Day shooting. Over 250 police responded to that shooting. District G tweeted when it was all clear; the twitter account information is on District G's website.

Mr. Kirschke stated Dr. Le's wife (Dr. Le is the District F councilmember) was in a very bad car accident on June 6, 2016.

An attendee noted that Dr. Le has put out a notice in District F stating he wants to change street names to Vietnamese names. The attendee noted he had spoken with Vietnam veterans who are very upset by Dr. Le's efforts.

D. Jim Murphy's Representative, Deanna Harrington –

Ms. Harrington noted that Mr. Murphy is interested in speaking to communities and would be happy to speak to the Boy Scouts.

Doug Parrish noted that he is trying to get Mr. Murphy to speak to the SN in September or later to give the SN an update on the state of the legislature.

An attendee asked Councilmember Travis if the current City budget was “in the hole.” Mr. Travis explained that next year’s budget should be better. This year, the City will not be able to pay down the debt on the pensions, but did not borrow money from the pensions either. Thus, the debt to pensions has grown. Mr. Travis previously introduced an amendment to cut spending by 1 ½ percent, which would have resulted in a \$30 million savings to the City, but no one on city council would vote for it. He stated that altering the procurement system alone can save the City \$15 million. Next year he will be tougher on budget issues; this year he wants to see how much help Mayor Turner will receive from Austin.

There was additional discussion regarding the backlog of drainage and flooding problems and the amount of money – perhaps 25 billion – needed to address the issues. Councilmember Travis stated that figure may include depreciation of City assets, and he believes the figure is more like \$3 to 5 million. It was noted that a “return” from Rebuild Houston should be seen in 2019 and it is spending about \$160 million on projects. He stated that the Rebuild Houston charter allows spending 25% on “maintenance.” He also noted that there is a lawsuit against the City regarding Rebuild Houston and if the court orders a refund of Rebuild Houston proceeds, the City will be even further in debt.

IV. Old Business:

A. On behalf of Lakes of Parkway, Doug Parrish asked Councilmember Travis what is being done regarding a traffic light at Whittington. Mr. Travis responded that his office has been looking into it and so far they have been told that a study was done and another study, even if needed, will not be done for at least another 6 months. Mr. Travis stated he knows circumstances have changed since the last study was done and his office will continue to pursue the issue.

B. Committee Reports:

311/SNAP - Judy Thompson noted that work is being done south of Westheimer on Eldridge and West Park. She thanked District F for the work progressing.

Judy Thompson also noted she attended the mobility meeting, “A Conversation About Multimodality in West Houston,” which addressed West Houston transportation issues. The meeting had a panel composed of Maureen Crocker, Executive Director, Gulf Coast Rail District, Andrea French, Executive Director, Transportation Advocacy Group, Clark Martinson, General Manager for the Energy Corridor District, and Irma Sanchez, Vice President of Projects, Westchase District. According to Ms. Thompson, rail is not in the picture for West Houston. Carpooling is not popular, but there may be

more park-n-rides. There is no short term solution to the transportation issues facing West Houston.

An attendee noted that carved out bus lanes on Westheimer are being considered, but only from Gessner to Wilcrest; it is scheduled for 2017.

An attendee asked Councilmember Travis what the City's position is regarding the high speed train from Dallas to Houston. Mr. Travis noted that extending the train to downtown Houston is cost prohibitive and, at this point, it is scheduled to go only to the Northwest Mall area. There is no money in the budget for Metro or rail.

Beautification – no report.

Security – no report.

Flooding – no report.

Homeless/Panhandler - J. Lozano noted that there were no homeless in Seattle during his recent visit. He said that Seattle contacts the families of homeless and makes arrangements for those homeless to be transported to their families.

He also discussed the shooting in his neighborhood, which was directed at an HOA member. Two 15 year-old were involved. Cameras caught one of the criminals hiding a gun in a mailbox.

Webmaster – Bob Andrew noted that the “Ready Harris” app helps families plan an evacuation meeting place and how to evacuate.

There was some discussion about getting the SN Alliance's annual report on to SN 17's website. Rhonda Sauter will look at that issue.

C. Approved minutes from May, 2016.

D. Meeting was adjourned at 8:16pm. Next meeting is July 13, 2016.