

Minutes from the meeting of October 11, 2017 – Super Neighborhood 17

- I. Call to order at 7:01 p.m. A quorum was established.
- II. Welcome and thanks were given by President Doug Parrish to our webmaster Bob Andrew and Councilman Greg Travis and his staff for extraordinary service during and since the Hurricane.
- III. Government Announcements:

Councilman Greg Travis from District G:

Mr. Travis gave a recap of the challenges during the storm. He noted that his main goals during the storm were to 1) provide a positive attitude to uplift moral, 2) provide information to constituents quickly and accurately, 3) provide prompt information to the City, Mayor, HPD, Houston Fire Department, and other agencies regarding our district. Highlights from his report included the availability of a warning system that has not been utilized. He noted shortfalls in debris removal due to contractual issued from DRC. He provided a viable option for the future, suggesting move debris to a couple of miles away quickly (modest price on the contractual scale) and then have mega moving equipment move from that quick location to the final storage area making the process much more cost effective, and timely for everyone. The DRC ideally should have been ready immediately not ten days later, since there was an expectation of damage. Travis noted that he had local standing water tested yielding results of 125 times the acceptable limits of E.Coli . Mayor Turner, Travis noted, did not show special interest in these figures. Councilman Travis also noted the large delays in responses to our area.

Travis presented information about the precise and specific nature of the Army Corps of engineers' methodology. This entity does not report to any paid office of any type only to a General in Washington, D.C. The primary purpose of the Corps is to protect downtown and the ship channel. His persistence did offer a modicum of change in opening Highway 6 a bit earlier to alieve the horrendous traffic and mobility issues on the West side of Houston.

Mr. Travis also reported that he voted NO on the tax increase requested by Mayor Turner. He also noted that the amount requested is exactly the figure expected for COH budget shortfall coming next year. He also noted that with a hiring freeze, the number of employees in the City has increased by 1,300. He will investigate to bring more information to future meetings regarding these figures. He noted a lack of communication between the Mayor and various persons including the Governor and those of us on the west side of Houston. Much funding is available if the Mayor would just ask for the funds. He did applaud those in the trenches and on the front line despite some command difficulties.

Questions from the group

Is there a formal plan to notify citizens with impending flooding or other emergency information? Travis noted that Harris County Flood Control has a method that only offers 80 characters. They were looking into this matter. The group noted that multiple messages of 80 characters could be sent. Travis agreed that someone has dropped the ball regarding communication in a timely manner for vital property and life threatening information. The fact that there was only one sensor at Piney Point was providing somewhat of a false sense of security since the Dairy Ashford, Wilcrest, and Westbelt areas were severely impacted before the true nature of the spread of water from the release was understood. Additionally, he noted that the Corps of Engineers has never had a release during an event in its 70 years of existence.

Water Bill issues, what is the status for citizens? Travis felt that many of these bills in question were the result of faulty sensors in meters from prolonged sitting water. There is more investigation planned for this problem. There is a hold plan for citizens with out of ordinary bills, but they must request it from the city.

Did Harris County Flood Control know about the flood gate openings sooner? Travis remarked that the Corps of Engineers did but no others, also noting that strict chain of command for the Corp.

What is the plan for debris removal at this point? Call 311 for your particular home address. You can also send an email to the city with a list of all addresses in your neighborhood. Mr. Ruiz from the COH also stated that COH is assessing and will begin second round soon, also remarking that those with higher levels of debris would be gathered before smaller ones. Citizens should expect delays.

Is there any recycling at this time? Not at this time, but the plan is to complete debris removal then recycling can return.

Mr. Leech (concerned neighbor) has done considerable research noting that a southern canal was to be constructed to alleviate the bottleneck in the Villages area to take large amounts of water directly to Galveston. He wanted to know if there were plans to evaluate, remediate, adapt any of the flooding areas. Travis noted that a study would be an excellent idea. More information will come regarding this critical area as we move forward and plan for future events. Mr. Leech, continued with a report from a professor from MIT stating that more flooding of this nature is probable. Travis noted that we have to shore up the dams, straighten out the bayou, dredge the bayous, and create more detention as a part of a comprehensive plan. He also suggested that at third reservoir in the cypress creek area is under consideration to hold back some of the water so it could drain in a more gradual manner thus lessening the impact of the recent storm dam issues. He expects this process to take at least five years.

Addition questions were asked specifically seeking information on an alert system. Mr. Travis will research and send more information soon.

What is the plan to avoid future sewage treatment plant issues? Travis described two scenarios offering one version which moves the plant to a higher area with proper building (cost prohibitive) and a second provides a pricey but manageable plan to build concrete walls around current structures to hold out the water. This second plan is under consideration.

What are the future corrections for HLP issues were similar to treatment plants? Mr. Travis noted that HLP was working on a solution to be described at a later time.

Specific amounts of water from the dams may have been misquoted. Travis noted that he was not aware of the much larger figures. He will research, verify, and report back to us on this issue.

Va'Shawnda McLean - Houston Police Department representative:

Ms. McLean gave the group crime statistics for the month of September.

Murder – 0

Sexual Assault – 3 (suspect that these were family violence related)

Aggravated Assault – 7

Family Violence – 65

B and B – Car break in and theft

Common days Mondays and Thursdays

Common location – La Fitness parking lot, 1 at barbershop, 6 at residences (apartments)

Officer McLean highly recommended that residents participate in Next Door online email to stay connected to our local communities. Where residents are aware, crime moves elsewhere. Check this email often. To reach the police department with non-urgent matters, use the email address, Hpdwestside-drt@houstonpolice.org, to give direct information such as an abandoned car or nuisance issues to the police department. This facilitates specific information that can go to the roll call captain daily. Officers can check out these items along their route that day. These items can be acted upon readily. This roll call route or an alert slip can offer a quick message directly to the westside storefront or command area for more prompt responses. When making contact, please give as many specifics as possible.

McLean also noted that there is a depository for trash and recycling information at the link listed.

<http://www.houstontx.gov/solidwaste/depositories.html>

Ms. McLean's contact information is as follows:

Store front 832-394-7620

Cell 713-306-8402

vashawnda.mclean@houstonpolice.org

Rene Ruiz – Department of Neighborhoods:

Mr. Ruiz reported assessment is ongoing on debris removal per previous mention in these minutes. He also stated that there is a city water bill hotline that is not working well. This issue is being researched for better customer service. There is a new satellite permitting center in the City Center area off Memorial Drive. Please use this handy center for rebuilding permit needs. His contact information is Rene.ruiz@houstontx.gov as well as by phone at 832-393-0939.

Margarita Dunlap - METRO representative:

Ms. Dunlap discussed the incredible scenes at George R. Brown and NRG facilities. METRO has the charge of moving citizens to various facilities. They continue to assist the 700 remaining victims. METRO personnel have been heavily involved in serving at shelters and assisting in the post Harvey issues. Ms. Dunlap herself spent countless hours volunteering. She encouraged our group to fill out comment cards provided tonight by METRO. METRO is only as responsive as the needs of the community are known, so please give feedback. She graciously thanked the group for allowing her to participate in our SN17.

Other Announcements

Michael Friedel – Eagles Trace representative:

Mr. Friedel welcomed everyone and introduced himself giving a brief biography. He noted that Mark Batterson was moving into a corporate position in Baltimore. He was thanked for the gracious hospitality that Eagles Trace has offered. He also noted the trepidations in watching and preparing to move residents to higher rooms along with the memory care and other unit residents as well. Fortunately, that relocation was not needed.

IV. Old Business:

A. June meeting minutes were approved

B. Committee Reports:

Security and homeless – Johnny Lozano: statistics were given by HPD officer thus not further report

Website - Bob Andrew: Bob noted that the site has a robust grouping of hurricane footage, maps, links, etc. that can act as an archive for future reference. He thanked all for contributions. Please visit the site as it has much to offer.

PIP - Nick Kornuta: Nick stated that in his meeting HPD Captain Faulhaber, noted that crime was nil during the storm. During the storm at the aftermath, other officers from other jurisdictions came to the city to aid. El Paso, Ft. Worth, and Federal Agencies also were here to aid. He reported that in numerous conversations with all the visiting groups the gracious, self-reliant, helpful nature of the Houston residents and their ability to self-rescue was extraordinary. Guests were so pleased to be taken care of with food and other amenities. This was so unexpected and unlike other disasters such as Katrina.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m. Next meeting is November 8, 2017