

Minutes from the meeting of November 13, 2019 of Super Neighborhood 17 – Eldridge/West Oaks

I. Call to order at 7:00 p.m. President Baker opened the meeting. He established quorum with # delegates or alternates.

II. Acknowledge and Welcome to Guests and Visitors
Matt Lopez – Harris County Flood Control District
Councilman Greg Travis – Houston City Council District G
Rene Ruiz – Mayor’s Citizens Assistance Office, Department of Neighborhoods
Anthony Freddie – office of Councilman Dr Steve Le (City of Houston, District F)
Cmdr. Faulhaber – HPD West Side Command
Ofc. Whitaker – Representative of HPD

III. Community Safety

Ofc. Whitaker from HPD spoke on current safety matters. He started with a discussion of the murder statistic. The murder report for the past month is from the car crash on Westheimer at the beginning of the month. Due to the nature of the crash, the driver was arrested at the scene and charged with murder. He then reiterated comments from the previous meeting regarding aggravated assault. He gave an example of a shoplifter. In one example, an individual was upset with services received, hit the service provider, and then left without paying. That then becomes an aggravated assault. He also commented on the sexual assaults in the area for the period. They were either related to dating or family members.

Crime Statistics in the last 30 days:

Aggravated Assault – down 7% from 31 to 29

Robbery – down 31% – from 16 to 11

Burglary Habitation – down 6% from 36 to 34

Burglary Building – up 38% from 8 to 11

BMV – down 5% from 66 to 63

Theft – down 9% – from 53 to 48

Auto Theft – down 30% – from 24 to 16

The floor then opened to questions, Ofc. Whitaker was asked about traffic blocking drives off Westheimer and Briar Green. Specifically, in the afternoon between 4 and 6 P.M. She was advised to send in an alert slip. Cmdr. Faulhaber offered business cards with contact information for follow-up if necessary.

He was then asked about speeding on Westheimer. Both Ofc. Whitaker and Cmdr. Faulhaber discussed that they routinely see the same issue in the

personal vehicles. Unfortunately, they have not had much apparent success as drivers tend to drive less aggressive when patrol cars are around.

HPD was commended for their recent efforts in patrolling the school zones along Memorial Dr., in particular near Meadow Wood Elementary.

The final question was an inquiry about recent changes to state law making package theft a felony. Cmdr. Faulhaber responded that the city had just received the circular and were evaluating the changes.

IV. Community Leaders

- a. **Councilman Greg Travis - City of Houston, District G** - spoke on road works on Memorial and Kirkwood. The Memorial project is officially past deadline. He expects the project to be completed in March, with warranty work through the remainder of the year. For Kirkwood the city will be replacing a lift station shortly. Major construction on the first segment, between the bayou and Briar Forest, should start in March. Completion of the last segment, North of Memorial, should be in 2026. [As a point of clarification I want to note that this project consists of three, separate, sequential, segments, each taking about two years to complete. The segments are Buffalo Bayou to Briar Forest, Briar Forest to Westheimer, and I-10 to Memorial.]

Councilman Travis was asked about the expanded drainage being planned as part of the road work if Buffalo Bayou would stay high longer. He clarified that the road is still capturing the same amount of water, that the project is moving the detention from street level to below street level.

He was then commended for culvert improvements that reduced flooding in some areas during Tropical Storm Imelda, this past summer.

He was then asked about the esplanade cut requested at the Eldridge Kroger that has been outstanding for "over a year." He apologized for a delay, but also clarified that he was first informed about 5 months ago. He will assist in helping pursue other options and will get back with SN17.

He was asked about the electrical easement along Wilcrest, if current work would prevent possible future use as a drainage easement. Councilman Travis recommended Steve Costello as an appropriate contact.

- b. **Anthony Freddie - Director of Constituent Services for Councilman Steve Le, City of Houston, District F** - spoke briefly about 311. He mentioned the recently added email address: districtF311@houstontx.gov, but he clarified that the proper course is still to first submit a 3-1-1 request and then, if necessary, follow up with Councilman Le's office.
- c. **Margaret Dunlap - METRO** - spoke briefly about the recently passed bond. She commented on the BRT built by the Galleria district. It will be taken over by METRO in March, and that concept will soon be expanded to other areas of the city. METRO will also expand their platform and sidewalk work projects. They will also be adding local service for Highway 6 South.

- d. **Rene Ruiz - Department of Neighborhoods, City of Houston** – was asked about recent tree plantings under the Highway 6, I-10 overpass, that they were blocking road signs. As a TX DOT issue he asked for an email reminder, and that he would have the responsible department follow-up with TX-DOT.
- V. **Matt Lopez – Harris County Flood Control District** - provided summarized results of their recent investigation into the drainage of Buffalo Bayou. He started with a brief history of HCFCD, noting that it was established by the state legislature and overseen by the Harris County Commissioners Court. The local municipalities are responsible for street drainage, that HCFCD focus is on the bayou system and getting water to the ocean. The system is gravity dependent, as mechanized solutions require a significant maintenance expense. The 2018 bond referendum was passed with specific projects listed. Where they were planning to wait for partner matching funds, such as municipalities, the state, and the US. Army Corp of Engineers. Due to citizen response they are starting to move forward with projects regardless. Even still, many projects are in community engagement meetings and not quite started. 237 projects are currently ongoing.

On the Buffalo Bayou watershed study, they studied some of the feedback from the community, in particular complaints regarding flow restriction at bridges and meanders. They specifically studied 7 bridges and 5 meanders and while they did find localized flood elevation reduction, they determined the results were not cumulative. Additionally, they found that some of the improvements would only move issues downstream. One of the biggest comments regarded the bridges and noted that raising the bridges would actually reduce flow available due to the bridge approach road grading obstructing flow that had been going around the approaches. For bridges and meanders, \$127M could save 40 buildings in the 100-yr floodplain and 174 buildings in the 500-yr floodplain.

As a conceptual study only, they also modeled the complete excavation of Terry Hershey park. While it would produce a significant drop in flood elevation, it was determined non-viable due to downstream flow. It would require an addition of at least 300 acre-ft storage past the Beltway that is just not available. \$216M would benefit 240 buildings in the 100-yr floodplain and 877 buildings in the 500-yr floodplain.

All of their results will be fed back to the USACE for their 216-resiliency study.

What HCFCD is doing is adding 90 acre-ft of linear detention between Eldridge and Dairy Ashford. They are desilting channels upstream of the reservoirs which will slow the water coming in, improving upstream detention. They have also added the fwsalerts.org website which takes subscriptions for push alerts during flooding.

Mr. Lopez was asked if any of the study looked at the flow rate. Ultimately, he suggested a referral to a hydrologist. He was then asked if the I-45 reconstruction downtown would impact the bayou. While he had no comments on I-45 itself, he did add that HCFCD has acquired property in the floodway at White Oak Bayou and is working on a plan at the channel confluence to improve back channel flooding on Buffalo Bayou near downtown.

In response to a questions on a perception of funding reallocation, Mr Lopez clarified that all the projects were listed in the referendum and what we are currently seeing is only a “reprioritization” of work.
- VI. The minutes were approved
- VII. Committee Reports

- a. **Jeff Baker, as Chair for Communications**, noted that an excess of emails may have been sent recently, that he would work to prevent over-communication.
 - b. **Jeff Baker, as Chair for Public Safety and Crime**, noted that many delivery services are now have non-traditional options available from control of delivery date and time, to alternate pickup at service centers and lockers.
 - c. **Diane Guillerman, Chair for Non-Profit Exploratory**, reported back on an information request from the executive committee that reverting from non-profit status would be simple. She also added a reminder that we provide notice that the next meeting will have a formal vote to execute the non-profit provision in the SN17 bylaws.
- VIII. Old Business
- IX. New Business
- a. The delegates were reminded that there is no meeting in December. The next meeting will be the annual meeting in January. In addition to the vote on non-profit status, the positions up for election are President and Co-Secretary.
 - b. The cut in the esplanade by the Kroger on Eldridge will be tracked with Councilman Travis at the next meeting.
 - c. An email will be sent to Rene Ruiz regarding tree planting under Highway 6 at I-10.
 - d. An email will be sent to Councilman Travis regarding cypress trees planted adjacent to the recently completed portion of the Eldridge & Memorial intersection.
- X. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

NO DECEMBER MEETING

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING: Jan 8, 7:00 PM AT EAGLES TRACE

ELECTIONS SCHEDULED

President, Co-Secretary, Register as Non-Profit