

Minutes from the meeting of Feb 10, 2021 of Super Neighborhood 17 – Eldridge/West Oaks

- I. Call to order at 7:02 p.m. President Baker opened the meeting. The meeting was held online through Zoom.

- II. Though not expressly acknowledged in the meeting, we thank the following officials for their presence and participation:
David Robinson – Houston City Council, At-Large Pos. 2
Claudia Morales – Office of Rep. Lizzie Fletcher, US Congress, TX District 7
Deanna Harrington – District Director, Rep. Jim Murphy, State House District 133
Rene Ruiz – City of Houston, Department of Neighborhoods
Katie Shelton – Chief of Staff for Councilman Greg Travis, City of Houston, District G
Long Nguyen – Director Constituent Services for Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas, City of Houston, District F
Na’Shon Edwards – Director Constituent Services for Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas, City of Houston, District F
Margarita Dunlap – Houston METRO
Wendy Baimbridge – City of Houston, Chief of Police
Cmdr. Angelo – HPD West Side Command
Ofc. Whitaker – HPD West Side Command
Lt. Trometer – HPD

- III. For Community Safety **Ofc. Whitaker from HPD** began with mention of the monthly PIP meeting, on the third Thursday (2/18) at 7pm. He then reviewed significant crime statistics. While most burglary statistics were down, he pointed out burglary of motor vehicles as being up calling on citizens to make sure to lock doors. They also continue to see catalytic converter thefts. HPD is making sure to patrol high crime areas. Asked about where catalytic converter thefts are occurring, he responded everywhere, malls, churches, strip centers, residential driveways. They quickly slide under the car and can be gone within a minute or two.

Lt. Trometer continued the catalytic converter theft discussion noting that they contain 3 precious metals. Specifically, platinum, palladium, and rhodium, one of which was going for \$1800/oz. Criminals only need 15 seconds with a Sawzall.

Lt. Trometer then discussed some recent auto-pedestrian accidents, including one where a relative backed over a family member. He also brought up an instance at SH6 and Memorial where a pedestrian was struck while in the crosswalk. He reminded everyone that roadways are dangerous. He has seen both operator and pedestrian impairment as an issue, even when the person is below the legal limit. He also suggested looking at the NextDoor app for posted safety tips.

Next he discussed homeless encampments, specifically at SH6 and IH10. They cannot remove homeless from underneath the overpasses. There is an order with Solid Waste Management (SWM) to come in every two weeks to remove abandoned property. HPD does offer the homeless contact assistance with Non-Governmental Organizations and other public service assistance. The current encampment ordinance limits persons to 1 tent, 1 bicycle, and the contents of a 3ft x 3ft box. Some of the issue with providing people assistance is that they may be afraid of police contact. HPD is currently issuing citations only, not arresting.

As for panhandlers, they will receive a misdemeanor citation for impeding traffic. Generally, this is when the panhandler has a limp or other limited mobility condition and are preventing traffic from moving.

Chief Baimbridge thanked the officers for their hard work and the attendees for participating and interacting with HPD.

Cmdr. Angelo thanked the DRT, especially with the limited officers working with the area homeless population. He also appreciated the honest feedback from the public.

He then discussed street racing. A delegate expressed thanks for HPD's recent aggressive response against street racing. He pointed to two recent operations involving HPD, HCSO, and DPS with multiple arrests being made at multiple gatherings. He also made the council aware of an upcoming car rally that usually sees street racing takeovers and that HPD was monitoring and preparing.

All members of HPD present included their direct city email addresses.

IV. Community Leaders

- a. **Na'Shon Edwards, Director of Constituent Services for Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas, Houston City Council, District F** – The chair began by honoring Mr. Long Nguyen, Mr. Edwards's predecessor. Mr. Edwards began by also thanking Mr. Nguyen for his service as well as thanking HPD, also present. He also thanked Jeff Baker for coordinating the volunteer effort for trash pickup and acquiring the litter pickers made available by District G [provided originally by District K].

For the sewer project, backfilling is currently in progress. Once complete and once West-Houston Center Dr reopens, excavation and lane closures along Dairy Ashford will begin. TXDOT is preparing a public hearing for the widening of Westpark Dr, date TBD. The city is working to get the NRG park vaccine megacenter up to 10k per day. Department of Neighborhoods & Community Affairs is working to gather information on HOA's and is asking them to make sure their information is up to date with the city: <https://forms.gle/ZPRjWtUDX9ZfRwD7> . He then mentioned two new ordinances which provide funding case management services and the tenant rental assistance

program. Finally, he asked that any illegal dumping be reported also to Ms. Thomas's office at DistrictFHOT@houstontx.gov . He also provided his direct city email address.

- b. **Katie Shelton, Chief of Staff for Councilman Greg Travis, Houston City Council, District G** – announced Kendall Library will have a mobile unit starting March 1, for curbside service only. The northbound lanes of Kirkwood are scheduled to open in March with work to start on the southbound lanes immediately thereafter. The flooding committee thanked Ms. Shelton for her assistance on parking improvements for the Barker Reservoir. A community member brought to attention materials left in the esplanade of Dairy Ashford near Memorial following the recent panel replacement program. Worn lane striping was pointed out along Eldridge near Memorial. Ms. Shelton promised to bring that up with the Memorial SN Council. Ms. Shelton was also thanked for providing litter pickers for the recent District F trash pickup. Ms. Shelton thanked district K for providing them to her. Asked about the Kendall Library itself, construction should start in April and complete by end-of-year. A delegate asked about water leaks, in particular one near an auto-repair garage on Memorial near Dairy Ashford. She was just made aware the past weekend and is still investigating. Last, when asked if the Kendall Library details will be on the website, she responded that they will, with dates.
- c. **David Robinson – Houston City Council, At-Large Pos. 2** – began by thanking the previous presenters and the delegates and the community for their participation. Some of his focus includes the library, affordable housing, and especially Harvey relief needs. He is available and can be reached at atlarge2@houstontx.gov .
- d. **Rene Ruiz – City of Houston, Department of Neighborhoods** – suggested everyone signup with citizens net to receive official news from the city. On HPD and catalytic converters he noted the city has also had issues, especially with hybrid vehicles. He recommended using your garage. It is hard to trace stolen property back to the owner, both for restitution and establishing product as stolen. Mark or etch property. A delegate asked about a water leak near the Kroger on Eldridge. Mr. Ruiz asked the delegate to send pictures. The delegate also expressed concern about “small” leaks being ignored.
- e. **Margaret Dunlap – METRO** – mentioned the new federal mandate for masks on public transportation. Exemptions are for children under two and where disability prevents use. Buses are being cleaned at least daily. METRO is investigating a spike among operators, but it appears to be non-work related. Nevertheless, it is resulting in an increase in operators off work. Follow www.ridemetro.org for service alerts, and try to restrict use to essential activities at this time.
- f. **Claudia Morales – Office of Rep. Lizzie Fletcher, US Congress, TX District 7** – announced that the federal government expects to have 200M doses distributed by the summer. TDEM is expecting increased distributions, has been, and will continue, to receive 8% of the national allocation. When asked why, when the state population is about 9%, she

mentioned that those numbers are based off 2018 outdated data. Asked if the super center is disclosing which vaccine a person will receive, the city responded they typically won't know. They will however receive a card when they receive the vaccine.

- g. **Deanna Harrington – District Director, Rep. Jim Murphy, State House District 133** – A delegate brought up sidewalks yet to be repaired along Westheimer. Those are part of a traffic signal replacement project that has already been mostly completed west from Shadowbriar, but ongoing further towards town. She mentioned the committee appointments for Rep. Murphy this session. She also brought up Mr. Murphy's support HB1509 targeting repeat offenders for certain misdemeanors. She suggested tracking that legislation through house.texas.gov .

A community member asked about garbage on local highways, especially interstates. She recommended that problem areas be reported to TXDOT. Both Ms. Harrington and Mr. Edwards (District F) suggested sending an email. Ms. Harrington also provided her direct contact information. Another community member brought up an area of SH6. They were recommended to Houston 3-1-1.

V. Committee Reports

- a. **Jeff Baker – Crime** – briefly re-summarized HPD's comments on road rage and door bell cameras.
- b. **Nick Kornuta – Flooding** – thanked Ms. Shelton (District G) for raising an issue with the USACE regarding land use. They are currently building new office and storage structures, and have now been asked if they would build more parking for Terry Hershey access. Additionally, the USACE has been asked why the Briar Forest parking lot is still closed now the major work is complete.

VI. A quorum was established with 9 delegates present.

VII. The minutes for the last meeting were approved.

VIII. New Business

- a. The chair called for suggestions for additional community engagement projects.
- b. The coming hard freeze forecast was discussed.
- c. A delegate asked about interest in improving Richmond Ave near Synott.

IX. Following a motion, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Mar 10, 7:00 PM, via ZOOM