

Minutes from the meeting of June 9, 2021 of Super Neighborhood 17 – Eldridge/West Oaks

- I. Call to order at 7:00 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:
 - Rep. Jim Murphy – State Representative, TX House District 133
 - Claudia Morales – Office of Rep. Lizzie Fletcher, US Congress, TX District 7
 - Deanna Harrington – Office of Rep. Jim Murphy
 - Rene Ruiz – City of Houston, Department of Neighborhoods
 - James Rains – Director of External Affairs for Councilman Greg Travis
 - Margarita Dunlap – Houston METRO
 - Yasar Bashir – HPD Asst. Chief
 - Ofc. Whitaker – HPD West Side Command
 - Lt Lui - HPD
 - Sgt Parkerson – HPD

- III. For Community Safety **Ofc. Whitaker from HPD** first announcing the next Coffee & a Cop meeting tomorrow.

The safety discussion opened discussing murders “out of control” with local media’s nightly stories. To date in our area murder is already over last year’s total of 3. While sexual assaults are down, burglary of motor vehicles are up and theft of motor vehicles is also “out of control” with a mention of catalytic converter theft as a principal component. As examples of BMV he mentioned laptop, purse, and bag thefts. As to TMV he spoke of catalytic converters. These thefts occur generally between 5pm and 1am, take at most 2 minutes. 49 were at apartments where criminals can work a row of cars at once. 1 business had 6 busses hit. 10 were single family residences, even cars in driveways.

Asked about the difference between Robbery and Aggravated Robbery the mark is a weapon or serious injury. As an example he mentioned a probable homeless eating without paying. That was originally robbery, but when he brandished a knife when confronted it became aggravated robbery. On other points **Sgt. Parkerson** offered to send SN17 a pamphlet on the Burglary and Theft of Motor Vehicles.

Chief Bashir reminded everyone that the media will sometimes misconstrue facts offered by HPD and to pay attention to Chief Finner and the Public Information Officer.

Lt. Lui concluded with an announcement of Lt Trometer’s departure to another department.

- IV. **Rep. Jim Murphy, TX House District 133,** Introduced the challenges of the most recent legislative session. Matters of energy, COVID, and the recent winter storm. COVID

especially limited the amount of time legislators spent on the floor as well as mandated face coverings which impacted communication and recognition.

He briefly summarized bills passed in the legislative session, including the budget, the power grid, healthcare, tax district accountability reforms, election reform especially clarifying poll watchers, religious freedom of assembly, and the state retirement fund.

Rep. Murphy was asked how winterization will be enforced. The Public Utility Commission will begin adopting rules once the legislation comes into force on Sept. 1 with oversight from the State House. Asked about poll watcher reforms, and removing for “disturbing the peace,” how is that defined? He would need to review the specifics and get back to the council.

To the bill passed to allow universal unconcealed carry of pistols, he noted that Texas was the 21st state to pass this. Asked about the rational and police views, if the state allows the purchase they have to allow the carry. He does recommend caution as open carry can make one a target. In light of the second amendment the issues of a charge for permitting and/or training wouldn't be about revenue as much as constitutionality.

He was then asked about the legislature and control of women's bodies in light of pro-life bills, specifically the heart-beat provision and limiting access that he must represent the whole of district 133 as best he can.

Rep Murphy asked specifically about SB1588/HB3571 and about seeking input from the HOA's, that those bills will make it more expensive and harder to find volunteers. This is of particular risk to Houston where the HOAs and not the city are responsible for maintaining neighborhood property values. Many members of the council have deliberately bought homes in areas with strong HOAs. He noted that most Houston HOAs are already abiding by the rules. Some may need to update their deed restrictions before the law takes effect to ensure their by-laws are in compliance by the effective date of Sept 1.

Rep. Murphy was praised for his support to disallow or ensure balanced discussion around critical race theory. They “don't want to think about my race – color before I speak.”

He was asked about construction along Westheimer that a lot of ongoing construction is having an impact on sidewalks and inconsistent lane closures. He understands our difficulties and noted that it will look good in the end.

V. Community Leaders

- a. For **District F**, the chair noted for the sewer diversion project [Westpark Dr from Kirkwood through Dairy Ashford] SN17 has contact with the contractor if there are any issues.
- b. **Rene Ruiz – City of Houston, Department of Neighborhoods** – provided a brief follow-up on large truck parking issues. He announced the new 3-1-1 system was about to go online to provide more accurate information, reduced call wait times, and improve department communications.

Asked about the trucks and issues on parking demand, he noted that for many it was easier and cheaper to pay the ticket than pay for storage. Asked about the 3-1-1 app, he noted a new app will be released to better geocode requests with photos and provide inter-notification to better handle duplicate entries.

- c. **James Rains, Deputy Chief of Staff for Councilman Greg Travis, Houston City Council, District G** – noted that the Kirkwood reconstruction is temporarily paused waiting on other utilities. The project is otherwise on schedule. The Kendall Library is scheduled for completion in Q4. District funds have been allocated to have Memorial and Eldridge restriped. He reminded residents that Tree Waste is 8 cu. Yd. per residence and Junk Waste 4 cu. Yd. Also, appliances with refrigerant must be tagged and not waste from a contract work. He announced a swim program at Trotter YCMA for 8 and under every Friday and to call Mr. Travis’s office or the YMCA for details. He announced an upcoming townhall to discuss crime with HPD, HCCO, HSCO, and the FBI and to submit questions via the district G website.
- d. **Margaret Dunlap, Houston METRO** – announced METRO is hiring and briefly mentioned the University BRT proposed alignment. Line 82 – Westheimer is about to be adjusted similar to 2 – Bellaire with improved shelters and accessibility. Asked about a start date, it is still some months away.
- e. **Claudia Morales, Office of Rep. Lizzie Fletcher** – who is responding to an uptick in complaints in 2020 especially for Ashford West 77077/77082. There have been issues with the postal master key as news outlets picked up on this week. She is now waiting for a response from the Postmaster General.

VI. Committee Reports

- a. **Jeff Baker – Report from the Chair** – The council is working with Eagles Trace to resume in person meeting and asked the delegates to consider in-person only or hybrid with online access.

- VII. Old Business
 - a. The chair apologized for needing to cancel the May trash pickup.

- VIII. New Business
 - a. With a quorum established, the minutes for the previous meeting were approved.

 - b. The chair also announced the next meeting Sept-8 with County Commissioner Tom Ramsey.

- IX. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

SUMMER RECESS – NO MEETING in JULY or AUGUST

NEXT MEETING: Sept 8, 7:00 PM, format TBD