

Minutes from the meeting of Nov 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. A quorum was established.
- III. Though not expressly acknowledged in the meeting, we thank the following officials for their presence and participation:
 - Councilman Greg Travis – City of Houston, District G
 - Stephanie Leota – Office of Rep. Lizzie Fletcher, US Congress, TX District 7
 - Ben Williams – Chief of Staff for Rep. Jim Murphy, TX House, District 133
 - Lawrence Bell – Office of Comm. Tom Ramsey, Harris Co. Pct. 3
 - Jada Kennard – Harris County Tax Office
 - Meiling Lin – Harris County Tax Office
 - Clementina Nunez – Harris County Tax Office
 - Yolanda Alvarado – Community Outreach Team, Office of DA Kim Ogg
 - Rene Ruiz – City of Houston, Department of Neighborhoods
 - Na’Shon Edwards – Constituent Services for Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas, City of Houston, District F
 - Jonathan Johnson – Constituent Services Aide for Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas
 - James Rains – Dep. Chief of Staff for Councilman Greg Travis
 - Hananh Cobb – Public Affairs Liaison for Councilwoman Sallie Alcorn, City of Houston, At-Large Pos. 5
 - Cmdr Reece Hardy – HPD West Side Command
 - Lt. J. Lui – HPD
 - Ofc. J. Simpson – HPD
- IV. For Community Safety **Ofc. Simpson of HPD** reviewed crime statistics. They noted no murders in the period. They discussed robberies, mostly in apartment complexes and 2 involving stores. For aggravated assaults they discussed areas of Dairy Ashford around Westheimer and around Whittington. For burglary of buildings, they noted that the most active times were Monday daytime and the most active area was along SH6. The biggest concern is the homeless population for which the city is working with local aid NGOs.

The discussed motor vehicle burglaries. This has been an issue along SH6 and strip centers. HPD reminded the community of the “Take-Lock-Hide” campaign. Asked about jugging and catalytic converters, HPD noted that some local agencies are providing catalytic converter etching free of charge.

Lt Lui noted that with the holiday season coming to be vigilant of package deliveries. Check

doorbell cameras and that HPD had made 99 arrests in the period. **Cmdr Hardy** noted that Rhodium, one of the components of catalytic converters, had increased in price over 1400%. While HPD will can confiscate stolen converters, without identification they cannot be tracked.

- V. **Clementia Nunez of the Harris County Tax Office** discussed what the office works with: exemptions, property tax statements, local fees such as alcohol, and vehicle registrations. There are 15 branch offices in the county open Monday to Friday 8 to 4:30. They also handle title transfers, renewals, license plates, and disabled placards. The office calculates, collects, and distributes property taxes on over 1M accounts and 77 jurisdictions with taxing authority. Those authorities include the county, various cities, and some ISDs. They consolidate the taxes into one bill, though some ISDs and MUDs bill separately.

They do not do appraisals; those are conducted by the Harris County Appraisal District which should represent the market rate from January 1. Those appraisals can be protested, but to HCAD. HCAD also manages the various exemptions which adjust the “taxable value” of the property. Those include over 65, over 55 for surviving spouses who were had reached age 65, disabled, disabled veterans, surviving spouses & dependents involving a Line-of-Duty Death, and disasters.

All the information is available and searchable online at HarrisPropertyTaxes.org. The tax office receives the taxable value, calculates the tax rate, and calculates the tax owed. A sample tax bill was presented and discussed showing the taxing authorities, exemptions, taxable value, rate, and amount owed. If you late turning in an exemption, you may still get a refund on the next tax bill, so still turn it in. Also discussed were tax ceilings/freezes which apply at age 65. The application can be submitted Jan 1 the year the occupant turns 65. It does not include the ISD tax, nor does it prevent adjustments for major renovations.

Next discussed were deferrals and late payments. With approval taxes can be delayed at 1-5% interest. Deferral ends on a property sale. This may help if the payment is late as it is generally automatic and a lower rate than the penalty schedule. Those are filed through the appraisal district. It is recommended to inform heirs to prevent surprises. Otherwise delinquency starts Feb. 1. Quarterly plans however, have no charge associated. Homesteads can usually establish a 12-36 month plan.

The office accepts advance payments. They will typically post late fall and return any overpayment. There are four ways to pay: online at HCTax.net, by mail postmarked by Jan. 31, by telephone, or in person. E-Checks are processed free, but there is a convenience fee for credit cards. Cash must be in person.

The typical annual schedule is Jan. 31, last day to pay the prior year bill. Once the bill is delinquent on Feb. 1, payment plans may be requested. Collections start to be processed on July 1 with added fees of 15%-20%. From August to October the tax office receives rate information and sends the next bills in October/November. Dec 31 is the last day to pay for

inclusion of Federal taxes.

For the appraisal district: www.hcad.org help@hcad.org 713 957 7800

For the tax office: www.hctx.net tax.outreach@hctx.net [no 'a'] 713 274 8000

County website: hctx.net

A community member noted that they had submitted forms but had not received an acknowledgment. There should always be communications but you can always call the office. Also, note the tax statement that arrives in October/November will show active exemptions.

Another member asked about appraised versus market value. The speaker noted that taxes are on appraised value, which are capped at 10% per year up to current market value.

VI. Community Leaders

- a. **Councilman Greg Travis – City of Houston, District G** – Announced he was running for a state office and would need to resign city council. He also noted his staff is still on the job working on constituent issues. He noted the current Kirkwood construction has 4-5 months. The next section up towards Westheimer should be bid in Q1 with construction starting in Q3. The Northern-most section from the bayou to I-10 has been removed from the schedule, with some panel replacements planned instead. Extra police have been requested to patrol Kirkwood following the lane swap.

Kendall library interior should be completed by end-of-year. Though ALL construction should complete in March, the plan is to have the library open for business in February. He noted however that supply chain issues are still impacting the work schedule.

Asked about specifics on the “supply chain issues” he noted that it is mostly cosmetic, principally roofing, and not structural. Asked about the opening, he noted that from interior work completion the library will need 2 months to move in with a push to be open mid-February.

- b. **Stephanie Leota – Office of Rep. Lizzie Fletcher** – discussed the recent service academy day and announced plans to repeat the event next fall. She discussed a project the Library of Congress seeking stories from veterans as well as from Gold-Star families: www.loc.gov/vets. Rep. Fletcher’s office is open for phone calls and emails. For those with passport and mail questions she has sent a letter to the postmaster general specifically to address delays and thefts, especially from cluster mailboxes.
- c. **Ben Williams – Chief of Staff for Rep. Jim Murphy** – commented on the redistricting maps from the state and noted they will take effect on swear in next [a year from] January. He also discussed Rep. Murphy’s upcoming teen summit announced on his e-newsletter and Facebook page. Asked about the senate joint resolution on bail reform,

he noted that it failed to pass the state house. Asked about balloon releases, some delegates expressed environmental concerns.

- d. **Na'Shon Edwards – Constituent Services for Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas** – introduced new staff member **Jonathon Johnson**. Mr. Johnson asked everyone to have a 3-1-1 request number ready before calling in concerns. Councilwoman Thomas and public works are seeking public engagement for projects at www.engagehouston.com. He also announced the District F end-of-year report.

Several members of the community supported comments to find ways to reduce the number of large commercial trucks parked on side-streets.

- e. **Hannah Cobb – Dep. Chief of Staff for Councilwoman Alcorn** – announced compost projects with the Houston Botanical Garden and a food waste diversion project with the Cashmere service center. She discussed issues with neighborhood noise complaints. A constituent discussed light pollution and not being able to read street signs as well as CenterPoint has transitioned street lighting to LED. Several constituents also voiced concerns over parking fines, especially for commercial vehicles, that a better solution is needed in our area.
- f. **Yolanda Alvarado – Office of DA Kim Ogg** – mentioned progress made on reducing case backlog. She also mentioned free gun locks. A member of the community spoke of the recent PIP meeting with Harris County having an approximately 180K case backlog with only 361 prosecutors. Also noted is the criminal courthouse still closed from Hurricane Harvey. She also noted that, for those interested persons, bail is the responsibility of judges.
- g. **Lawrence Bell – Office of Comm. Tom Ramsey** – announced that per agreement among the Harris County Commissioners, the new county precinct boundaries are now in effect. Concerns should now be addressed to Mr. Ramsey's office.
- h. **Rene Ruiz – City of Houston, Department of Neighborhoods** – started with commercial truck parking citations noting around 80 near Shadowbriar and Oxford Park. Many were repeat citations, with one having had 8. The vehicles towed were only light duty as heavy wreckers are not zoned to police districts. Police have been active on Overbrook. Asked who to report, and Mr. Ruiz suggested anything that needs ticketing. Report to 3-1-1 and reach out to Mr. Ruiz who can relay notes to truck enforcement. Asked about high grass near Daily Elementary on Briar Forest, he noted those esplanades are on the public works schedule.

VII. Committee Reports.

- a. Jeff Baker – Chair of Public Safety – briefly discussed package safety and the use of locker stations and delivery service offices for package pickup.
- b. Nick Kornuta – Chair of Flooding – discussed changes to flood insurance and the new flood plain maps and rate schedule in effect on Apr 1st. Renewals will see 18% annual increases until the new pricing is reached with maps available online at maapnext.org

VIII. Old Business

- a. With a quorum of 10 delegates the minutes were approved

IX. New Business

- a. Jan 12 elections were announced for President and Co-Secretary. Possible election formats were also discussed given the possibility of an online meeting.

VIII. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

No Meeting in December

NEXT MEETING – ANNUAL MEETING

Jan. 12, 7:00 PM, via ZOOM

Election of President and Co-Secretary