

## Minutes from the meeting of Sept 12, 2022 of Super Neighborhood 17 – Eldridge/West Oaks

- I. Call to order at 7:00 p.m. President Baker opened the meeting at Eagles Trace
- II. A quorum was established.

We thanked the following officials for their presence and participation:

Na'Shon Edwards – Office of Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas, City of Houston, District F

James Raines – Office of Councilwoman Mary Nan Huffman, City of Houston, District G

Elizabeth Stinsman – Office of Commissioner Jack Cagle, Harris County, Pct. 4

Jada Kennard – Harris County Tax Office

Rene Ruiz – City of Houston, Department of Neighborhoods

Margaret Dunlap – METRO

Sr Police Officer Tim Whittaker – HPD, West Side Command

We also acknowledged the following candidates and their representatives:

Johnny Teague – Candidate, US Congress, TX District 7

Kyle Scott – Candidate, Harris County Treasurer

Carla Wyatt – Candidate, Harris County Treasurer

Leslie Briones, Candidate, Harris County Commissioner, Pct 4

Represented by Gordon Quan, Laurie Newman, & Jesus Zamora

Jack Cagle – Incumbent, Harris County Commissioner, Pct 4

- III. For Community Safety **Officer Whittaker of HPD** provided a rundown of crimes on Houston's westside for the month of August. He also spoke to personal experience accidentally leaving a cell phone in a car, reminding members of the community to retrieve items if discovered to be left a vehicle. This includes handbags and purses among other valuables. He spoke to arrests in the area as well as specific examples of crimes.

Whittaker expressed concern over the lack of patrol officers. He noted that for the city's 700 sq. miles, there are 5000 officers, with about 1600 patrol officers. He also noted that West Side has the most calls of any division of the city.

In response to a constituent question he noted as an example of a previous weekend where 9 priority 1 calls were waiting at shift change for an officer to be available, that is a "red lights and sirens" response.. Asked about reports from other cities regarding theft of specific car brands with a known USB defect, he is not aware of that issue in Houston. Asked about problem paper tags and catalytic converters he noted that legislation is coming down that should help HPD better deter those elements.

Next he was asked about Dallas's plan to address hot spots and if anything similar was in Houston. He noted that Houston already has a similar unit, DRT. They will also respond to

requests from council members. Due to understaffing, they are also working with the Harris County Sheriff's Office. He also gave a hypothetical example of a call out removing officers from elsewhere noting the budget issues. He also commented that over the last decade or so policing changing from a career to just a job.

When asked about judicial endorsements to the November election another delegate noted that those come from the Houston Police Officer's Union and not HPD, and that the HPOU has a history of supporting judges from either party.

IV. **Candidate Forum** – SN17 invited and provided time for candidates to the upcoming election to speak. Additional candidates were given time at the conclusion of the meeting.

- a. **Johnny Teague**, candidate for US Congress, TX District 7
- b. Gordon Quan, former City of Houston Council Member and Mayor Pro Tem spoke on behalf of  
**Leslie Briones**, candidate for Harris County Commissioner's Court, Pct. 4
- c. **Jack Cagle**, incumbent for Harris County Commissioner's Court, Pct. 4

A delegate asked about **Lizzie Fletcher**, incumbent for US Congress, TX District 7. She was unable to attend due to legislative commitments in D.C.

Also announced was the upcoming candidate forum at the West Houston Institute – HCC Alief Campus, 2811 Hayes, Wed, September 21, at 6:30 pm. The forum moderator is Fox 26 political reporter, Greg Groogan.

V. Community Leaders

- a. **James Raines – Office of Councilwoman Mary Nan Huffman, City of Houston, District G**  
– started with a discussion of the Kirkwood repaving project. This 18 month-long project will install concrete paving with storm drainage, curbs, sidewalks, driveways, street lighting, and necessary underground utilities from Briar Forest to Westheimer. Due to the bidding process, they expect work to begin this winter. Next, he announced the grand reopening of Kendall Library, October 15 at 10am.

In regards to recent discussion with the Houston Housing Authority and development on Memorial Dr. He noted two developments are backed by HHA which operates independent of the city. They are not using TDHCA [Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs] credits and do not come before city council. They have started clearing land. Delegates raised concern about the building height, one at 3 levels and the other at 5. Mr Raines noted that the HHA was created by Federal requirements to utilize HUD funds, and that it is for low income property development. The position is filled by mayoral appointment.

Asked about flooding, he noted that they are not exempt from the city detention requirements. Other delegates expressed concern about tax abatement and the impact to the community.

Discussion concluded with a brief constituent complaint on homeless behind businesses at Highway 6 and Memorial.

- b. **Na'Shon Edwards – Office of Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas, City of Houston, District F** – commented on the recent gun buyback program, a part the One Safe Houston program. Another buyback is planned for District F, date TBA. He next noted that the new Alief Neighborhood Center at Kirkwood and Bellaire will have a soft opening in October, and that the city just set a new tax rate from 0.56% to 0.53%.

Next he discussed the recent influx of group homes into various neighborhoods. He commented on a recent fatality that occurred in a converted garage. Their ability to operate is really dependent on specific language in deed restriction covenants, though he did recommend contacting District F for concerns on illegal group homes.

For the upcoming National Night Out, Oct. 4, he recommended a form for invitations. He then reviewed various 3-1-1 statistics and information. He noted that the average time to repair a city water leak is currently around 21 days.

He closed with remarks on capital improvements. While the Westpark Dr closure for the sewer diversion project is completed, construction is continuing up towards Eldridge and will eventually go to Turkey Creek [Buffalo Bayou] that will necessitate lane closures on Eldridge. Additionally, expect updates shortly on expanding Westpark Dr to four lanes through Royal Oaks & Shadowlake.

- c. **Elizabeth Stinsman – Office of Comm. Jack Cagle, Harris County, Pct. 4** – noted the phone number to call, 832 927 4444, to connect constituents to the right person, even if it is outside county government. She discussed Comm. Cagle's letter in support of community opposition to the recent HHA developments. She also noted flyers on hurricane preparedness and the upcoming Shakespeare in the Shade at Tracy Gee Community Center. The Energy Corridor will continue to partner on events this fall. She concluded with a discussion of recent Commissioner's Court agenda and plans.
- d. **Rene Ruiz – City of Houston, Department of Neighborhoods** – discussed the One Safe Houston program, noting its principle of crime prevention through environment design. This free three-day workshop is scheduled for September 27 – 29. Registration available at <https://www.houstontx.gov/mayor/press/2022/one-safe-houston.pdf>. He also reiterated details of the Department of Neighborhoods matching grant program.

- e. **Margaret Dunlap – METRO** – announced upcoming meetings, dates TBA, for the University BRT from Westchase to Downtown to Tidwell. She also noted work ongoing to replace bus stops to meet ADA compliance goals. She commented on some example stops where previous design drops passengers into a ditch.

VI. Committee Reports

- a. Jeff Baker – Chair Community Safety – spoke briefly about catalytic converters as well as having HPD as public speaker for the October meeting.

VII. Old Business

- a. The June meeting minutes were approved

VIII. New Business

- a. John Auman, Secretary, has announced he may be leaving SN17. President Baker nominated Joy Cocchiara as Co-Secretary. The nomination was accepted by unanimous consent.

VIII. Candidate Forum

The following additional candidates spoke briefly before the Superneighborhood council

- a. Carla Wyatt, Candidate for Harris County Treasurer
- b. Kyle Scott, Candidate for Harris County Treasurer

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

**NEXT MEETING – Oct. 12, 7:00 PM, Eagle’s Trace**