

Minutes from the meeting of June 12, 2019 of Super Neighborhood 17 – Eldridge/West Oaks

I. Call to order at 7:00 p.m. Vice President Lozano opened the meeting. He established quorum with 8 delegates or alternates.

II. Acknowledge and Welcome to Guests and Visitors
Nina Mayes – office of Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher (US House District 7)
Deanna Harrington – office of Representative Jim Murphy (TX House District 133)
Rene Ruiz – Mayor’s Citizens Assistance Office, Department of Neighborhoods
Councilman Greg Travis – Houston City Council District G
Van Huynh – office of Councilman Dr Steve Le (City of Houston District F)
Margarita Dunlap – METRO representative
Tony Buzbee – Candidate for Mayor

III. Community Safety

Andrea Hernandez from HPD spoke on current safety matters. He started with sexual assaults. The two incidents involved victims who knew their assailant. Officer Hernandez then spoke on the significant spike in robbery, theft, and vehicle crimes. This is typical for this time of year as school is out. HPD would ask that we be aware of our surroundings and keep valuables out of sight. This would also include trash as anything that looks like it might have value may be of interest. Officer Hernandez also noted that when garbage is set out any boxes be condensed as it could serve as an advertisement to thieves. He also spoke to the YTD increase in burglary of buildings. There have been a number of incidents involving storage units and cell phone stores. Officer Hernandez also spoke on aggravated assaults. They are down and all the incidents this period involved either road rage or someone known to the victim. Next Officer Hernandez spoke on the homeless encampment that has recently set up behind West Houston Medical Center. The hospital is currently working with the city to have it cleared. Finally he concluded with a specific aggravated robbery. This involved a female who gave a known individual a ride who subsequently carjacked her. The car was quickly located and two suspects were apprehended. One had an outstanding warrant.

Crime Statistics in the last 30 days:

Aggravated Assault – down 54% from 24 to 11

Robbery – up 128% – from 7 to 16

Burglary Habitation – up 3.6% from 28 to 29

Burglary Building – up 18% from 11 to 13

BMV – up 23% from 59 to 73

Theft – up 68% – from 31 to 52

Auto Theft – down 20% – from 20 to 16

IV. While waiting for the next speaker Vice President John Lozano announced the resignation of President Jack O'Connor. A special election to replace the president will take place at the September meeting. That person will serve until the next regular election in January 2020.

V. **Tony Buzbee, Candidate for Mayor** was introduced by Treasurer and law school classmate, Diane Guillerman. He then introduced himself as a retired USMC Captain, veteran of the Persian Gulf and Somalia, and self-made businessman. He spoke about the current mayor, and both a failure to act on recommendations from his first days in office as well as the perceived corruption that benefits business partners and not the citizens of the city.

On HPD Mr. Buzbee compared the City of Houston to New York. Houston currently employs 2.2 officers per-capita with 40% assigned to patrol. New York City which is a more condensed "vertical city" currently employs 4.4 officers per-capita and the typical police department has 60% of its officers assigned to patrol. HPD currently needs 1500 more officers. Due to inaction from the current administration, the best Mr. Buzbee currently expects to hire 600 over the next four years.

He also brought up how the current administration, through union and lawyers, has pitted HPD against HFD. While wasting city funds on contracts with his business partners he has failed to agree on a raise with HFD, or seek the expansion his own office recommended at the beginning of his term.

In response to audience questions on fundraising, Mr. Buzbee reiterated his commitment to self-fund his campaign and to not accept funds from other sources. He noted that the last election for mayor had a combined spend of about \$750K the current mayor already has a fund of about \$3M.

Mr. Buzbee stated that he intends to staff positions based on personality and not on politics.

VI. The minutes for the previous meeting were approved.

VII. Community Leaders

- a. **Rene Ruiz – Mayor's Citizens Assistance Office, Department of Neighborhoods** – passed out literature on disaster prevention.
- b. **Van Huynh – office of Councilman Dr Steve Le (City of Houston District F)** – announced three items. Starting June 24 the city will be working on a sidewalk connecting the park at Eldridge and Westpark Dr. to the North. Panel replacements on Dairy Ashford from Westpark Dr. South to Alief-Clodine are approved, funded, and should run from June to November. Finally Van announced that he has been promoted to be District F, Council Member Dr. Le's chief of staff.
- c. **Margarita Dunlap – METRO representative** – provided information on free student passes for METRO over the summer. She announced construction at the I-69/ I-610 interchange for the Post Oak BRT as well as construction at the NW Transit Center at I10

and I-610 for the same. Universal accessibility projects continue at METRO bus stops to make them compliant with ADA standards. Finally she discussed beacons that have been installed in bus stops to provide information on next bus arrival.

- d. A member of the **campaign for Raj Salhotra – candidate Houston City Council At-Large Place 1** – presented key points. Information is available at www.rajforhouston.com

VIII. Committee Reports

- a. **Jeff Baker, Chair for Public Safety and Crime, Chair for Communications**, had two quick comments. Shootings are way up. We need to improve traffic on our website.
- b. **Diane Guillerman, Chair for Non-Profit Exploratory**, presented a handout on our current plan to organize as a 501(c) Non-Profit as stated in the by-laws. She concluded with her key advantages and disadvantages. Advantages: contributions could be tax-deductible, eligible for grants, limited liability. Disadvantages: \$300 in filing fees, requirement to keep and file records, subject to non-profit limitations, open to public scrutiny. No action was recommended or taken, though several individuals immediately offered to contribute the initial filing fee.

IX. There being no old business the meeting continued to new business.

X. New Business

Jeff Baker discussed the need to bring in more people. That we are here to help neighbors. He mentioned posting to various communities such as Nextdoor, Facebook, and the SN17 website. Van brought up the Alief Super-neighborhood which at one point had shrunk to 4 or 5. They reached out for donations and brought in a person specifically for communications. Van also brought up that the city can match up to \$5K. He suggested we could focus on a specific project or a signature event. One example suggestion was an event to focus on the Memorial corridor road construction.

XI. With all business concluded the meeting was adjourned.

NO MEETING FOR JULY or AUGUST

NEXT MEETING: Sept 11, 7:00 PM AT EAGLES TRACE

SPECIAL ELECTION FOR PRESIDENT