

Minutes from the meeting of October 9, 2019 of Super Neighborhood 17 – Eldridge/West Oaks

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

- II. Acknowledge and Welcome to Guests and Visitors
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
Torrence Atkinson – office of Councilman Greg Travis
Van Huynh – office of Councilman Dr Steve Le (Houston City Council District F)
Freddie Anthony – office of Councilman Dr Steve Le
Ofc. Timothy Whitaker – Representative of HPD
Ofc. John Vu – Representative of HPD
Sgt. Tavis Parkerson – Representative of HPD
Lt. Mitch Hutter – Deputy Constable, Precinct 5
Representative for Nick Hellyar, Candidate for City Council, At-Large pos. 4
Representative for Sally Alcorn, Candidate for City Council, At-Large pos. 5

III. Community Safety

Senior Patrol Officer Timothy Whitaker from HPD spoke on current safety matters. He started with a discussion on what constitutes assault versus robbery. He gave an example of a shoplifter. If the shoplifter punches someone, an assault, it then becomes a robbery. He also commented on the sexual assaults in the area for the period. They were either related to dating or an arranged meetup.

Crime Statistics in the last 30 days:

Aggravated Assault – up 73% from 15 to 26

Robbery – down 17% – from 12 to 10

Burglary Habitation – up 6% from 34 to 36

Burglary Building – down 33% from 15 to 10

BMV – up 15% from 55 to 63

Theft – down 24% – from 37 to 28

Auto Theft – up 54% – from 13 to 20

Whitaker then spoke about the crime analytics team. Where minor detail, such as a “white car,” may not be useful for patrol officers they are being put to use by the analytics team. While the police work to put people in jail, it is up to the city/county attorney’s office to determine if they can be kept in jail.

He then spoke on new trends. In one case, a jugging victim was followed home after multiple stops, including a stop at the West Side [HPD] Station. Distraction by phone remains an issue. To burglary of motor vehicles HPD are seeing more focus on criminals searching for firearms. Electronics are dropping out of favor due to the increased ease of tracking and remote kill switches. Though thieves will break a car window for anything in sight, even seemingly innocuous car-litter.

IV. Community Leaders

- a. **Councilman Greg Travis - City of Houston, District G** - spoke on road works on three major roads. He noted that construction on Kirkwood South of the Bayou would be starting this spring. He is working with the Houston Galveston Area Council to get funding for Dairy Ashford between Memorial and Westheimer. And finally, that an expected change order on the Memorial construction project. While he expects principal construction to go through February, residual repairs to new work could continue through next year. In response to a comment, Councilman Travis will have the striping at Memorial and Kirkwood inspected to see if it needs modifications for visibility improvement.
- b. **Van Huynh - Chief of Staff for Councilman Steve Le, City of Houston, District F** - spoke about District F not being just Alief. He is working to add communication channels, especially with the 311 system. They have added an email address specifically for tracking service requests in the district: districtF311@houstontx.gov and improve tracking of requests within the district. Van then introduced Freddie Anthony, a new staff member for the district F office who spoke on his years of service to the city.

V. Following discussion with community leaders, at the request of a delegate the election for president was called. Having one candidate, Jeff Baker was elected president of Super Neighborhood 17 by unanimous consent.

VI. **Lt. Mitch Hutter - Deputy Constable for Ted Heap, Pct. 5** - spoke on their work in the community. In Harris County the constables focus on property crimes as well as makes itself available for contract patrol services. If your neighborhood is patrolled under contract or if you are in a park managed by a constable, call the constables for assistance.

When speaking of package theft, Lieutenant Hutter spoke highly of doorbell style cameras. While the camera quality was previously poor, recent cameras are providing much better evidence. While not exact, his opinion was that the proportion of low-quality footage has decreased from 75% of footage down to 25%, especially with regards to license plate capture. Though he did add it would still be better to have packages delivered to work, a neighbor at home, or a package store. While somewhat cliché, see something-say something is still good advice, and a way for neighbors to look out for neighbors. He then spoke on children home alone. While the old advice was for children home alone to not answer a door under any circumstances, now the advice is that children should simply say their parent or guardian is temporarily busy. If the caller remains or returns the child should not call a parent first, but call 9-1-1 first. The dispatcher can then relay in the parents. This saves valuable time and ensures the call is given the correct priority. Lieutenant Hutter also discussed the age, race, and gender of criminals. Where it used to be masculine dominated and females may be an accomplice, he is now also seeing female dominated criminal groups. We should not drop our guard due to age, race, or gender.

VII. Community Leaders, Continued

- a. **Rene Ruiz – Mayor’s Citizens Assistance Office, Department of Neighborhoods** – spoke on water backup and 3-1-1. He commented that the city is not always aware of where water backs up. If someone sees a change to where water is backing up, they should check with public works who may be able to resolve an issue before it becomes a major problem. We can always call his office, preferably with a 311-request number. The current 3-1-1 tracking system only records that a request has been dispatched out to its proper department. His office is working to improve the system so can better track requests through complete resolution.

In response to a question on sidewalks, Rene commented that sidewalk repair is mandated by city ordinance. If it is a liability it should be repaired by the property owner. That would include the city where the sidewalk is on city property.

VIII. Committee Reports

- a. **Jeff Baker, Chair for Public Safety and Crime**, commented on doorbell cameras that a single camera could be monitored for \$3 per month or \$30 per year. Unlimited service is available for only \$100 per year and includes 2 to 3 months storage on-line.
- b. **Nick Kornua, Chair for Flooding**, commented on a meeting he attended with Lizzie Fletcher, Jim Murphy, Greg Travis, Stephen Costello (City of Houston), HUD, HCFCD, and the GLO (General Land Office). He added that on Oct 17 HCFCD would be reviewing the Buffalo Bayou hydraulic study.
- c. **Diane Guillerman, Chair for Non-Profit Exploratory**, after commenting on how we should proceed it was decided to call a vote at the January meeting on whether or not to form as a non-profit.

IX. The June minutes were approved, the meeting in September being postponed due to a lack of quorum.

X. There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: Nov 13, 7:00 PM AT EAGLES TRACE