

Minutes from the meeting of Sept 9, 2020 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:
Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas – Houston City Council, District F
Councilwoman Sallie Alcorn – Houston City Council, At-Large Pos. 5
Claudia Morales – Office of Rep. Lizzie Fletcher, US Congress, TX District 7
Kathleen Shelton – Chief of Staff for Councilman Greg Travis, City of Houston, District G
Long Nguyen – Director Constituent Services for Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas
Rene Ruiz – Mayor’s Citizens Assistance Office, Department of Neighborhoods
Diana Caicedo – Governmental Affairs Liaison, Houston Public Library
Sally Swanson – Executive Director, Houston Public Library Foundation
Stephen Chamberlain-Sr. Project Manager-Houston Public Libraries
Michelle Delk – Sr. Project Manager with GSD’s Real Estate, Design & Construction Division
Margaret Dunlap – Houston METRO
Cmdr. David Angelo – HPD West Side Command
Ofc. Tim Whitaker – HPD West Side

- III. For Community Safety **Ofc. Whitaker from HPD** discussed potential changes to the presentation of crime statistics under the new station commander. The homicide for August was noted as a domestic situation. The sexual assault victim met initially through a dating app. While aggravated assaults were up 28%, this included domestic violence which will be soon separated into another category. The area is currently seeing over one burglary of a motor vehicle per day. He asked to make sure valuables not be left in vehicles. Ofc. Whitaker, when asked about the change in statistical breakdown, reported it is being driven at the division level and not city-wide. While the area is seeing an increase in violent crime, specifically, aggravated assault, some of the difficulty is that many of the events are road rage incidents, have uncooperative victims, or are the result of a gang nexus. The gang unit is currently working on expanding with more officers. Another difficulty is due to current conditions the jail is not intaking misdemeanor offenders who are currently subject to cite and release.

When asked about recovery of stolen property, he reported the clearance rate for burglary is the lowest. This is due to lack of witnesses and a difficulty in establishing provenance of goods as stolen. While pawn shops can be monitored, unless an item is well marked, well documented, or suitably unique it may be impossible to identify. Suggestions to improve recovery of property is good documentation through photographs, with serial numbers, and adding other markings. As an example, Ofc. Whitaker brought up an example of a burglary victim not even knowing the brand of TV that was stolen. In that case, recovery, let alone a

conviction if found, are likely to be impossible.

IV. **Diana Caicedo, Sally Swanson, and Michelle Dell – Speaking on the Kendall Library Rebuild**
First, despite COVID, the construction timeline is continuing.

There are currently two parts to the rebuild. The first is the planning/permitting. The city is aiming for 90% reimbursement from FEMA. If the facility is not rebuilt as original, the reimbursement rate would drop to 50%. This is driving the current plan as FEMA will only reimburse at the higher rate if the rebuild is substantially the same. It took about a year to get the okay to proceed, getting the City's contractor and FEMA to agree on the project estimate. The second part involves looking at mitigation improvements. Potential changes will be to control future flood waters, moving building equipment higher to a less susceptible location, and roof drainage improvements. The plan is for construction to start in Q4 of 2020 with substantial completion in Q3 of 2021.

When asked about other interim options, a book-mobile was suggested, but that would be subject to a relaxation of COVID restrictions. When asked about the building's name, it was brought up that, one, the name was chosen by the parks department due to the secondary space on the first floor, and two, it is already on the building and any alteration may impact FEMA funding. While technological updates are permitted, other changes may not be.

When asked what residents can do, the library team pointed to the Houston Public Library Foundation. They have received substantial funding for other libraries through private and corporate donations. [Contact information was included in the chat window and will appear below]. Additionally, the library will be seeking community input on programming as completion nears.

V. Community Leaders

- a. **Long Nguyen – Director Constituent Services for Councilwoman Tiffany Thomas** – Free testing is being offered at Crump stadium. See the newsletter on the district F website www.houstontx.gov/council/f/ or visit honumg.com/crump . Free in-home testing is available for certain homebound individuals, 60 years old, veterans, or disabled, call 800 213 8471. While the CDC has issued an eviction moratorium, it does NOT forgive debt, including missed payments. However, the city has extended its rental assistance program for landlords and tenants. More information is available at HoustonRentAssistance.org .
- b. **Kathleen Shelton – Chief of Staff, office of Councilman Greg Travis, City of Houston, District F** – The first phase of the Kirkwood project is 12% complete with completion by December 2021. The contractor is negotiating traffic management changes that could accelerate completion 4-6 months. HPD has stepped up traffic enforcement in the area due to safety concerns for the workers.
- c. **Rene Ruiz - Department of Neighborhoods, City of Houston** – Advertised the city's Neighborhood Matching Grant program on the city website at

www.houstontx.gov/council/committees/rna.html. Deadline is Nov 6.

- d. **Margaret Dunlap - METRO** – METRO is working to deliver groceries for certain in-need individuals. Bus headways are constantly in adjustment as utilization changes due to COVID. This includes added buses to facilitate social distancing on the METRO network. The NW Transit Center has reopened. The Silver BRT with service along Post Oak has opened. The fare will be \$1.25 between the NW and the Westpark Uptown Transit Centers. For questions, contact Margaret at md18@ridemetro.org
- e. **Claudia Morales – Office of Rep. Lizzie Fletcher, US Congress, TX District 7** – Mentioned that for issues involving the IRS, delayed checks and stimulus payments, unemployment, and SBA issues contact her office at 713 353 8680, her website at fletcher.house.gov/ or by email Claudia at claudia.morales@mail.house.gov.
- f. **Sallie Alcorn – Houston City Council, At-Large Pos. 5** – discussed the adopt-a-drain program. Citizens adopt a storm drain and are asked to periodically clear debris ahead of storms. houstonadoptadrain.org

VI. Committee Reports

- a. **Jeff Baker, as Chair for Public Safety and Crime**, reiterated the door handle check. He has documented individuals in his area walking the street checking for unlocked cars to pilfer.
- b. **Nick Kornuta, Chair of Flooding and Drainage**. Construction for the Barker and Addicks reservoir dams is completing. More information regarding the study will be coming this fall. The project is currently awaiting community interaction, and is attempting to proceed working around COVID restrictions.

VII. There being no quorum, no business was conducted, and the meeting adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: Oct 14, 7:00 PM, via ZOOM

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