

**ELDRIDGE/WEST OAKS SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD**  
**Super Neighborhood 17 (SN17)**  
**Monthly Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, January 8 2025 @ 7:00 PM**  
<https://sn17.org/>

*President, Jeff Baker; Vice-President, Nick Kornuta; Secretary, Joy Cocchiara; Treasurer, Diane Guillerman*

President, Jeff Baker called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm with a quorum. There was a large turnout.

**I. Public Safety – HPD Crime Stats -Westside Senior Police Officer Tim Whitaker/ HPD**

Year-to-date stats represent Jan – Dec 2024 as compared to 2023. Homicides were up 60%, sexual assaults were up 78%, robberies were up 46% and aggravated assaults were up 20%.

There were 49 arrests in SN-17, 14 of which were assaults. (See full data on page 4)

**II. Guest Speaker – At-Large Position 1 Council Member Julian Ramirez <https://www.houstontx.gov/council/1>**

Council Member Ramirez has completed one year of his four year term. Reflections on his past and future efforts are focused on the following themes:

*Public Safety--More Police on the Streets and Smart on Crime Initiatives:* Ramirez’s background in law enforcement as a prosecutor with the DA’s office for 27 years informs his work in this area. The budget amendment he sponsored to fund an additional cadet class (an increase from five to six classes) passed with strong support. The number of police officers on the street is still below where the city was 20 years ago. Recruiting is a big challenge, given the pay disparity with our peer cities. For the past few years, the city has used temporary partial federal funding to boost the pay for cadets. Those ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds have run out. City Council passed a \$10,000 bonus to better compete with higher paying cities for recruits. A divergent issue is the number of non-criminals (mental illness crises, etc.) that end up in the criminal justice system, to which the police are called to respond. Trained crisis call takers at 911 have helped to alleviate this issue, steering some non-criminals toward treatment instead of jail, a “smart on crime” initiative.

*Fiscal responsibility and Government Efficiency:* Houston has financial challenges and achieving a sound financial footing is an important priority. Even so, this year the city was able to pass a budget without a tax rate increase. Council member Ramirez is working with the TX legislature (Rep DeAyala) to get state funding to address Houston’s water system, which requires maintenance and replacement of outdated parts. There is a good argument to make for state funding. While Houston has 2.3 million residents, the city provides water to 5.5 million people over four different counties.

*Ethics and Corruption:* Last year there was a meeting with the mayor’s staff to suggest changes to the Office of Inspector General, the agency that investigates alleged misconduct by city employees. These efforts include looking at ways ensure that candidates and office holders adhere to campaign finance reporting requirements and personal finance statement disclosure requirements. The overarching goal is to make systems more transparent. In particular, the city receives a lot of public information requests, which get little to no attention, in violation of the TX Public Information Act. Citizens have a right to these records and to know what the government is doing, so that is being worked on too.

*Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones:* TIRZ are special zones created by City Council to attract new investment. Taxes attributable to new improvements (tax increments) are set-aside in a fund to finance public improvements within the zone. There are about 28 TIRZ in the city of Houston. Investigative reporting has unearthed some suspicious activity related to the use of these funds –landscape services not performed, a new building that remains unoccupied, expansion of an already recognized world class park while other parks go without basic equipment. This is not meant to condemn all TIRZ. A lot of

beneficial work has been done – flood mitigation, nutrition programs, new roads and sidewalks, etc. Ramirez would like to see more control exercised over TIRZ.

*Affordable Housing Advocacy and Accountability:* Houston does not have enough affordable housing. Public Facility Corporations (PFC) are partnerships formed between developers and the Houston Housing Authority (HHA) to set aside a required number of housing units at reduced rates (below market value) in exchange for a 100% property tax break. PFC's have not been delivering the expected affordable housing units promised. In the prior TX legislative session, an oversight bill was passed so that such development deals now come before City council for approval. In an effort to provide additional local control, the TX legislature is expected to continue addressing issues with PFCs, such as housing developments that are being proposed outside Harris County.

### III. Community Leaders

#### Harris County Precinct 4 – Lesley Briones/ Meagan Blackwell

See 2024 Year in Review: <https://cp4.harriscountytexas.gov/Connect/Newsroom/2024-year-review>

Harris County Precinct 4 wants to know how to improve parks, trails, and green spaces. The survey at [bit.ly/P4HealthyParks](https://bit.ly/P4HealthyParks) (copy and paste in your browser) will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. After you finish the survey, you may enter the raffle for a chance to win a \$50 gift card.

From the Office of the Harris Co Attorney: Information on the following programs can be found at:

- Stay Scam Free: <https://cao.harriscountytexas.gov/ScamFree>
- Community Resources: <https://cao.harriscountytexas.gov/Connect/Community-Resources>
- Summer Legal Academy (High School Students) <https://cao.harriscountytexas.gov/Students>

#### Dist. F - Tiffany Thomas <https://www.houstontexas.gov/council/f/>

*2024 Annual Report:* Council Member Thomas proudly and enthusiastically displayed the report. This year's theme is *The Blueprint*. Thomas said, "It's really just a big thank you letter to our residents." The full PDF version is on the District F website above.

*Solid Waste Removal:* The depository on the southwest side is undergoing construction, and this is causing additional delays in trash pick-up because the trucks have to go to another depository further South.

*Apartment Crime in Westchase:* Three apartments in Westchase (Richmond/Gessner area) are experiencing high incidences of crime. The Westside Command Center and the apartment management company, which owns all three complexes, have identify specific issues in the area. The District F office has committed \$20,000 of overtime for this initiative, which will be announced in the coming weeks.

*Ashton Village* (Richmond/S. Dairy Ashford) has a \$4 -6 million storm water/storm drainage project coming; pending announcement.

A generator will be added at the Alief Neighborhood Center (\$2 million), which will allow it to serve as a resiliency center during disasters.

#### Dist. G - Mary Nan Huffman/Brad Mushinski <https://www.houstontexas.gov/council/g/>

City Council voted unanimously on January 8th to deny an application by CenterPoint Energy to prevent an increase in monthly electric bills for residents. CenterPoint could still receive approval for a rate hike at the PUC. A decision is expected later this year. Huffman's office encourages anyone who strongly opposes the rate hike to reach out to the PUC directly.

**COH Dept of Neighborhoods (DON) - Claudia Guerra/Rene Ruiz** <https://www.houstontx.gov/neighborhoods>

Ms. Guerra will be our new contact with the Department of Neighborhoods, replacing Rene in this role. She expressed sincere interest in learning about the issues that face SN-17.

**State Representative District 133 - Mano DeAyala/Deanna Harrington**

Below is a list of bills sponsored by Rep DeAyala (89<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, convening on Jan. 14). Keep track of their progress at <https://capitol.texas.gov/>

HB 298: Relating to the content of a driver's license or personal identification certificate

HB 650: Relating to a credit for prepayment of the amount required to be paid by a school district for the purchase of attendance credit under the public school finance system

HB 677: Relating to the restrictions on political activities of a county elections administrator

HB 910: Relating to the venue for the prosecution of an election offense.

**IV. Committee Reports/Secondary Speakers**

The Super Neighborhood 17 website <https://sn17.org/> is back on line. You will find current and archival meeting agendas and minutes under the *Agenda and Minutes* tab.

**V. Old Business**

The November Meeting Minutes were approved and are now posted on the sn17.org website above.

**VI. New Business**

*1. Vote to Approve SN 17 amended by-law:*

Super Neighborhood coordinator, Sandra Cortez requested that SN-17 clarify specific areas of our by-laws relating to:

- *General Meetings* - notice and frequency of meetings, and the ability to hold virtual meetings
- *Election of Officers* - terms, eligibility, notice of open executive committee positions, and the process to fill vacant positions
- *Active Stakeholders* - definition related to delegate representation/participation

The SN-17 executive committee met on October 28, 2024 to update the by-laws. The proposed edits were accepted as amended and approved unanimously by a vote of the delegates in attendance.

*2. Election of Vice President and Secretary*

The incumbent Vice President, Nick Kornuta and Secretary, Joy Cocchiara were reelected by acclamation. No nominations were put forward.

*3. Houston Community College, Northwest John Bahta, Community Outreach & Public Relations coordinator*

Super Neighborhood 17 is served by HCC Northwest with 5 campuses in West Houston - Alief Bissonnet, Alief Hayes, Katy, Spring Branch and the West Houston Institute. HCC has an open admissions policy and since 2023 offers bachelor's degree programs - Applied Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Applied Science, and Healthcare Management. HCC offers educational partnerships and does outreach in the community, e.g., center for entrepreneurship, GED classes. <https://www.hccs.edu/locations/northwest-college/> for more information.

**NEXT MEETING: February 12, 2025**

**SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD 17  
HPD WESTSIDE DIVISION CRIME STATS**

**Month-to-Month Trends (Dec/Nov)**

SN17	Nov	Dec	TREND
MURDER	2	0	-200.00%
SEXUAL ASSAULT	2	4	100.00%
ROBBERY	13	15	15.38%
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	20	28	40.00%
<b>Violent Crimes</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>27.03%</b>
BURGLARY HABITATION	22	20	-9.09%
BURGLARY BUILDING	12	18	50.00%
BURGLARY MOTOR VEHICLE	50	56	12.00%
THEFT	46	55	19.57%
AUTO THEFT	21	23	9.52%
<b>Non-Violent Crimes</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>13.91%</b>
<b>CRIMES TOTAL</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>16.49%</b>

**Year-to-Date Trends (2023/2024)**

SN17	2023	2024	TREND
MURDER	5	8	60.00%
SEXUAL ASSAULT	23	41	78.26%
ROBBERY	106	155	46.23%
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	297	357	20.20%
<b>Violent Crimes</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>30.16%</b>
BURGLARY HABITATION	227	211	-7.05%
BURGLARY BUILDING	147	194	31.97%
BURGLARY MOTOR VEHICLE	829	676	-18.46%
THEFT	573	582	1.57%
AUTO THEFT	433	340	-21.48%
<b>Non-Violent Crimes</b>	<b>2209</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>-9.33%</b>
<b>CRIMES TOTAL</b>	<b>2640</b>	<b>2564</b>	<b>-2.88%</b>

**Arrests\***

<b>Current Month Arrests</b>			
Aggravated Assault	5	Murder	0
Assault	14	Narcotics	4
Auto Theft	0	Prostitution	0
Burglary Habitation	1	Sexual Offenses	0
Burglary Building	1	Theft	1
Disorderly Conduct	5	Offense Against Family	0
Drunkenness	0	Weapons Violation	3
DWI	9	All Other Crimes	6
Robbery	0		
<b>Total People Arrested</b>	<b>49</b>		

\* Arrests made during the course of the offense on the original offense date and location