

# Eldridge/West Oaks Super Neighborhood Council Meeting

## FINAL DRAFT MINUTES

February 10, 2010

The meeting of the Eldridge/West Oaks Super Neighborhood Council (17) (EWOSNC) was called to order at 7:07 pm, February 10, 2010 by President Sandie Meyers. A quorum was present, with fifteen stakeholder delegate representatives attending. Prior to the call to order, A. Turner, HISD delegate, presented proposed name tags to the delegates for input.

### I. Old Business.

A. The **minutes** from the previous meeting were approved with no corrections.

### B. Committee Reports

**(1) Security Committee:** Bob Sumicek, Chair of the Security Committee, reported he had attended the January P.I.P. (Positive Interaction Program) meeting at the Westside Command Station, and stated that crime in this area has gone down and is minimal. Mr. Sumicek had inquired into the Citizens on Patrol (C.O.P.) program and if someone from HPD was available to speak to neighborhoods about the program. Ms. Meyers inquired about having an HPD contact person that can come to the SN monthly meetings to establish a relationship with SN members. Mr. Sumicek responded that he had a contact and would make the request. The Ashford Hills POA delegate, Walter Miller, questioned the accuracy of HPD's statement that crime had gone down, stating his neighborhood had seen an increase in crime and in HPD's response time. Billie Long also attended the P.I.P. meeting and reported that the P.I.P. speaker was a sketch artist who had helped solve more crimes in the country than any other sketch artist; she had also authored a book. It was stated that the Westside Command Station's captain is Mary Lentschke; the station encompasses HPD Districts 19 and 20. HPD District 18 is no longer within Westside's purview and it has a new station. Diane Guillerman noted that some neighborhoods do not have enough residents willing to participate in a C.O.P. program and an alternative for those neighborhoods is a Neighborhood Watch Program. A delegate noted his neighborhood had a problem with teens hanging out in their park area, doing drugs and/or drinking, and the residents were approaching the teens with their cell phones or other devices and threatening to take the teens' pictures; the residents saw some success with this approach.

**(2) Beautification Committee:** Diane Guillerman noted that no one had stepped forward to chair the Beautification committee, and she was willing to give the update. Ms. Guillerman reported that she had attended a meeting with the Briar Forest SN President and a Memorial SN representative regarding the proposed Farmers' Market. She stated that plans for the Farmers' Market are moving forward and they have two tentative locations. They are looking into the state and city permit requirements, vendors, and nailing down a location. The Farmers' Market is only a part of the planned Westside Green, which is envisioned as a recycling center, alternative energy park, and community gardens. There are two projects the Beautification Committee can get started on: (a) removing "bandit signs," and (b) approaching businesses (once targeted) to clean-up/spruce up their properties. The City has said that bandit signs (those signs tacked up on light poles and stuck in esplanades) can be removed. Anyone interested in volunteering for these efforts can contact Ms. Guillerman. She also noted that a City ordinance prohibiting any commercial business from placing any attention-getting device on any public or private property within the City became effective on January 1, 2010. Mr.

Donald Perkins, City Planner, handed out a sheet containing information on the ordinance, including enforcement, and will get a link to Ms. Guillerman to e-blast to the delegates.

Ms. Meyers then invited attending guests to introduce themselves: Mr. Mark Kirschke, the Communications Director with Oliver Pennington's office; Mr. Samuel Dike, Director of Community Affairs for At-Large Council Member Stephen C. Costello; Ms. Elaine Gaskamp, SN17 liaison from the Mayor's office; Mr. Donald Perkins, City of Houston Planner; and Susan Von Gonten, a resident from Briar Village.

**(3) SNAP Committee:** Judy Thompson, SNAP Committee Chair, stated the committee had been busy and SNAP requests had been submitted through Mr. Perkins. She thanked Mr. Perkins for his help. She stated that delegate David Rowe had suggested submitting a change to the intersection at Dairy Ashford and Westheimer to have two lanes turning east onto Westheimer. The group discussed the possibility of making a similar change to Eldridge at Westheimer, but there are only two lanes going south at that intersection and only one lane going east. Ms. Thompson reviewed the list of 311 items submitted to the City by the committee. Ms. Guillerman will email the list to all delegates. One pothole on the list has already been fixed by the City. Ms. Thompson received a call from Lynn Anderson regarding number 3 on the list, stating that the intersection (Parkway Plaza/Lakes of Parkway and Briar Forest) is only busy 30 minutes per day and doesn't warrant a signal change. Number 19 on the list, regarding a traffic signal at Briar Forest and Valedictorian Dr., was discussed because the City has indicated a signal will probably not be installed there because the traffic problem occurs for only a 30-minute period each weekday. It was discussed whether HISD officers could direct traffic during that period, but HISD's delegate stated a security issue would arise. Mr. Sumicek suggested a "junior cop" or someone with the mobility police be requested through HPD.

Ms. Meyers inquired into whether there was a 311 contact person. Ms. Thompson stated no, but Mr. Anderson had been working with delegate Kathleen Terracina to get some of the issues addressed, and Ms. Thompson did get the number for the person regarding installing traffic signals. It was noted that one death had occurred at that intersection, so although it was a problem from the City's perspective for only 30 minutes a day, it was nonetheless a serious issue. B. Sumicek will contact Westside High School about getting a mobility cop at that location.

**(4) Website:** Mr. Sumicek stated he has been researching websites for the Eldridge/West Oaks SN and that free websites will be populated with too many ads, so paying for one may be the best alternative. He noted the cost – one year for \$66, two for \$55, three years for \$44 – and "back-up" can be purchased. He suggested seeking funding for the cost and providing rotating ads. John Lozano suggested that each neighborhood contribute towards the cost, since it was a minimal expense. Mr. Sumicek listed some suggested content for the website, such as officers, committees and members, minutes, blog, SNs email, and also suggested offering neighborhoods the opportunity to have a link on the site for a small fee. Another delegate questioned if there were any free websites and Memorial SN's website was discussed. Ben Crocker, President of Memorial SN, is a "computer guy" and he used Google's free website. It was suggested that EWOSNC look at that website to see if it was sufficient and there were not too many ads. Mr. Perkins stated he would forward the link, which was stated as [sites.google.com/site/memorialsn16](http://sites.google.com/site/memorialsn16).

### **C. CIP Hearing**

Mr. Kirschke stated the District G CIP (Capital Improvement Projects) hearing has been scheduled for March 3, 2010, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Paul Revere Middle School. The citizens CIP request form is now "paperless" and will be available through a 311 module beginning on Monday, February 15. He is going to look at it once it is available and send out some instructions for its use. Mr. Kirschke recommended that constituents show up at the hearing to advocate for

the projects they are interested in. Mr. Perkins gave an overview of the hearing process, stating it is hosted by Council Member Pennington, who will introduce department heads and current projects. A “Q&A” portion will be available. Mr. Perkins noted it is a good opportunity to network with city department personnel and to approach them with individual questions or concerns. EWOSNC should email our CIP requests ahead of time. Ms. Meyers suggested that the SNAP Committee get together to compile the requests and someone from the committee may volunteer to present at the hearing. Ms. Thompson agreed and requested that any known CIP requests be submitted to her, as well as any 311 requests that delegates came across while driving around. The delegates can also submit the 311 requests themselves.

## **II. New Business.**

### **A. “Mission Statement.”**

The discussion regarding a “mission statement” began and it was stated that the SNs purpose was iterated in Section 3 of the Bylaws. Ms. Guillerman stated that the intent of discussing a “mission statement” was to come up with some goals that the SN wants to accomplish and within a time frame, for example, one year. Some suggestions of issues to address were traffic, road improvements, and property values. An example of a goal was the work begun by the Eldridge Coalition, a group started to address potential traffic problems that might arise due to the new office buildings on Eldridge south of Memorial. Ms. Thompson explained the genesis of the coalition. A discussion ensued about a mission statement and a delegate suggested the following: “Improving the quality of life within the Super Neighborhood by focusing on traffic issues, security, and quality of life.” Sherry Lamb, the John Paul II Catholic School delegate, stated she writes these types of statements for other groups and she will get with Ms. Turner to discuss coming up with a mission statement.

## **III. Miscellaneous.**

Delegates were reminded to share information they are getting from EWOSNC with the residents in their respective neighborhoods. There was a discussion regarding inviting Susan Castro, the Alief Independent School District’s representative, to a meeting. Also, Ms. Guillerman asked the delegates to invite friends from other neighborhoods to come to EWOSNC meetings if their neighborhoods are not already involved. Ms. Meyers asked Mr. Sumicek to see if an HPD representative could come and speak at the March EWOSNC meeting and he said he would contact them.

Ms. Meyers noted that another amendment must be made to the By-laws to eliminate Oaks of Parkway as a participating stakeholder because that neighborhood is represented by Briarhills HOA. This amendment will be voted on at the next EWOSNC meeting, which is scheduled for March 10, 2010. Ms. Meyers stated she contacted Karen Luik to schedule the next meeting at the new Kendall library, but had not received a response. Mr. Perkins stated he will look into it, but advised keeping the reservation for the school library just in case.

## **IV. Announcements.**

Elaine Gaskamp noted that 50,000 recycling bins are available to neighborhoods that have City of Houston trash pick-up, on a “first come, first served” basis. Any neighborhoods interested can get on a list by contacting Ms. Gaskamp. If the neighborhoods do not get actual COH pick-up, they cannot obtain the bins. An issue was raised because Stonehenge I and Parkway neighborhoods pay City taxes but do not get reimbursed by the City. Both Mr. Kirschke and Ms. Gaskamp stated they will look into that matter. Mr. Kirschke announced the first District G Newsletter was completed and sent out to constituents, and is available online. Mr. Perkins passed out updated information regarding city council, a

condensed 311 item list, information regarding the attention-getting device ordinance, and Councilmember Pennington's CIP hearing invitation.

Mr. Dike announced a survey regarding flooding and drainage available online and sponsored by Councilmember Costello. He stated that the issue of flooding and drainage is being studied over the next couple of months and encouraged delegates to get that information out to their neighborhoods. The City Council committee on flooding and drainage meets every fourth Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am. Mr. Dike noted also that the issue is complicated technically and because it involves several entities, such as the federal, city and county governments.

Mr. Kirschke advised that an ad hoc committee has developed among the several west Houston Super Neighborhoods, headed by Bill Hopkins, who has some technical expertise in the matter. Hopkins has met with the Army Corp of Engineers. Mr. Kirschke mentioned that the issue appears to be that the bayous/reservoirs are full during rain events and therefore, water from surrounding neighborhoods has nowhere to go. He suggested that EWOSNC form a flooding and drainage committee so that the SNC can be involved in that effort.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Diane Guillerman,  
Eldridge/West Oaks Super Neighborhood Vice President and Acting Interim Secretary