

JANUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER



Friends and neighbors,
I hope you had a great start to 2023 and that you have been achieving goals and resolutions that you might have set at the beginning of the year.

Our goal at the At-large 4 office is to ensure that our constituents across all eleven districts are taken care of and any issues dealt with.

This month I have heard from constituents regarding apartment issues, hazardous facilities, trash pick up and much more. Habitability continues to be the most concerning issue for our constituents.

Please continue reading to see how we are serving the people of Houston.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Letitia Plummer".

Council Member Letitia Plummer, DDS
At-Large 4

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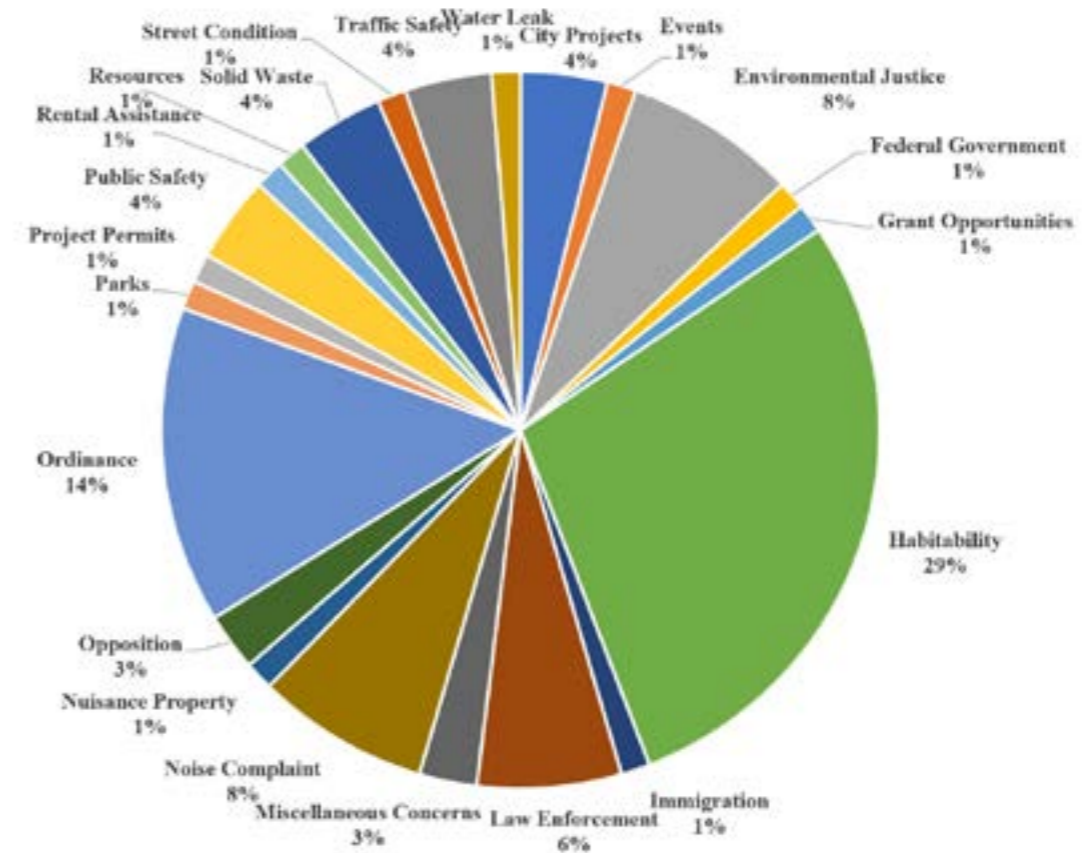
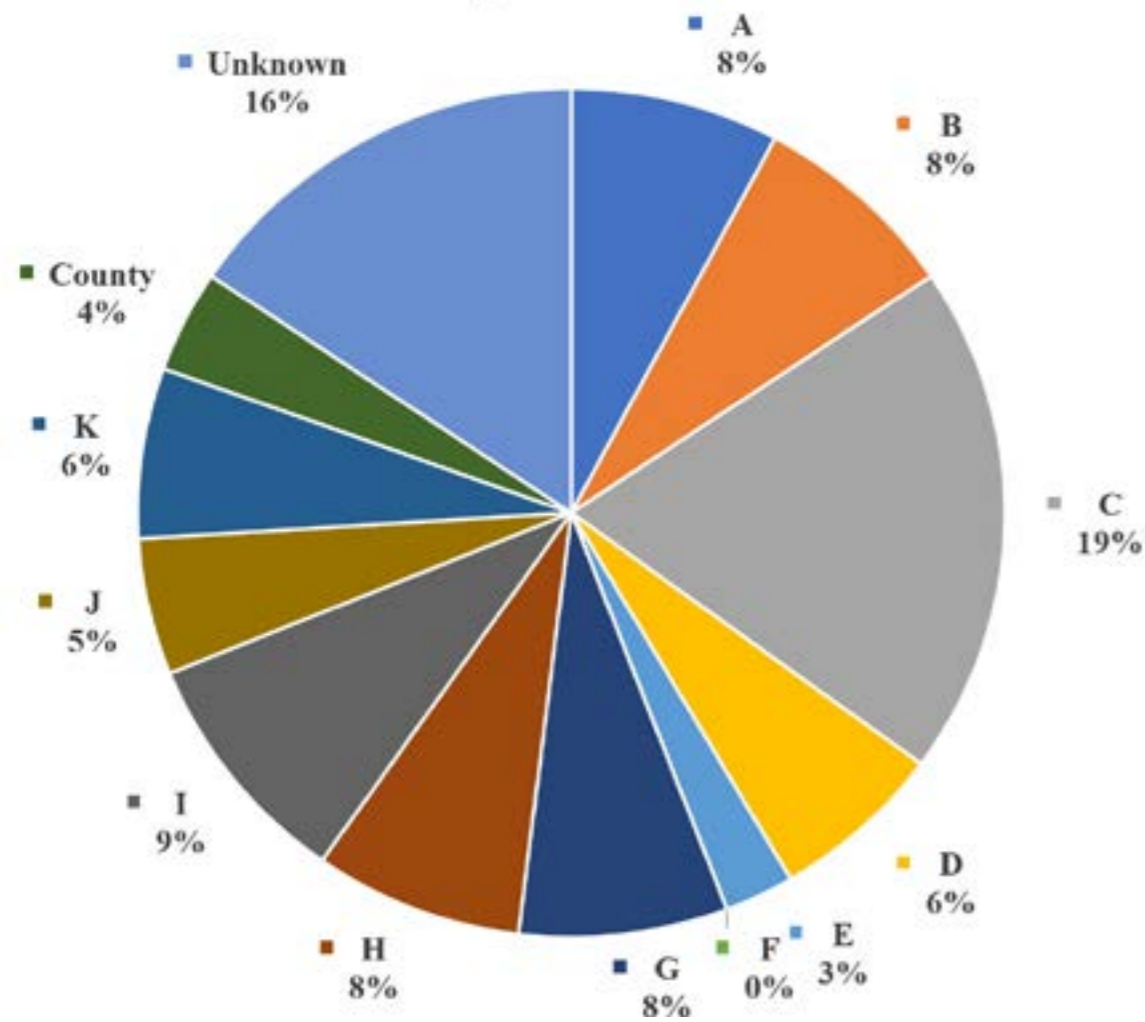
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AT-LARGE 4 OFFICE:

CONSTITUENT CONCERNS

Constituent Service Requests : Breakdown by District



Top Constituent Concerns



Constituents call our At-Large 4 office with concerns and service request from all eleven districts in the City of Houston. This data is from January 1st through January 27th, 2023.



Habitability remains the top concern for the constituents that call our office. This month's complaints include:

- Rodent infestations
- Roach infestations
- Leaks (ceiling, toilet)

Environmental Justice

My Position on Hazardous Facilities In Residential Areas



The State of Texas has governance over these plants and in most cases municipalities have little power to stop the violations. However, lending our voice in support of the impacted communities is essential. This means that during the TCEQ comment period, sending a comment; during a TCEQ or EPA public meeting, speaking up for the community and holding facilities accountable and asking them to be better partners in protecting residents and the environment.

Health & Environmental Impact

Hazardous facilities in residential areas can cause serious health and ecological impacts to the surrounding residential areas. Houston has many facilities in residential areas. The hazards can lead to compromise the health of the residents, sometimes leading to long-term or terminal diseases.

Health impacts include:

- Cancer (different types)
- Physiological malfunctions (e.g., reproductive impairment,

kidney failure, etc.),

- Breathing difficulties, including Asthma

Environmental impacts include:

- Reduced air quality
- Contaminated water
- Fire explosions
- Destroyed organisms, plants, and animals

Hazardous facilities may release particulate matter which are a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. When PM is inhaled, it cause serious health issues.



Office of the Chief Clerk, MC
105
TCEQ
PO Box 13087
Austin, TX 78711-3087
12/30/2022

RE: ARGOS USA LLC PERMIT RENEWAL, PERMIT NUMBER 105998

I am opposing the renewal of the Air Quality Permit for the continued operation of the Concrete Batch Plants located at 302 Bennington Street, Houston, Harris County, Texas 77022. These plants are in a densely populated residential area with approximately 5332 residences within 1 mile of this facility and 53934 within a 3-mile radius. In addition, Roosevelt Elementary School is located within 0.5 mile of the plants. While I understand the necessity of the materials these plants produce, the detrimental effects on the health of the residents do not justify the operation of these plants in residential areas. Cement batch plants are the largest producers of dusty, gritty pollution. It impacts air quality and affects lung and breathing capacity of residents, including reduced lung development in children. According to various data sources, in 2015 alone, 5200 premature deaths were linked to particulate matter. Until additional protections are in place, such as regular inspections that thoroughly vet operations and baghouses for filtering particulate matter, and air monitors for air quality purposes, I will not support the renewal of Air Quality Permits for cement batch plants in residential areas.

Sincerely,

Letitia Plummer, At-Large 4

Concrete Batch Plants

Concrete batch plants are an example of a hazardous facility. Particulate matter, a type of dust, can penetrate deep into the lungs causing breathing issues. Approximately, Fifty-four percent of concrete facilities exist in neighborhoods that are majority people of color.

Argos LLC are concrete batch plant located in a residential area in **District H**. There are 5332 residential homes within 1 mile of the plants and 53934 within a 3-mile radi-

us. An elementary school is within 0.5 miles. Whenever a facility applies for a permit or permit renewal, Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ) informs the public through a notice with a commenting period. In December 2022, Argos LLC applied for a permit renewal. I sent my comment to the TCEQ opposing the renewal, based on concerns of the health complications from the particulate matter.

Chemical Storage Facilities

These facilities can sometimes fail to properly manage, or store hazardous chemicals as required by federal law. When facilities do not develop safety precautions, carry out necessary maintenance or prepare risk management plans, there is health and safety risk to nearby residents, which includes catastrophic chemical accidents and explosions.

TPC Group LLC operates a facility in **District E**, and impacts residents in neighboring **Districts of H and I**. This facility processes crude c4. In September 2022, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created an agreement

with TPC LLC which specified deadlines to address violations at the facility. The violations noted by the EPA were alarmingly like TPC's facility in Port Neches. The Port Neches facility exploded in 2019 which resulted in thousands of residents having to be evacuated, and over \$100 million in off-site damages.

I asked the EPA representatives for an update on the corrections that the TPC had made. They were unable to provide an update. This was immensely disappointing.

Recycling Facilities

Although recycling is great for the environment, a recycling facility in a residential area can be a cause for concern for residents as these facilities can also release particulate matter. Chemical release into water sources is also another cause for concern.

I met with residents and members of the Melrose Civic Club who expressed concerns about **Independent Texas Recyclers**, located in a residential area in **District H**. The concerns included air quality due to particulate matter from the facility. Air Alliance has shared data with my office from air quality monitors which we are currently reviewing as well as conducting our own research.



Click the photo above or the word YouTube below to watch the full statement video

View my full statement on [YouTube](#).

NHP Foundation and Cleme Manor Update

Background

In 2016, NHP Foundation received \$41 million for Cleme Manor Apartments in Fifth Ward, District B. For Cleme, it would be its first comprehensive renovation of the affordable housing property in two decades. This was a cause for celebration for the community. The renovations by NHP included the installation of new drywall, Energy Star appliances, doors, higher efficiency HVAC units and water heaters, windows, water savings improvements, and much more. However, 311 data shows that this was not the end of their problems; Cleme residents continued to have some habitability issues.



Council Member Letitia Plummer at the Council Session, relaying her concerns for tenants at Cleme Manor Apartments

In June of 2022, the frustration from residents hit peak, when the power went out in the apartment complex and many residents were forced to sleep in their cars. Already, they had been fighting for a year to improve conditions in their apartments and found that their complaints went unheeded. Among the list of complaints, bubbling sewage, crawling vermin, and high crime. NHP Foundation promised to make changes, but residents continued to complain that very little had changed.

Council Votes on Additional Funding for NHP Foundation

August 2022, one of the agenda items included city funding for permanent supportive housing for homeless adults and would be in District D. NHP Foundation, the developer and Magnificat House would re-

ceive \$18.6 million for this development. Many tenants from Cleme Manor spoke at public session urging city council not to award this money.

Mayor Turner put forth a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that included an independent inspection and repairs within 90 days. While I applauded Mayor Turner's effort, I could not support this item knowing that tenants at Cleme Manor had yet to see NHP Foundation deliver its promise. I, along with five of my colleagues did not support this item. The item still passed, and the funding was awarded.

NHP Foundation Makes Major Changes at Cleme Manor

From August to December 2022, my office continued to engage with constituents, and they reported positive changes

at Cleme Manor. NHP Foundation hired a new management company as well placing NHP employees at Cleme.



Residents stated that it was now easier to request repairs as they had been given a number to call and could easily talk to the NHP manager at Cleme Manor.

During December, I hosted a Christmas party for the residents of Cleme Manor. My staff and I were surprised to be greeted by Senior Vice President, Asset Management Carlos Gonzalez. We toured the facility and talked to residents and from that it was very clear that things had changed at Cleme Manor. Not only that, but it

was also apparent that VP Gonzalez was very much involved in the ongoing oversight and maintenance at Cleme Manor. He knew residents by name, and they knew him. He was familiar with aspects of their lives, and they were willing to share details of their daily life with him and NHP staff.

Recent Updates

In January 2023, I requested to review the Physical Needs Assessment Report and found that NHP Foundation was making good on its promise to turn things around at Cleme Manor. In addition, NHP had signed the tenant protections from Harris County, promising that tenants would never face the situation they did in June 2022. We informed NHP, that we would continue to work with residents to ensure that issues were remedied in a timely manner but at the same time we were grateful for NHP actively making the effort to keep its promise to Harris County and the City of Houston. Our work, of course, is not done. We will continue to monitor Cleme

Manor and NHP Foundation. While this was positive outcome, unfortunately, this is not the case for other landlords in Houston. There are still apartment complexes that continue to violate tenant rights and will not remedy health and safety conditions in their units.





Accountability is not about scoring points or meant to be a 'got you'. It is an effort on our part to ensure that those in the wrong realize their mistakes and attempt to correct them.



Houston Tenants Council was formed by our At-Large 4 office to empower and educate Housing Advocates so that they could better assist the people they serve. The Council is comprised of organization and a tenant who have been assisting other to navigate housing issues. These issues include, tenant rights, evictions, public housing, senior housing, veteran housing, homelessness, rental assistance and more.

AFL CIO Antonio Zuniga www.gcaflcio.org	TOP Mitzi Ordonez www.organizetexas.org	WOORI JINTOS Steven Wu www.woorijuntos.org	ICNA RELIEF Syed Ahmed www.icnarelief.org
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LONESTAR LEGAL Kimberly Brown Miles www.lonestarlegal.org	BUFT Cleo Glenn Johnson McLaughlin www.Buftx.org	AARP Shondra Wygal www.AARP.org	RAINBOW PUSH COALITION Dr. Candace Matthews www.rainbowpush.org
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 COCO Daniella Flanigan	COMMUNITY ADVOCATE Tammy Rodriguez	TENANT Tonya Grubs	
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FEDERAL TENANT PROTECTIONS AND RENTAL AFFORDABILITY

WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES NEW ACTIONS TO PROTECT RENTERS AND PROMOTE RENTAL AFFORDABILITY

A few days ago, the White House announced new action to increase fairness in the rental market, along with a blueprint for a Renter's Bill of Rights. I am excited by this, as I have been fighting to improve quality of life for our tenants for the last few years. Highlighted here are some of the most important aspects that I would like to see implemented in Houston.

Access to Safe, Quality, Accessible and Affordable Housing

Renters should have access to housing that is safe, decent and affordable and should pay no more than 30 percent of household income on housing costs. Owners of rental housing and state and local governments should ensure that homes for rent meet habitability standards and are free of health and safety hazards, such as lead or mold.

Clear and Fair Leases

Renters should have a clear and fair lease that has defined rental terms, rights, and responsibilities. Leases should not include mandatory arbitration clauses, unauthorized terms, hidden or illegal fees, false representations, or other unfair or deceptive practices.

Education, Enforcement, and Enhancement of Rights

Federal, state, and local governments should do all they can to ensure renters know their existing legal rights, and to protect renters from unlawful discrimination and exclusion that can take many different forms.

The Right to Organize

Renters should have the freedom to organize without obstruction or harassment from their housing provider or property manager and should not risk losing their housing because of organizing. Moreover, tenant associations should be recognized by their housing providers or management companies.

Eviction Prevention, Diversion, and Relief

Renters should be able to access resources that help them avoid eviction, ensure the legal process during an

eviction proceeding is fair, and avoid future housing instability. To prevent evictions, renters should have access to just- or good-cause eviction protections that require a justified cause to evict a tenant, and tenants need to receive adequate notice if their lease is not being renewed. providers or management companies.

At-Large 4 Tenant Education Program

Visit: www.houstontx.gov/council/4/tenant-education.html

Documents available in English, Spanish and Korean



PUBLIC HOUSING



Public housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low- and moderate-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Public housing comes in all sizes and types, apartments and high-rise apartments for elderly families. These units are owned by Houston Housing Authority (HHA) and managed by Property Management Companies.

Some Important Details

- There is no charge to apply for or to be placed on HHA's Public Housing waitlist.
- Applicants placed on the waitlist must submit all changes (contact number, address, family size, etc.) through the online application portal.
- All applicants must monitor and respond to waitlist notices delivered via email and/or postal services.
- The application portal allows users to select English, Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Swahili. If you prefer an alternative language, you may call the 504 hotline at 713-260-0353 or 504ADA@housingforhouston.com to request translation assistance or bring a designee to assist in completing the application. For hearing impaired assistance, please call 711 TTY.
- Applicants do not have to live in Houston or Harris County to apply for the HHA Public Housing waitlist.
- You may apply to live at as many of the available Public Housing locations as you would like. You only need to submit one pre-application form and select all of your desired locations listed on the application. Once an applicant is offered Public Housing and accepts the option provided to them by the HHA, the applicant will be removed from all other waitlist sites.

For additional information, visit:

<https://housingforhouston.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Public-Housing-Waitlist-FAQ-1.pdf>

How to Apply for Public Housing

The Houston Housing Authority Waitlist opened on **January 15, 2023** and will remain open until **Wednesday, February 15, at 4:00 pm CT**. At that time, no additional applications will be accepted. Hard copies are also available at the HHA administration office during normal business hours (Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm).

To apply for the waitlist, visit:

<https://hha.myhousing.com/Account/Login>

Council Member Letitia Plummer January Council Agenda Recap



City Council In January

This month I supported many important items during the weekly Council Agenda Session and raised awareness about others. Here are some highlights from January.

Minority and Women Owned Business Sub-Contractors

Each week, I have continued to raise awareness about contracts that have not met their MWBE goals set by the Office of Business Opportunity. When Contractors have fallen short of their obligations, I have questioned the reason. On contracts that failed to meet the goals without a legitimate reason, I voted no.

Housing for our Houseless Community

This month I supported several items that would provide the city's houseless community with safe housing, including an increase in funding for homeless shelter operations. Our houseless community deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

Healthcare Access for the Houseless

In addition to the housing and shelter, I supported additional funding for continuing administration and operation of Project Access, a Homeless Transportation Program that provides homeless persons with access to essential health and social services resources.

Improvements to Parks

Parks are an important aspect of our communities as they provide recreational opportunities for families. I supported an item relating to construction of improvements to neighborhood parks under the 50/50 Park Partners Initiative Project in various districts across the city.

Sidewalk Fee in Lieu Program

I supported amending the Sidewalk Ordinance which creates a complete sidewalk network in the city by providing some sidewalk options and establishing a sidewalk fund and protocols for constructing sidewalks.



Buffering Standards

Under the new rules developers of high and mid rises need to provide a physical separation, a buffer, between their buildings and all single-family homes or small multifamily residences. Rules also include standards for commercial properties next to homes that include lighting standards and regulations on the color and intensity of light fixtures as well as screening requirements for bulk garage containers.



At-Large 4 Community Impact

Council Member Letitia Plummer In the Community Highlights



Met with Green Town Labs

Attended the grand opening of the new Alief Community Center in District F

Celebrated MLK Day with Houstonians

Met with the Greater Houston Partnership

Attended the installation of officers for the Harris County Medical Society

Celebrated Lunar New Year with Houstonians

Celebrated the 31st Anniversary of Missouri Baptist Church and Pastor Young

Attended various civic club and super neighborhood meetings

Met with the Port of Houston



January Highlights

Attended civic club and super neighborhood meetings

Visited apartment complexes with habitability issues

Met with legislative staff regarding habitability legislation

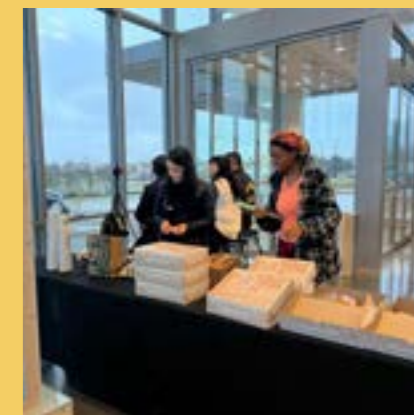
Held the first Houston Tenants Council Meeting

Attended GLO's Homeowner Assistance Program reconstructed home handover event

Attended ribbon cutting ceremonies of new parks and centers across the city

Contributed \$33,000 from the AL4 Fy2022 office surplus for a drainage project in the Northeast of Houston

Assisted community organizations with permit issues and tracked 311 cases for constituents





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Council Member
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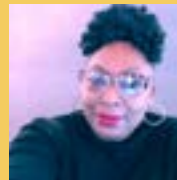
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