

Super Neighborhood Alliance

Minutes of Virtual Meeting Held 12 April 2021



Guests

Sallie Alcorn, CM At-Large 5
Rain Eatmon, Staff for CM Dist B
Na'Shon Edwards, Staff for CM Dist F
Joe Gatson, Staff for CM Dist K
Gareth Morgans, Staff for CM At-Large 2
Chris Brown, Controller
Max Moll, Controller's Office
Lara Cottingham, ARA
Mary Benton, Office of the Mayor
Jack Valinski, DoN
Rene Ruiz, DoN
Teresa Geisheker, P&D

Francisco Castillo, Staff for Commissioner Pct 2
Roger Bridgewater, Staff for Commissioner Pct 3
Scott Packard, Houston Health Dept
Nicholas Ton, Houston Health Dept
Christina Walsh, Staff for State HD 148
Ashley Johnson, LINK Houston
Katie Wang, Kinder Institute
Jie Wu, Urban Harvest
Margret Dunlap, METRO
Alyce Coffey, City Solid Waste Department
Andret Rayford
Linda Scurlock

Super Neighborhood Representatives

Philip Salerno, SNC 05
Ricky Miller, SNC 05
Mark Klein, SNC 12
Mardie Page, SNC 13
Leigh Killgore, SNC 14
Pedro Ayarzagoitia, SNC 15
Jeff Baker, SNC 17
Stacie Fairchild, SNC 22
Mike VanDusen, SNC 22
Kay Warhol, SNC 24
Doug Smith, SNC 25
Kathie Easterly, SNC 28
Terry Cominsky, SNC 31
Cheryl O'Brien, SNC 32
Sylvia Rivas, SNC 36
Becky Edmondson, SNC 37
Cindy Chapman, SNC 37

Stephen Polnaszek, SNC 38
Jeff Peters, SNC 38
Willie Rainwater, SNC 41
Deidre Taylor, SNC 42
Deb Bonario-Martin, SNC 45
Paula Parshall, SNC 45
Carol Klieber, SNC 45
David Smith, SNC 46
Juan Antonio Sorto, SNC 49,50
Rosiland Francis, SNC 50
Roy Lira, SNC 63
Joy Jones, SNC 63
Amy Dinn, SNC 64,88
Kathleen O'Reilly, SNC 66
Gareth Morgans, SNC 82
Tomaro Bell, SNC 83

Meeting convened at 6:30pm.

- I. **Minutes of the March Meeting** – A motion to accept was made by Doug Smith. Second from Tomaro Bell. Minutes were approved, with modification identifying Kate Dentler as staff in Council District C.
- II. **Update on City COVID-19 Testing and Vaccine Distribution** – Scott Packard, with the Houston Health Department, stated the infection rate is continuing to trend downward from the last surge in December. If people continue to get vaccinated, the department hopes there will be no further surges. Scott mentioned that people need to stay vigilant in their use of masks and distancing, because the UK variant is becoming wide-spread in the Houston area.

The city is prioritizing its vaccine distribution by focusing on vulnerable communities, where people are more likely to die if they contract COVID-19. Scott indicated how people can sign up for vaccinations offered by the city and county.

Juan Sorto asked how the city is reaching out to vulnerable communities. Scott responded the city identifies a partner in a vulnerable area, and canvases a perimeter around that partner. And the city also in-home service to those individuals who are not able to leave their homes.

Deidra Taylor asked how to arrange for the city to come to a community to administer vaccines. Scott responded he could provide a request form by email.

Amy Dinn ask how vulnerable neighborhoods are notified about a temporary vaccination site in their community. Scott indicated the neighborhood clinics are not widely publicized because the site are targeting specific areas. Neighborhood organization can be contacted to announce the vaccination opportunities locally.

III. City of Houston Controller Chris Brown – Chris said that COVID-19 and low oil prices have adversely affect the city budget, leading to a possible \$200MM deficit in the new city budget starting in July. The city gets about 20% of its income from sales tax, and because of COVID-19 this is down about 6%. The city derives about 50% of its revenue from property taxes. While residential properties have maintained their value, commercial values are likely to decline with more people working from home.

The city received \$405MM in CARES Act funding in 2020 to help offset expenses related to COVID-19. The city is anticipating getting more than \$600MM in ARPA funds in 2021 and 2022, and their use may be less restrictive. Mr. Brown commented the Houston airport system received \$165MM in CARES funds to help offset the downturn in air travel.

He mentioned the city has continued to spend in excess of city revenue. To help address these shortfalls, the city hired a consulting firm that identified 58 items that could save the city about \$300MM annually.

Pedro Ayarzagoitia asked if the Controller’s Office audits the 380 agreements between the city and developers. Mr. Brown responded his office does audit the agreements and the results are available on the city website. Pedro asked if the public could request an audit, and the reply was “yes”.

Doug Smith asked about a \$10MM reduction in expenses related to city property maintenance. The response was that there were some retirements in the department without replacements being hired, and people working remotely resulted in a \$30MM reduction in expenses.

City employee, Alyce Coffey, asked how access the ARPA plan. Mr. Brown responded the ARPA plan is available on the US Treasury website, and is not accessible on a city website.

Leigh Kilgore asked if the 58 items identified by the financial consulting firm are available to read. They are available for viewing on the finance department’s website in the budget section.

IV. Houston Community Data Connections at Kinder Institute for Urban Research – Katie Wang, Kinder Institute Director of Urban Research, made a presentation on their Houston Community Data Connections (HCDC) database. The goal of the program is to provide community leaders and non-profit agencies with easy to use information to help make decisions regarding their communities.

Katie provided an overview of the type of data collected into the database, and a high-level walkthrough of the dashboard used to access neighborhood data on a geographic basis.

Rain Eatmon invited Katie to participate in a community outreach meeting hosted by CM Jackson.

Deb Bonario-Martin asked how the study projects are selected. Katie mentioned they were relying on partners to help identify areas being studied.

Stacie Fairchild asked why SN22 was divided into two study areas. The areas are chosen to be reflective of census data.

- V. Super Neighborhood General Plan** – The plan committee met in March to start plan development, and will report an update in May.
- VI. Open Comments** – Tomaro Bell reported the first job fair for Daikin had over 700 participants, and 250 have been hired. Because of this success, another fair will be held on May 1, from 10am to 4pm at the HCC campus at IH-10 and Beltway 8. Juan announced County Judge Lena Hidalgo would be the featured speaker in the May meeting.
- VII. Adjournment**
The meeting adjourned around 8pm.