

Super Neighborhood Alliance
Minutes from Meeting held November 12, 2018



Guests

Tom McCasland, Director, COH-HCDD
Jack Valinski, DON
Rashida Calender, Rice University
John O'Neil, Harvey Registry
Michael Moore, Texas Central Partners
Margaret Dunlap, METRO
Ashley Johnson, LINK Houston
Brittany Flowers
Gladys House-El, Freedman's Town
Charonda Johnson, Freedman's Town
Randall Baxley
Thomas Wang

Leigh Killgore, SNC 14
Randy Jones, SNC 16
Jack O'Connor, SNC 17
Michael Huffmaster, SNA Chairman, SNC 18
Jane West, SNA Secretary, SNC 22
Mike Van Dusen, SNC 22
Kay Warhol, SNC 24
Doug Smith, SNC 25
Barbara Quattro, SNC 25
Cheryl O'Brien, SNC 32
Marcy Williams, SNC 36
Cindy Chapman, SNC 37
Jeff Peters, SNC 38
Juan Sorto, SNC 49/50
Albert Coleman SNC 49/50
Kathleen O'Reilly, SNC 66
Leroy West, SNC 71/76
Scott Cubbler, SNC 84
John (Bart) Harris, SNC 86

Super Neighborhood Representatives

Ricky Miller, SNC 05
Philip Salerno, SNC 05
Curtis Curely, SNC 06
Roger Gingell, SNC 10
Mark Klein, SNC 12

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

I. Introductions and Approval of Minutes for October 8, 2018

Jeff Peters moved and Cheryl O'Brien seconded approval of October 8, 2018, meeting minutes. Gladys House-El asked for the minutes to be revised to reflect that she attends SNA meetings as a representative from the Fourth Ward (Freedmans' Town) SNC 60, but that request was declined because SNC 60 has not yet been formed or recognized by the administration, and does not have a SN Council. Doug Smith called the question. **Motion carried.**

II. METRO Welcome and Announcements

A. METRO Welcome. Tanya McWashington, METRO's Vice-President of Public Engagement, welcomed meeting participants to the METRO building and board chamber where the meeting was held. Because the meeting date fell on the day that the city celebrated Veteran's Day, the City Hall Annex where the SNA regularly meets was not available and METRO kindly offered their meeting space as an alternate location. Ms. McWashington said that METRO's Executive Director, Tom Lambert, was traveling and therefore unable to welcome the SNA himself. She said that Mr. Lambert looked forward to addressing the SNA at a future meeting. Also here tonight are all of METRO's Community Liaisons, each of whom is assigned to a regional sector of the METRO service area. Many SN Councils participated in last year's survey for the METRO Next planning effort. METRO is now working on a final plan for which there will be more community involvement in the future.

B. Veterans' Recognition. Chairman Huffmaster recognized veterans in attendance by asking them to stand to be recognized and thanked for their service to our country.

C. Congratulations to Award Winners. Chairman Huffmaster recognized and congratulated Cindy Chapman and the Westbury Civic Club for being named by Keep Houston Beautiful a Mayor's Proud Partner for 2018 for Keep

Westbury Beautiful Day. Chairman Huffmaster also recognized and congratulated Marcy Williams and the Brays Oaks Management District, and Cindy Chapman, Veg Out! Westbury, and the Westbury Community Garden/Westbury Area Improvement Corporation for receiving Certificates of Recognition. The award ceremony will be held on November 13th.

D. Recovery Houston. No update. Contact Kimberly.Hatter@houstontx.gov for information, and follow updates at www.houstonrecovers.org.

E. Complete Communities. No update. See www.houstontx.gov/planning for news and updates.

F. Calendar. Chairman Huffmaster shared a list of meetings that SNA representatives have attended or will be attending this month, including: Election Day, November 6th; Complete Streets Coalition, October 16th and November 15th; Houston Resiliency Workshop, November 8th; Houston Stronger, November 9th; Walkable Places, November 14th; Bayou City Initiative, November 14th; and a meeting with Houston Public Works Department, December 10th.

III. Harvey Homeowner Assistance Program, Tom McCasland, Director, Houston Housing and Community Development Department (“HCDD”)

Chairman Huffmaster stated that he had a copy of the power point presentation that Director McCasland had planned to show but was unable to show, and that he would distribute the presentation to SNA members.

Director McCasland said that within the next two months the City of Houston expects to receive \$1,175,954,338 in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds from the federal government for assisting in long-term housing recovery from Hurricane Harvey. To receive this funding, the city must submit guidelines to the Texas General Land Office (“GLO”). The city is in the process of developing guidelines for several different types of housing programs with multiple public comment periods. All of the programs and their respective comment periods are available for review on the HCDD website (www.houstontx.gov/housing/). All of the programs are intended to assist eligible city applicants whose residences were directly impacted by Hurricane Harvey by providing housing programs that will preserve and expand the housing stock while creating sanitary, safe, energy efficient housing, and a resilient community. One of these programs is the Homeowners’ Assistance Program (“HoAP”) consisting of the following five program options to assist eligible homeowners with their rehabilitation, reconstruction, and/or other eligible housing needs:

1. Reimbursement: Homeowners who have completed partial or full repairs on their home maybe eligible for reimbursement of eligible expenses incurred prior to application to the program for work performed. The reimbursed value of repair work will be limited to the cost of achieving minimum program standards. As per federal regulations, any work considered for reimbursement must have been performed prior to program application and following an environmental “Tier II” clearance. Xactimate® or similar industry standard tool will be used to ensure cost reasonableness, and the work will be validated through an on-site inspection.

2. City Managed Rehabilitation and Reconstruction: The city will manage and complete the construction process for the rehabilitation or reconstruction of Harvey-damaged homes on behalf of homeowners. The city will contract with multiple firms to provide design and construction services for the rehabilitation or reconstruction of damaged properties.

3. Homeowner Managed Rehabilitation: This option will allow homeowners who have started the process, and are under contract with a contractor at the time of application, but need financial assistance to complete repairs. The city will assist homeowners participating under this option to navigate Program compliance requirements and funding process. Services are anticipated to include general customer service

assistance, identification and referral to community resources and referrals, program guidance, support in accessing funds, progress inspections, and on a case-by-case basis, limited construction information. Homeowners will select their own licensed and insured contractor(s) and contract verifications, subject to approval and verification by HCDD. Xactimate® or similar industry standard tools will be used to ensure cost reasonableness and the work will be validated through an on-site inspection. Homeowner managed rehabilitation will only be available to homeowners who have initiated the repair process and are under contract with a contractor at the time of application. Program Standard Operating Procedures will fully address program details, including minimum construction standards, environmental compliance, program controls, and circumstances under which this option may be provided

4. Acquisition: Homeowners may be eligible to have their single-family homes voluntarily acquired by the city in conjunction with its Single-Family Development Program. The City will provide owners of substantially damaged homes the option to exchange their home for a newly constructed, or rehabilitated home, built to flood resilient standards. The city-acquired home may then be sold, reconstructed or rehabilitated to flood resilient standards and offered to another homeowner within the acquisition program or for sale to a low to moderate income buyer.

5. Interim Mortgage Assistance (IMA): Interim Mortgage Assistance (IMA) may be provided to homeowners who are making both a mortgage payment on their storm-damaged home and making a rental payment for a temporary home. These homeowners may be eligible to receive up to 20 months of assistance based on the lesser of their monthly mortgage and temporary rental housing payments. This option may be considered when the rehabilitation or reconstruction of a home extends beyond three months, during which mortgage payments may be due, but the home remains uninhabitable. This assistance will help to ease the financial hardship homeowners may face during the post disaster recovery period and prevent homeowners from going into foreclosure.

Assistance for Reimbursement, City Managed Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Acquisition, and Homeowner Managed Rehabilitation will be provided in the form of a zero-interest, forgivable loan, secured by placement of a lien on the applicant's real property during the compliance period. Funding priorities have been established to assist vulnerable populations based on Area Median Income (AMI), including low to moderate income, elderly or disabled persons and households with a child or children under age 5. Applicant prioritization sequence for funding will be based on the following criteria:

1. Elderly (62 years or older) or disabled households at or below 80% AMI
2. Households at or below 80% AMI with young children under the age of 5
3. Households at or below 50% AMI
4. Households at or below 80% AMI

Upon exhaustion of applications eligible for priorities 1-4 under each subprogram, a review will be completed for eligible households above 80% AMI. Meeting one or all prioritization criteria will not guarantee assistance, as allocated funding and program timelines are limited. HCDD reserves the right to cap assistance to households above 80% AMI at \$150 million.

Questions and Answers: Doug Smith asked what contract city council approved last week for \$13.5M. Director McCasland responded, a contract for intake work of the approximately 6,000 homeowners expected to benefit from the recovery funds.

Juan Sorto commented that a qualification requirement of being current on mortgage and tax payments will likely eliminate many people in need who have fallen behind on these payments due to the storm damage. Director McCasland acknowledged that this is an issue and said that HCDD is working with non-profits to help people make catch-up payments or to get into payment plans to bring them current on their

mortgage and tax payments.

Gladys House-El asked what if you already have had materials donated for home repair. Director McCasland said that he would speak with her off-line about that situation and then urged anyone who has done repair work on their home to keep their receipts.

Roger Gingell asked Director McCasland for his thoughts about getting apartment buildings out of the flood plains. Director McCasland responded that moving apartments out of the flood plains is a high priority for the city, as was moving away from garden-style apartments to apartments built at higher levels.

Director McCasland closed his comments by stating the importance of making everyone aware that receipt of federal recovery funds requires an environmental review, and that the initial step for all applications was completion of an environmental survey. He also acknowledged that large amounts of recovery funds will be arriving in the city after many people have given up hope of receiving help, but that there is hope for help and people should not despair. He encouraged people to check the HCDD website for updates on all available programs.

Scott Cubbler asked if people who have already completed repairs but do not have receipts could apply for help. Director McCasland answered, that while the cost of repairs could be estimated for purposes of reimbursement, that receipts are the best evidence.

IV. Hurricane Registry, Rashida Calender, Rice Univ./Children's Environmental Health Initiative

The Hurricane Registry is a research project that is collecting information on the impact Hurricane Harvey has had on communities. The survey questions people about where they were during the hurricane, and what environmental exposure they experienced in the storm's aftermath. Researchers noticed an increase in registry responses following outreach to various Super Neighborhood leaders who would then share the information about the registry at their meetings, on social media, and in their newsletters. Hence Ms. Calender reached out to the SNA. The Registry was inspired by the World Trade Center health registry that followed the 911 attack. The report from that project released in 2008 showed an increase in upper respiratory issues and some cancers and prompted changes in some guidelines for addressing the health impacts of that disaster. The Hurricane Registry is intended to provide health officials with data for use locally and nationally to address the health effects of natural disasters. The project is on-going and all are encouraged to take the survey which takes on average about 10 minutes to complete. The survey can be completed on-line at www.harvyregistry.rice.edu/

Scott Cubbler commented that he participated in the World Trade Center registry and that he found it to be an undue burden and his experience with it was not good. Ms. Calender stated that the Hurricane Registry gives respondents the ability to opt out of future surveys.

Ms. Calender was asked what sample size was needed for the survey to be statistically significant and she responded that they need at least 5,000 responses and that they currently have 3,500.

V. High Speed Rail: Michael J. Moore, Texas Central Partners

Texas Central Partners is working to implement the first High Speed Rail system in the United States between Houston and Dallas. The Houston-Dallas route was selected for this project because the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) estimates that within the next few years travel time between Houston and Dallas by car will take six hours or more. The high speed rail will use Japanese technology to make the trip in 90 minutes with one stop in the Brazos Valley at Roans Prairie which is roughly equidistant between Texas A&M University and Sam Houston State University, and will include a station

and a maintenance facility. The trains are expected to have half hour headways in each direction, to carry 400 passengers, and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act by having wheelchair accessible aisles that are 34" wide. Ticket prices are expected to have a wide range and to be competitive with airline tickets for business travelers and with the cost of renting a car for a family of four.

In Japan this high speed rail technology has been in use for over 50 years without any fatal crash. In Japan the average annual delay is less than one minute. The trains will be grade-separated from all other modes of transportation, will run on electricity supplied via over-head lines, and will be equipped with regenerative braking technology meaning that they will generate electricity and return it to the grid when they break. Roughly half of the track will be built on a viaduct and half on an earthen berm.

The Houston station will be at the site of the former Northwest Mall which is roughly the center of the city's population. Mr. Moore said that his company already controls the footprint of the mall. No decision has been yet as to the station design. The Federal Rail Administration ("FRA") picked the alignment that appears in the DEIS. The train will follow Hempstead Road and US 290 through Harris County, and then will turn to follow the Center Point Right of Way. Over 50% of the track will be next to power lines. The company is working with METRO to connect the Houston station at Northwest Mall to downtown; a good option for doing so is the I-10 corridor. The company is also working to connect to station to the Bus Rapid Transit being built in the Galleria area. The connections to downtown and the Galleria are both expected to be addressed in the METRO Next Plan.

The project is expected to create approximately 10,000 construction jobs and 1,500 permanent jobs once the trains start operating. It is also expected to take over 14,000 vehicles off of I-45. Funding for the project will be all private, and approximately 30% of the land parcels needed for implementation are already under contract with multi-year options. Over 50% of the land parcels needed in Waller, Grimes, and Madison Counties are under contract. The public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has already closed and the company is now in the process of preparing responses to over 20,000 comments. The Final Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be released in August or September of 2019, and the Record of Decision is expected to be issued by March 2020 and possibly sooner. Financial closure will follow soon after the Record of Decision is issued. The project is expected to take about five and a half years to build and to be operational in 2025.

Jack Valinski asked what happens if the company fails? Mr. Moore said that in the unlikely event that Texas Central Partners' effort fails that another company will take over the effort because they'll be able to do so for pennies on the dollar.

Barbara Quattro asked what a train ticket will cost? Mr. Moore said for business travelers the price will be comparable to an airline ticket, but that there will also be "on demand" pricing because the goal will be to fill 400 seats for each departure.

Chairman Huffmaster commented that conversations with METRO were on-going about how to connect downtown to the high speed rail station at the former Northwest Mall.

Gladys House-El commented that she has been to some meetings about this project with lots of angry people. Mr. Moore responded that the project represents a new mode of transportation using a new, efficient, technology. The company anticipates that once the trains are operational the demand will grow.

Roger Gingell commented that residents of Spring Branch will be happy to see the train built.

Randy Baxley asked if the company has the power of eminent domain. Mr. Moore said that the company believes that it does have that power.

Randy Jones asked if the train was expected to be profitable. Mr. Moore responded that the train is expected to have a long-term pay-off.

Kathleen O'Reilly asked how power for the train would be generated to which Mr. Moore, responded, "the grid." He also said that as Texas becomes cleaner, the train would have more options to increase the relative cleanness of its footprint.

Cindy Chapman asked if the Texas Triangle will ever be created, i.e., if the high speed train service would be expanded to include Austin and San Antonio. Mr. Moore said that it's proving hard enough to build the Houston-Dallas line, but that once it's built, other cities will surely want it, too.

Jack O'Connor asked if Texas Central Partners feels any pressure from Elon Musk and his hyperloop? Mr. Moore mused that Mr. Musk will face similar challenges to those that his company is now facing, i.e., how to implement a new technology.

For additional information see the Texas Central Partners website: <https://www.texascentral.com>. Mr. Moore also invited participants to contact him directly at mmoore@texascentral.com.

VI. Old Business

A. Survey: Chairman Huffmaster reported that the survey of basic questions used to compose the SNA's Annual Report is being prepared and is expected to be distributed soon. Alternatively, officers will be calling SNC representatives for updates about their Super Neighborhoods.

B. Chapter 42 - Minimum Lot Size Rescission - Committee Formation: Chairman Huffmaster reported that the Planning Commission denied the variance application discussed at the last meeting pursuant to which developers seeking to replat property known as White Oak Crossing in the Near Northside (SNC 51) were trying to avoid having to comply with the existing minimum lot size area. Chairman Huffmaster stated that under Chapter 42 of the City Code minimum lot size areas are subject both to the variance process and to a process for rescinding the minimum lot size designation. He stated that he had asked Mike Van Dusen from SNC 22 to organize a committee to study the issue and recommend possible changes to Chapter 42 of the City of Houston's Code of Ordinances to restrict or eliminate the ability to obtain such variances. Roger Gingell asked what the committee would be trying to do. Mike Van Dusen responded that the committee would be seeking ways to protect the minimum lot size designations that neighborhoods representing approximately 20,000 lots have worked petitioned to put in place to protect the character of their neighborhoods. Kay Warhol asked how Mike Van Dusen could be reached, to which Chairman Huffmaster responded that he would distribute Mike VanDusen's contact information.

VII. New Business - Nomination Committee: Committee Chairwoman O'Reilly announced that slate of candidates would be presented to the executive committee later in November and would be presented to the SNA at the next meeting on December 10th. Roger Gingell asked, "what is the process?" Ms. O'Reilly responded that nominations for the open officer positions of chair and vice-chair would be presented at the December meeting and that the election would be conducted during the January meeting.

VIII. Committee Reports:

A. Standing Committees: No updates received.

B. Advisory Committees: Chairman Huffmaster shared that the Walkable Places Planning Commission Subcommittee was scheduled to meet later in the week.

IX. Open Comments (5 minutes)

Philip Salerno reported that Make I-45 Better Coalition headed by Michael Skelly met recently with residents from Dallas who are also trying to persuade the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to make their highway projects better for residents. He said that there has still been no replies to the comments that coalition submitted to the I-45 DEIS, and that the coalition hopes to receive additional information perhaps during a meet with TxDOT in December.

Doug Smith shared a list of locations for city-approved alternative housing. He explained that the list reflected approved applications for boarding houses. Because most deed restrictions require single family homes, he has prepared a table listing the applications culled from the city's website. Chairman Huffmaster said that he would distribute the list to SNA representatives so that they could check to see if any were in their neighborhoods.

Doug Smith also said that he would like to know whether the a SNC has ever been recognized for the Fourth Ward/Freedman's Town (SN 60), and asked to be apprised of the city's position on that issue.

Margarita Dunlap, METRO community liaison to the SNA, thanked people for attending meeting, and invited everyone to receive a gift Qcard good for one round trip journey on a METRO bus or train.

X. Adjournment: 8:15 p.m.

Philip Salerno moved, and Doug Smith seconded a motion to adjourn.

The next SNA meeting will be Monday, December 10, 2018, at the usual location: City Hall Annex.