

**HOUSTON
CITY
COUNCIL
DISTRICT
G**

News From District G

June 2010

To The Residents of District G:



Oliver Pennington
Houston City Council
District G

900 Bagby, 1st Floor
Houston, TX 77002

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1562
Houston, TX 77251

Phone:
(832) 393-3007

Fax:
(832) 395-9571

Email:
districtG@houston.tx.gov

Website:
houston.tx.gov/council/G/

facebook



Tanglewilde/Westmont Independence Day Parade:

The spirit of freedom and independence is alive and well in District G. Council Member Pennington was invited to be the Grand Marshal in the Tanglewilde/Westmont Independence Day Parade. The festivities got underway by introducing each of the neighborhoods' veterans. The large crowd then heard from Reverend Frank Varro, who led the neighborhood in prayer and in singing the song of each branch of military service. Council Member Pennington had the distinct pleasure of presenting a Certificate of Appreciation to Mr. Rupert Avriett for his many years of service as the head of the Citizens Patrol in Tanglewilde. Mr. Avriett also received a Certificate of Appreciation from Joan Buschor on behalf of the HPD Westside Positive Interaction Program. The parade included an honor guard of veterans, an HFD fire truck, the Grand Marshal's convertible, at least 6 art cars, nearly 2 dozen art motorcycles, a hay wagon filled with children (including the Council Member's grandchildren, Alexandra and Luke Tropoli), as well as over 100 flag-waiving pedestrians. In addition to the Council Member, his wife Beverly and their grandchildren also participated in the parade and festivities.

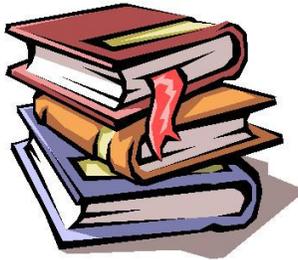
After the parade, everyone was invited to the Tanglewilde/Westmont swimming pool and treated to hot dogs, sliders, and ice cream floats. This is a tremendous undertaking each year by Tanglewilde & Westmont to commemorate our freedom and independence.



In This Issue:

Independence Day Parade.....	1	Move Over or Slow Down.....	5
New Hours at Kendall Library.....	2	Out and About in District G.....	6
3-1-1 Houston City Services	2	Neighborhood Traffic Management Program.....	6
FY 2011 Budget.....	3	Ending Abuse of Emergency Medical Services.....	7
2-1-1 Emergency Evacuation Assistance.....	3	Water Rate Increases Effective June 1	8
Anticipated Redistricting Timeline	4		

New Hours of Operation for Kendall Neighborhood Library



Beginning July 1, 2010, Kendall will have New Hours of Operation:

Monday	10 AM – 8 PM
Tuesday	10 AM – 6 PM
Wednesday	10 AM – 8 PM
Thursday	10 AM – 8 PM
Friday	10 AM – 6 PM
Saturday	10 AM – 5 PM

The current Hours for the Parks & Recreation basketball court and gymnasium at Kendall are:

6-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday
6-7 p.m. Friday
10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Saturday

On August 9, the basketball court and gymnasium will go back to non-summer hours as follows:

1-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday
1-8 p.m. Friday
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Saturday

We want to thank all those who wrote our office to comment about the lack of library hours on Saturday, as that helped us convince the library's leadership that this was a big issue to our constituents. We also wish to express our gratitude to Dr. Rhea Lawson and her staff for reevaluating the hours at Kendall and making this change. We received nearly 100 emails about Kendall, and this move will hopefully please a large number of constituents.

Volunteer Opportunities: A number of our constituents who wrote us told us they wanted to get involved and volunteer at Kendall. We are hoping that such constituents will follow through and get involved with the library.

Since its opening in February 2010, the Kendall Neighborhood Library has become the second busiest branch in the Houston Public Library system, checking out more than 40,000 items a month. In order to have steady supply of materials for library customers, the library needs help restocking its shelves.

Volunteers are needed to assist staff with shelving and shelf reading to make their collection available on a timely basis. Areas available include adult and children's fiction and non-fiction and picture books. There are 5 positions available.

Schedule: 2 hours/week--10 AM-12 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Commitment: Ongoing; 3 months minimum.

Training: Individual training is provided on the first day. Training covers library layout, basic shelving rules and procedures.

Contact: Karen Luik, Manager, Kendall Neighborhood Library, 832-393-1880 during library hours (10AM-6PM, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday; 10AM-8 PM Monday & Thursday; 10 AM - 5 PM Saturday) or karen.luik@houstontx.gov

One way to help insure Kendall will be able to stay open during its new hours of operation is for you to get involved and volunteer to help this busy branch library. We hope many of you will volunteer your time and talents.

Similar volunteer opportunities exist at all Houston neighborhood libraries. If you wish to volunteer at a different library, simply ask the on-site librarian for information about available volunteer opportunities.

3-1-1

During Fiscal Year 2009, the 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline received over 2.4 million calls and 8,100 requests via email. Citizens submitted over 17,000 requests via the self-service web portal. You can call 3-1-1 to request almost any city service.

From inside Houston, call 3-1-1 and speak to one of the customer service representatives. From outside the City of Houston, on cell phones or VoIP, call 713-837-0311 (phone lines

are open 7 days a week from 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight. Houstonians can also access this helpful service via fax to 713-837-0210, and e-mail to 311@HoustonTX.gov. A self-service request form is available online at www.houstontx.gov/311/311form.html

If you file a 3-1-1 request please make a note of the SR# (Service Request). If you have any problem getting your requested help, please notify our office for monitoring and follow up.



311 Service
Helpline

FY 2011 Budget

After a marathon City Council Session on June 23, Houston City Council unanimously approved a \$4.12 billion city budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2010. The taxpayer-supported General Fund expenditure portion of the budget is \$124 million below the adopted budget for the previous year and represents the lowest spending plan since 2008.

The General Fund portion of the budget is just under \$2 Billion. Revenues in this fund are comprised mainly of property and sales taxes, but also include other taxes, franchise fees (electric, telephone, cable, and natural gas), license fees, permit fees, charges for service, fines and forfeits, interest, and the sale of capital assets.

The other half of the City's revenues come from the various Enterprise Funds such as Aviation (\$414,017,927), Convention and Entertainment Facilities (\$112,224,107), Parking Management (\$16,555,920), and the Combined Utility System including the Water and Sewer Operating Fund (\$959,801,771), the combined utility system operating fund (\$365,028,365), and the combined utility system general purpose fund (\$238,226,843), and the Storm Water Fund (\$38,623,583).

The budget was balanced without a property tax increase and without major layoffs or cuts in services. The budget includes an ongoing review of all fees for service to achieve total cost of service recovery (some fees have not been increased in as long as 20 years).

The budget also meets all contractual obligations to employee unions (including a contractual 3.75% base pay increase for firefighters, a contractual 2% base pay increase for classified police employees, and a contractual 3% increase in base pay for all other municipal employees, plus 1.25% merit bonus for those who qualify), covers all contractual increases in health benefits costs, and provides for two police cadet classes (which will add a total of 140 new police officers) and three fire cadet classes (which will add a total of 126 new firefighters). The budget calls for a number of parcels or real property owned by the City to be sold during the next year, including the old Kendall library.

The Mayor's goal was to affect an average 3% across the board reduction in expenses and to implement management efficiencies designed to cut costs and save taxpayers approximately \$22 million (e.g., consolidation of HR, Payroll, and Information Technology, Fleet Management changes (fuel, repairs, and take-home vehicle policy), managing city facility hours of operation and continued renegotiation of contracts).

Finally, there is no reliance in this budget on debt to fund day-to-day expenses (e.g., no pension obligation bonds). For more information, see http://www.houstontx.gov/budget/11budprop/1_Maylet.pdf, which is a link to the budget letter Mayor Parker provided to City Council.

To review the entire budget, please visit: <http://www.houstontx.gov/budget/index.html>



A LOOK at the BUDGET

2-1-1 Emergency Hurricane Evacuation Assistance

In the event of an evacuation, would you need transportation assistance? This may be because you do not drive, are elderly, disabled, or simply do not own a vehicle. If so, dial 2-1-1 now to register for free emergency evacuation assistance.

The City of Houston encourages those members of our community who do not have access to transportation, and may need special transportation assistance during an emergency evacuation, to pre-register with the City of Houston's Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Note that all persons who have registered in previous years must re-register for assistance in 2010. Each year

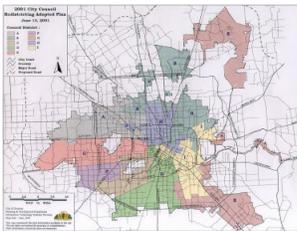
on January 1, the city's registration database is completely cleared.

To register on the internet, go to <http://www.houstonoem.net>. Under the tab "Transportation Assistance" select "Register Here". You may also contact the OEM at 713-884-4500 or dial 2-1-1, the Texas/United Way Helpline (cell phones or VoIP should call 1-877-541-7905).

For more information, you can also visit: <https://www.211texas.org/211/>



Anticipated Redistricting Timeline



United States
Census
2010

The City's Charter provides that when the City's population tops 2.1 million, the City is required to create two (2) new single-member District Council seats. While that milestone was passed in 2006, the City decided to wait until the results of the 2010 Census. Federal law requires precinct-level data for redistricting, which will not be available until after the 2010 count.

The last big shakeup in political representation at Houston City Hall came over 30 years ago, in 1979. As part of a deal with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the City was allowed to complete its annexation of Clear Lake City, over the objections of most residents of that area, only if it broke up its eight person city council system with all members elected at large. The new city council would retain five at-large members, but nine district seats were added. To placate a number of community leaders who had pushed for an all district council, the City and DOJ agreed that when the municipal population, then about 1.6 million, reached 2.1 million, two additional district council seats would be added.

The 2011 redistricting will require major surgery across the city, but especially on the west side, where most new growth has occurred. The insertion of two new districts, each with about 210,000 residents, into the current map will necessarily ripple across all the existing nine districts requiring extensive modifications.

Mayor Parker recently established the Special Ethics and Council Governance Committee on Redistricting and Term Limits. This Committee includes all members of City Council and will consider matters related to City Council redistricting based on the provisions of the Houston City Charter and the 2010 federal decennial census, and matters related to term limits. The Committee will also facilitate Council and community input in the redistricting process, and consider actions recommended by the Mayor's administration to establish and effect a smooth transition to new Council Districts.

Proposed Redistricting Schedule:

Mayor Parker has proposed the following redistricting schedule:

August 11, 2010	If desired, ordinance ordering Charter Amendment election to reduce residency requirements for single member districts from 12 months to 6 months, for November 8, 2011 election, placed on agenda (taggable to August 18)
August 18, 2010	Tag date for ordinance ordering Charter Amendment election
August 23, 2010	Deadline to order Charter Amendment election
November 2, 2010	Charter Amendment Election
January 15, 2011	Engage consultant (Demographer) to assist in redistricting
February 28, 2011	Census Bureau expected to release Texas data by this date
March 2, 2011	Ordinance declaring population of city and finding single member council districts materially imbalanced (assuming census information is received in February)
March 9, 2011	Resolution establishing procedures, criteria and rules for the establishment of council member district boundaries.
March, 2011	Community Input / Town Hall meetings

April 6, 2011	Staff Plan complete, per Planning Department
April 13, 2011	Public Hearing 9:00 a.m.
April 20, 2011	Public Hearings (2 sessions) 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
May 4, 2011	Redistricting Plan complete, per Planning Department. Legal Department prepares ordinance adopting the Redistricting Plan.
May 5-10, 2011	Review Plan with Council, per Planning Department
May 11, 2011	Council approves Redistricting Plan ordinance establishing boundaries of single member districts (taggable to May 18)
May 18, 2011	Tag date for Council approval of Redistricting Plan ordinance
June 1, 2011	Target date to submit plan to Department of Justice for preclearance (allows for a 60-day DOJ review prior to the deadline for setting the boundaries and completion of extended review, if necessary, prior to election date).
August 3, 2011	Deadline for Redistricting Plan ordinance establishing boundaries of single member districts (more than 3 months before Election Day, Texas Election Code Sec. 276.006)
August 8, 2011	First date to file for a place on ballot.
September 7, 2011	Last date to file for a place on ballot
November 8, 2011	Election Day

Move Over or Slow Down

Starting Monday July 12 through Sunday July 18, officers from the Houston Police Department's Traffic Enforcement Division will be actively educating motorists about Texas Transportation Code Section 545.157 "Passing Authorized Emergency Vehicle," commonly known as the "Move Over or Slow Down" law.

From Monday July 19 through Sunday July 25, HPD officers will be actively enforcing the "Move Over or Slow Down" law and will be issuing citations.

Under Texas law, motorists approaching a stationary emergency vehicle with its signals (emergency lights) on are required to either vacate the lane closest to the emergency vehicle (if a lane is available) or slow to a speed no more than 20 miles per hour below the posted speed limit. When the posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour or less, the driver must slow down to five miles per hour.

"Many motorists are unfamiliar with this law and we need to educate them," said Lieutenant Mike Hoesel of the HPD Traffic Enforcement Division. "It is imperative motorists understand this law and what it means for officer safety," he added.

A violation of the "Passing Authorized Emergency Vehicle" law is considered a Class C misdemeanor, punishable by a maximum of \$200 fine. The maximum fine is increased to \$500 if the violation results in property damage, and may be further elevated to a Class B misdemeanor if the violation results in bodily injury.



Out and About in District G



During the month of May, Council Member Pennington was extremely busy attending City Council Meetings and Committee Meetings held by the 9 City Council Committees he has been appointed to. In addition, Council Member Pennington and/or District G staff attended the following meetings/events outside the office.

- Habitat for Humanity Build
- Broad Oaks Civic Association Annual Meeting
- Greater Houston Partnership NASA Briefing by Representative Pete Olson
- Briar Bayou HOA Annual Meeting
- Harris County Healthcare Alliance
- The Institute for Regional Forecasting's 2010 Spring Real Estate Symposium, "Houston's Emergence from the National Economic Meltdown: The Short-Run and the Long-Run" featuring Dr. Barton Smith
- Houston Media Source Reception
- Houston Police Officers' Annual Memorial Service and Candlelight Vigil
- Houston Art Car Parade
- Boys and Girls Club Dinner
- ROCC Breakfast Club
- Mid-West Super Neighborhood #20
- Inter-Super Neighborhood Council Luncheon
- West Lane Civic Association
- Greater Houston Partnership Meeting
- City Council District A Town Hall Meeting (Crime Prevention)
- Houston Public Library Foundation Meeting
- West Houston Public Safety Coalition
- HPD Midwest Division 18 District PIP Meeting
- Afton Oaks General Meeting
- Washington Avenue Coalition/Memorial Park Super Neighborhood #22 Transportation Master Plan Meeting
- Memorial Super Neighborhood #16
- Memorial Drive Business Owners Alliance
- River Oaks Foundation
- Glendower Court POA
- YMCA Swim Wise Water Safety Program Kick Off

New Neighborhood Traffic Management Program



A reminder that there is a new Neighborhood Traffic Management Program. This is the program under which you get speed cushions or other traffic calming or mitigating devices (speed limit signs, stop lines, one-way streets and partial or half closure, improved shoulders and parking lanes, modified striping, bicycle lanes, turn restrictions, rumble strips, textured pavement, flashing beacons, speed limit radar unit signs, speed tables, intersection curb extensions, chokers, chicanes, forced turn islands, raised pedestrian refuge island, traffic circle islands, median barriers, diagonal diverters, roundabouts, and realigned intersection).

If you have an application in for a Neighborhood Traffic Project, please email ntmp@cityofhouston.net to confirm it is still an ongoing project. If you had an application simply requesting Speed Humps (or cushions), you will need to submit a new application—the sooner the better, as your priority will be determined from the new filing date.

Application: http://documents.publicworks.houstontx.gov/documents/divisions/traffic/ntmp_application_form.pdf

Brochure: http://documents.publicworks.houstontx.gov/documents/divisions/traffic/ntmp_brochure.pdf

Contact Information:

Neighborhood Traffic Management Program
Traffic & Transportation Division
Public Works & Engineering Department
City of Houston
611 Walker, 5th Floor
Phone: 713-837-0552
Fax: 713-837-7288
Email: ntmp@cityofhouston.net

Website: <http://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/traffic/ntmp.htm>

Ending Abuse of Emergency Medical Services

One of the very first issues Council Member Pennington took up was the abuse by some Houston residents of emergency medical services. In many instances, people repeatedly call 9-1-1 to get a ride to their doctor's office or to the drug store to renew their prescriptions or for other non-emergency reasons. In many of these instances, it may be that the citizen just does not know how to obtain needed medical care. And until recently, Houston ambulance operators were required to transport a patient regardless of their medical condition. The problem for the City in these tough economic times is that over half of the invoices for ambulance transport go unpaid in Houston, totaling \$30 Million a year.

On June 30, Council Member Pennington and City Council approved an amendment to Section 4-12 of the Houston Code of Ordinances to provide that a patient's transport status shall be determined solely on the basis of the medical needs of the patient in accordance with the most current fire department guidelines as approved by the physician medical director. This opens the door for the medical director to promulgate criteria and protocols for those who will and will not be transported by ambulance to an ER. As clearly stated in the amended ordinance, one's ability to pay will NOT be a factor—if you need emergency medical services, they will be provided whether or not you are able to pay.

On July 7, Council Member Pennington and City Council passed an Ordinance approving a professional services agreement with a consulting company that will assist the Houston Fire Department in establishing itself as an EMS Supplemental Payment Program provider. This is a state "pass-through" program that allows reimbursement to EMS providers that service Medicaid patients. Currently, Medicaid only pays a flat fee of \$250 per transport (whereas the true cost to the

City is between \$1,750 and \$2,200). Once HFD has become a recognized provider in the EMS Supplemental Payment Program, the City will submit a request for reimbursement for 68 cents on the dollar of the difference between the fixed Medicaid payments and the actual cost per run. Estimated revenues are expected to be up to \$2 Million a year.

The City is also participating in the TeleHealth Nurse Triage program. The goals of this program are to alleviate overcrowded area hospital emergency rooms, connect callers with medical homes where needed, decrease inappropriate ambulance dispatches, and improve ambulance call response times by referring non-emergency 9-1-1 callers to a dedicated TeleHealth Registered Nurse for triage. The nurse has the ability to book the patient an appointment at a local community clinic and/or provide the caller with alternate transportation by taxi to an ER or clinic.

The City also has a program called Care-Houston which attempts to identify so-called "frequent flyers" (people who have called for EMS eight (8) or more times in the last 90 days) and refer them to the Department of Health and Human Services to determine what conditions exist to cause them to repeatedly request 9-1-1 service. If it turns out that it is a social services issue, the program is able to refer the frequent flyer to whatever agency can best assist them.

The City has also recently instituted the Field Referral Process where medical services personnel who arrive on scene in response to a 9-1-1 call are allowed to access the TeleHealth Nursing Program. Medical personnel have the option of offering certain patients the opportunity to speak to a TeleHealth Nurse instead of receiving an ambulance transport to the hospital ER. Of referrals made from the field to date, 78% have resulted in other-than-ambulance transport.



If you would like to receive periodic emails from Mayor Annise D. Parker and the City of Houston on topics of interest to you and your neighborhood, please go to <http://www.houstontx.gov> and register with CitizensNet



United States
**Census
2010**



3-1-1

Cell phone or VoIP:
713-837-0311

District G Staff:

John Moss
Chief of Staff
(832) 393-3271

Mark F. Kirschke
Director of Communications
(832) 393-3267

Mary Harmon
Constituent Services
(832) 393-3272

Christina F. Manero
Volunteer Coordinator
(832) 393-3270

Jeffrey A. Lubritz
Council Intern
(832) 393-3266

City of Houston Water Rate Increase Effective June 1, 2010:

As you are no doubt aware, the City of Houston substantially raised its water/sewer rates, effective June 1, 2010. Council Member Pennington, joined by two other Council Members, voted NO on these increases.

The following charts show the new single-family and multi-family residential rates, which will appear on your July water bill:

Single-Family Water and Sewer Rates					
Combined Water and Sewer charges					
	5/8 or 3/4" meters	1 inch meter	1.5 inch meter	2 inch meter	3 inch meter
Basic charge, per meter size	\$11.56	\$12.84	\$16.51	\$18.14	\$26.03
<i>The numbers below this line include both Base and Volume charges</i>					
1,000 gallons	\$11.79	\$13.07	\$16.74	\$18.37	\$26.26
2,000 gallons	\$16.91	\$18.19	\$21.86	\$23.49	\$31.38
3,000 gallons	\$17.41	\$18.69	\$22.36	\$23.99	\$31.88
4,000 gallons	\$36.32	\$37.60	\$41.27	\$42.90	\$50.79
5,000 gallons	\$43.63	\$44.91	\$48.58	\$50.21	\$58.10
6,000 gallons	\$52.74	\$54.02	\$57.69	\$59.32	\$67.21
From 7,000 to 12,000 gallons	As above, plus add \$9.40 per 1,000 gallons over 6,000, to a maximum of 12,000 gallons				
Over 12,000 gallons	As above, plus add \$11.76 per 1,000 gallons over 12,000 gallons				

Multi-Family Water and Sewer Rates		
Combined Water and Sewer charges		
	Meter size (Inches)	Basic Charge, per meter size
Basic Charge, per meter size (0 consumption)	5/8	\$12.44
	3/4	\$12.58
	1	\$13.92
	1.5	\$18.12
	2	\$20.02
	3	\$44.38
	4	\$56.34
	6	\$90.75
	8	\$231.63
	10+	\$246.89
Volume Charge (All consumption)	All meter sizes	Add \$8.51 per 1,000 gallons

All other water and sewer rates are available on the City of Houston website: <https://www.houstonwaterbills.houstontx.gov/>