

**Super Neighborhood Alliance**  
**Minutes from Meeting held January 14, 2019**



**Guests**

Mayor Sylvester Turner  
Kimberly Hatter, Mayor's Office  
Brandon Denton, Mayor's Office  
CM Mike Knox, At-Large Pos. 1  
CM David Robinson, At-Large Pos. 2  
CM Amanda Edwards, At-Large Pos. 4  
Carol Haddock, Director, Public Works  
Michael Ereti, Public Works  
Alyce Coffee, Solid Waste Mgmt.  
Teresa Geisheker, Planning Dept.  
Rhonda Sauter, DON  
Ellery Makuch, HCDD  
Jamaeya Carmouche, Harris Co. Prec. 1  
Nelson Espitia, Harris Co. Prec. 2  
Francisco Castillo, Harris Co. Prec. 2  
Jacqueline Smith, FEMA  
Abner Lyons, State Rep. H. Dutton  
Gladys House-El, Freedman's Town  
Ashley Johnson, LINK Houston  
Margaret Dunlap, METRO  
Erica Cantu  
Bill Baldwin  
Mario Castillo  
Sallie Alcorn, Candidate At-Large 5  
George Alcorn  
Raj Salhotra, Candidate At-Large 1  
Irene Martinez, TXRX Labs/NSF  
Madison Moore, TXRX Labs/NSF

**Super Neighborhood Representatives**

Tina Sullivan, SNC 03  
Philip Salerno, SNC 05  
Ricky Miller, SNC 05  
Priscilla Graham, SNC 06  
Esmeralda Ramirez, SNC 06  
James Thibodeaux, SNC 06  
Angie Thibodeaux, SNC 06  
Rain Eatmon, SNC 06  
Roger Gingell, SNC 10

Mark Klein, SNC 12  
Pedro Ayaragoitia, SNC 15  
Randy Jones, SNC 16  
Greg Sergesketter, SNC 16  
Jack O'Connor, SNC 17  
Nick Kornuta, SNC 17  
Jeff Baker, SNC 17  
Michael Huffmaster, SNA Chairman, SNC 18  
Judson Bryant, SNC 18  
Jane West, SNA Secretary, SNC 22  
Mike Van Dusen, SNC 22  
Barbara Quattro, SNC 25  
Doug Smith, SNC 25  
Sandra Rodriguez, SNC 27  
Kathie Easterly, SNC 28  
Terry Cominsky, SNC 31  
Cheryl O'Brien, SNC 32  
Girien Salazar, SNC 34  
Esmeralda Salazar, SNC 34  
Marcy Williams, SNC 36  
Becky Edmondson, SNC 37  
Cindy Chapman, SNC 37  
Jeff Peters, SNC 38  
Stan Sarman, SNC 43  
Linda Smith, SNC 46  
David Smith, SNC 46  
Ivory Mayhorn, SNC 47  
Laura Jones, SNC 47  
Huey German-Wilson, SNC 48  
Ken Williams, SNC 48  
Juan Antonio Sorto, SNC 49/50  
Albert Coleman SNC 49/50  
Maria Josie Robles, SNC 51  
Sylvia Cavazos, SNC 51  
Vicky Salinas Colorado, SNC 51  
Jessica Hulsey, SNC 63  
Kathleen O'Reilly, SNC 66  
Tomaro Bell, SNC 83  
Scott Cubbler, SNC 84

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

### I. Introductions and Approval of Minutes for December 10, 2018

Kathleen O'Reilly moved and Tomaro Bell seconded approval of the December 10, 2018, meeting minutes. Motion carried. Chairman Huffmaster recognized the elected officials and other dignitaries present, i.e., CM Knox, CM Robinson, CM Edwards, Public Works Director Carol Haddock, Planning Acting Director Margaret Wallace-Brown, and Department of Neighborhoods Director Takasha Francis.

### II. Mayor Sylvester Turner - A New Year's Address

**Complete Communities.** Mayor Turner opened his remarks by stating that he is not the mayor of two cities, a city of haves and a city of have-nots. His signature initiative is Complete Communities: an initiative whose goal it is to provide all communities quality neighborhood schools, grocery stores, parks and green space, business and job opportunities. The City of Houston ("COH") does not have all the resources needed to accomplish this goal so he is working to leverage resources and is talking with all the major banks about investing in Houston communities as they have invested in communities in other cities.

**Flooding and Drainage.** Drainage and flood prevention remain top priorities. Living in the post-Hurricane Harvey era, he is doing everything possible to mitigate the risk of flooding and is committed to being transparent. Rebuild Houston is being rebranded, will be more transparent, and will endeavor to do more projects that will positively impact neighborhoods. Examples are Storm Water Action Team ("S.W.A.T.") projects that have been very popular. The mayor is committed to doing more of these relatively small projects aimed at improving neighborhood drainage.

**Hurricane Recovery.** Mayor Turner announced the opening of four neighborhood centers at which applications are being accepted for federal funds to reimburse costs of hurricane repair and recovery. This reimbursement program being administered by the COH has something for everyone. While eligibility for most of the federal funding is restricted to the neediest members of our population; approximately 20% of this funding is not income-restricted.

**Recycling and Solid Waste Management.** The agenda for this week's city council meeting includes an emergency measure for spending \$5,000,000 to rent equipment, pay overtime to existing employees, and hire an outside contractor to catch-up the collection of recyclable waste. Trucks ordered last year aren't expected to be delivered until August of this year. The emergency measure is expected to bridge the gap. Regular trash is being picked up on schedule; the equipment failures are only effective recycling.

**Public Safety:** The COH needs 600 to 1,000 additional police officers. COH has more gangs than we'd like and we're partnering with all available resources to combat them. The shortage in funding for public safety is related to passage of Proposition B, the ballot initiative calling for pay parity between police officers and firefighters of equal rank. The mayor said that the COH cannot afford Prop B; then or now because it will cost @ \$100 million per year and has no revenue source. He said that he'll do his best to honor the voters' choice, but the city does not have the resources to pay for it. When people look at the city budget of \$5 billion, they say surely there are resources available for this purpose, but over half of the budget is tied up in enterprise funds, i.e., funds that can only be spent for a specific purpose. The police and fire departments are the two biggest departments that use general funds; over 90% of both those budgets is for personnel. The COH must balance its budget by the end of June; absent an increase in revenue, the only way to pay for Proposition B is to make reductions somewhere else. Everyone expects the mayor to find a path forward. He intends to meet with firefighters on Wednesday. He's open to all suggestions. But with a budget that must be balanced, and without a revenue source, times are going to be bumpy.

Randy Jones (SNC 16) asked if there could be a remedy to Prop B through collective bargaining? The Mayor said that there can be a negotiated remedy if, for example, firefighters are willing to take less instead of getting it all at once. We've all seen what's happening at the federal level. That's not a path forward. Firefighters vs. city

government; firefighters win.

Jack O'Connor (SNC 17) said he can walk to three fire stations; he's from NYC and he couldn't do that there. The mayor responded that the COH is looking at the possibility of restructuring the fire department to improve efficiency. Gladys House asked about the possibility of using funds otherwise given to the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones ("TIRZ")? The mayor said that they're funding stream is created by the state legislature and already allocated.

Tomaro Bell (SNC 83) asked the mayor to comment on the consent decree related to sanitary sewer overflows. The mayor said that it's a "friendly lawsuit" with the federal government that dates from 2010 that the COH is very close to resolving. He said that at one point it stood to cost the city up to \$5-\$7B, but that they are on the verge of reaching a pretty good deal that he hopes to announce within the next 30-45 days. He said when he became mayor, he committed not to push problems off to the next mayor. He's handled pension reform, he's working on garbage equipment some of which dates to 2003, on the consent decree dates to 2010, and on flooding and drainage by using federal funds to rebuild not just to what was here, but to rebuild the city better.

Kathleen O'Reilly (SNC 66) expressed appreciation for all that the mayor is doing to improve the quality of life and commented that she's looking forward to water management plan, and to construction standards at both the micro and the macro level, and to policies that will encourage constituents to reduce the generation of solid waste. The mayor responded that he has received many complaints of contractors not being respectful, i.e., tearing up yards and gutters and not cleaning up, doing shoddy work; adversely impacting seniors and not being good civic partners.

Huey German-Wilson (SNC 48) said that Trinity Houston Gardens experienced flooding during Hurricane Harvey in part because of its location near rail yards. Asserting that even though the same areas flood every time it rains, she asked what could be done as community members have not been able to talk to the railroads who can't even be counted on to remove their own trash. Mayor Turner said that the community may not be able to talk to the railroads, but that the city could. He asked for Ms. German-Wilson's contact information and said that he would follow up with Stephen Costello and the city's County partners. Chairman Huffmaster added that railroads restrict drainage or aggravate flooding in many neighborhoods, and thanked Mayor Turner for support from Stephen Costello to address this issue.

Jessica Hulsey (SNC 63) asked about housing, commenting that 60-70% of the population in the Second Ward were renters and that permanent single family housing is needed to balance the construction of large multi-family projects. Asserting that need for single family housing is on the white board in his office, the mayor said that the question is how to strike a balance. Planning Commissioner Bill Baldwin observed that increasing the allowable density beyond 27 units per acre could help by allowing smaller houses to be built less expensively. Asserting that he did not want a city only for the very rich and the very poor, the mayor said that he's talking to banks not only about financing home purchases, but also providing buyer assistance initiatives.

James Thibodeaux (SNC 06) asked if any of the hurricane recovery funds had been allocated for garbage trucks. The mayor said, "Yes," but only for trucks that were damaged in the hurricane, not for replacing the aged fleet.

Pedro Ayaragoitia (SNC 15) commented that 70-80% of police officers and firefighters do not live in the city, and that the city of Chicago requires police officers and firefighters to live in the city, and asked if the COH could provide incentives for police officers and firefighters to live in the city? The mayor said that the COH could provide incentives, but that doing so requires money, and asked, "Am I going to incentivize them to move in when I need the money to hire more?" He reiterated that passage of Proposition B set the COH back financially. He also said that he's an optimist and that he would be sitting down with firefighters in an effort to find a path forward.

CM Knox commended that the emergency measure was not just \$5M for purchases, but also included about \$1M in overtime for to complete the skipped collections, and to contract with an outside company to take approximately one quarter of the city's recycling routes. He expressed frustration at the need for these emergency expenditures.

Jane West (SNC 22) commented that residents in a number of inner-loop SNs are experiencing adverse impacts from neighborhood bars and clubs in the form of crime such as public intoxication, burglary of motor vehicles, disorderly conduct, and nuisances such as loud music, traffic congestion, and parked cars that block streets and driveways, and asked if the mayor would work with a quality of life committee that was forming to address these issues. The mayor agreed and said that he planned to visit some late night hot spots with HPD Chief Acevedo to assess the situation.

Doug Smith (SNC 25) asked if the mayor would consider allowing the minimum lot size protections to be permanent and not expire after a certain number of years. Planning Commissioner Bill Baldwin stated that newly created minimum lot size areas last for 40 years, and that a 10-year automatic renewal applies to areas created before the 40-year time frame was adopted.

Mike Van Dusen (SNC 22) observed that there are tens of thousands of homeowners who've acted to have the minimum lot size protections apply to their homes. The mayor said that he's a big fan of these protections.

Barbara Quattro (SNC 25) asked if the COH could use recycled plastics for roads and other projects? The mayor said that he would defer that issue to the Public Works Department.

Alyce Coffee (Solid Waste Management) added that the source of illegally dumped truck tires can be traced, but the source of illegally dumped car tires cannot be traced. As an effort to discourage illegal dumping of tires, someone suggested that the COH should collect a fee or deposit for care tires.

Ivory Mayhorn (SNC 47) thanked the mayor for all of his work, observed that many people lost businesses and jobs as a result of Hurricane Harvey, and asked in any of the hurricane recovery funds would be used for work force development? The mayor said, "Yes," and referred Mr. Mayhorn to Tom McCasland, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development for follow-up.

### **III. Announcements**

Chairman Huffmaster recognized HISD Board President Rhonda Skillern-Jones, and a representative from County Judge Lina Hidalgo's office for having joined the meeting. Chairman Huffmaster announced that Recovery Houston was entering a new phase now that the four new resource centers are open. He also recognized Ellery Makuch from the COH's Housing and Community Development Department as having flyers with the locations of the resource centers. Additional information is available at [www.recovery.houstontx.gov](http://www.recovery.houstontx.gov) or by calling 832-393-0550. The flyers state that the first step in receiving aid is to complete the Recovery Survey which can be done on-line. Ms. Makuch said that a fifth resource center is expected to open in March, and that the outreach team has two mobile units that can visit meetings held elsewhere. She also said that there will be workforce development in addition to housing aid.

Chairman Huffmaster announced that SNA activities have been slow over the holidays, but that members of the SNA's executive committee did meet with representatives of the Planning Department in January and that they agreed to notify SN Councils of variance applications. Any SN Council that is not receiving notices of variances should see Chairman Huffmaster or Secretary West to check that the COH has the correct contact information for your SNC. Since the Planning Department has agreed to target each active SN Council for receiving notices of variance requests that come forward for their areas, it is more important than ever to keep your contact information current. It is also important to keep your civic club information current as the Planning and Public Works Departments both use that contact information to notify stakeholders for pertinent meetings. He also announced that the Planning Department newsletter is available on-line, and emphasized that the newsletter provides good information.

Chairman Huffmaster expressed thanks and appreciation for having had the opportunity to serve as chairman for the last two years which, he observed, had been busy and challenging. He noted that over the course of these two

years, the SNA has experienced stronger engagement with both city departments and the county, and observed that engagement means that the SNA's opinion carries weight and has influence on policy and practices. He recognized the members of his executive committee; Juan Antonio Sorto, Jane West, Tomaro Bell, Mark Klein, Doug Smith, Kathleen O'Reilly, and Cindy Chapman, and thanked all who participate in the SNA and stand for transparency, public engagement, and the power of speaking with one voice. He also recognized the support received from the Department of Neighborhoods, and especially from Rhonda Sauter, the head of the Mayor's Citizens Assistance Office.

#### **IV. Old Business**

**A. SNA Officer Elections:** The Nominating Committee recommended Cindy Chapman (SNC 37) to serve as Chairwoman, and Juan Antonio Sorto (SNC 48) to serve as Vice-Chairman. Roger Gingell (SNC 10) had previously nominated himself to serve as chairman. No nominations were received from the floor. Chairman Huffmaster opened the floor to each of the candidates to address the attendees. Greg Sergesketter (SNC 16) objected to Mr. Gingell as unqualified to serve as chairman due to a conflict of interest arising from his representation of an entity that has sued the city. Following the candidates' statements, a roll call vote was held for the position of chair pursuant to which 24 votes were cast for Cindy Chapman and 2 votes were cast for Roger Gingell (see attached record of roll call vote). There being only one candidate for the position of vice-chair, Juan Antonio Sorto was elected without a roll call vote.

**B. Survey:** Chairman Huffmaster announced that copies of the survey that will be used to create the SNA's annual report are available and asking representatives of all active SN Councils to complete and submit a survey.

**V. New Business:** None.

**VI. Committees Reports:** None received.

#### **VII. Open Comments (5 minutes)**

Rhonda Sauter from the Mayor's Citizens Assistance Office announced that Eastex/Jensen (SNC 46) had recently been recognized, and that a new SN Council for the Astrodome area (SNC 34) is in the process of forming.

#### **VIII. Adjournment: 8:15 p.m.**

At 8:15 p.m. Terry Cominsky (SNC 31) moved and Tomaro Bell (SNC 83) seconded adjournment; motion carried. The next SNA meeting will be Monday, February 11, 2019.

SNA Roll Call Vote for Officers Held in January 2019

SNC			Chair: Chapman		Chair: Gingell		Vice-Chair Sorto	
03	1	Carverdale						
05	1	G. Inwood		1				
06	1	Acres Homes		1				
10	1	Spring Branch West				1		
12	1	Central NW		1				
15	1	G. Heights		1				
16	1	Memorial		1				
17	1	Eldridge/ West Oaks		1				
18	1	Briar Forest		1				
22	1	Washington Ave		1				
25	1	Alief		1				
27	1	Gulfton		1				
31	1	G. Meyerland		1				
32	1	Braeswood		1				
36	1	Brays Oaks		1				
37	1	Westbury		1				
38	1	Southwest		1				
43	1	Kingwood		1				
46	1	Eastex/Jensen		1				
47	1	E. Little York Homestead		1				
48	1	Trinity/ H. Gardens		1				
49/50	1	E. Houston		1				
51	1	Northside Village		1				
63	1	Second Ward		0		1		
66	1	Museum Park		1				
83	1	McGregor		1				
84	1	Spring Branch N North		1				
Total	27			24		2		