

Super Neighborhood Alliance

Minutes from Meeting held November 11, 2019, at MECA, 1900 Kane Street



Guests

Jackie Dozier, Forming SNC 02
Laurie Robinson, Forming SNC 02
Colin Gary, Airbag Recall
Jenna Harpring, Airbag Recall
Margaret Dunlap, METRO
Dexter Handy, Citizens Transp. Coalition
Austin Halvorson, State Rep. Sarah Davis
Jack Valinski, KPFT
Diana Lerma Pfeifer, Stop TxDOT
Francisco Castillo, Harris Co., Pct. 2
Victoria Lara, University of Houston
Raj Salhotra, Candidate At-Large 1
Willie Davis, Candidate At-Large 2
Michael Kubosh, Candidate At-Large 3
Janaeya Carmouche, Candidate At-Large 3
Marcel McClinton, Janaeya Carmouche Campaign
Dawn Rogers, Candidate
Maria T. Jackson, Candidate
Anthony Dolcefino, Candidate At-Large 4
Sallie Alcorn, Candidate At-Large 5

Super Neighborhood Representatives

Philip Salerno, SNC 05
Ricky Miller, SNC 05
Mark Klein, SNC 12
Pedro Ayaragoitia, SNC 15
Randy Jones, SNC 16
Jeff Baker, SNC 17
Jane West, SNA Secretary, SNC 22
Mike VanDusen, SNC 22
Stacie Fairchild, SNC 22
Cheryl O'Brien, SNC 32
Cindy Chapman, SNC 37
Jeff Peters, SNC 38
Stephen Polnaszek, SNC 38
Juan Antonio Sorto, SNA Vice-Chairman, SNC 49/50
Cynthia Aceves-Lewis, SNC 62
Jessica Hulsey, SNC 63
Tina Sullivan, SNC 63
Kathleen O'Reilly, SNC 66
Leroy West, SNC 71/76
Tomaro Bell, SNC 83

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m.

I. Introductions

(05 minutes)

II. Acceptance of Minutes from Meeting Held on September 9, 2019

(05 minutes)

Tomaro Bell (SNC 83) moves, and Philip Salerno (SNC 05), seconds approval of the minutes from October 14, 2019. Motion carries.

III. Presentations:

A. Airbag Recall: Jenna Harpring and Colin Gary (05 minutes)

Tens of millions of airbags are dangerously defective. Sixteen people have died in the United States alone, including two in the Houston area, and hundreds have been seriously injured. Even a minor collision can cause these airbags to explode during deployment, blasting sharp metal fragments at drivers and passengers. In response, vehicle manufacturers are conducting the largest safety recall in U.S. history. Authorized dealerships are repairing defective airbags for FREE. Parts for nearly all affected vehicles are in good supply at local dealerships and some are offering free towing, loaner vehicles, shuttle service or other accommodations for affected vehicle owners.

DON'T RISK INJURY OR DEATH. CHECK IF YOUR VEHICLE IS AFFECTED AND, IF NEEDED, FIND A DEALERSHIP TO REPAIR YOUR AIRBAG. More information about the recall, including a list of recalled brands and models, is available on-line at www.airbagrecall.com.

B. 5G Cell Towers Coming to Neighborhoods: Philip Salerno (SNC 05) (15 minutes)

The permitting and installation of micro cell phone towers under 60 feet is governed by both Senate Bill #1004 of 2017 and Chapter 5 of the City of Houston Infrastructure Design Manual. Senate Bill #1004 added Chapter 284 to Subtitle A, Title 9, of the Local Government Code. Chapter 284 governs the deployment of network nodes in public right-of-ways (ROW). Key definitions in Subchapter A include:

Key Definitions

Collocation - the installation, mounting, maintenance, modification, operation, or replacement of network nodes in public ROW on or adjacent to a pole. Collocation is further discussed in Section 284.056.

Decorative pole – streetlight pole specifically designed and placed for aesthetic purposes on which no appurtenances or attachments have been placed or are permitted to be placed.

Design District – an area zoned or otherwise designated by municipal code, and for which the city maintains and enforces unique design and aesthetic design & standards.

Historic district – an area zoned or otherwise designated as a historic district under municipal, state, or federal law.

Important Sections of Chapter 284

Section 284.052 prohibits the City from entering into exclusive arrangements for the use of the public ROW.

Sections 284.053, 284.054 & 284.055 provide for the charging of rates to be paid by network providers.

Section 284.056 allows for collocation of network nodes on service poles.

Section 284.103 covers the general limitations on the placement of poles in the public ROW.

Sections 284.104 covers the installation of poles in municipal parks & residential areas and requires that poles and nodes shall comply with private deed restrictions and other private restrictions.

Section 284.105 covers the installation of poles in historic or design districts. Applicable only to design districts; e.g., management districts that have decorative poles, or to historic districts.

Sections 284.107 requires compliance with undergrounding requirements including private deed restrictions

or other public or private restrictions without land use approval.

Section 284.152 provides for city authority to require a permit for the poles & nodes and limits the number of nodes that may be submitted in one application to 30. It does not limit the number of consolidated applications that can be submitted at one time.

Sections 284.154 requires the City to approve or deny the application not later than 150 days after a completed application is submitted.

Section 284.155 requires the network provider to begin installation not later than six months after the final approval of the application; but, the City may grant extensions.

How to File a Complaint

It is recommended that you sign up for the Planning & Development Dept. email distribution list of permits.

The Office of the City Engineer (OCE) is responsible for approving permit applications for micro cell phone towers below 60 feet. OCE also has an email distribution list.

Do not submit a 311 ticket as they do not know what to do with a complaint about the poles.

If there is a wooden stick usually with a plastic color flag attached placed in the ROW it should have written on it the permit/project number.

Contact the OCE (832.394.9137) and provide them the permit number or the location of the stick.

If you are within a management district or historic district, contact them about the placement of the poles and ask if your district has restrictions.

Request a meeting with the OCE and request that they review the permit application based upon your exceptions; e.g., design district, deed restrictions, etc.

If the contractor hired by the network provider damages your property, ask OCE for the name and contact information for the provider and file a complaint for re-payment.

My HOA's Experience

I first found out about the poles when I discovered that the poles were being placed inside the front yards of my community while the pole holes were being dug.

I contacted my councilmember's office and they knew little about this issue. They told me to contact 311. 311 didn't know what to do and told me to call the Planning & Development (P&D) Department, but provided an incorrect telephone number.

I spoke with Planning & Development Department and found out that they do not have governance since the poles are below 60 feet and told me to contact the OCE.

I contacted OCE via telephone and email and discussed the restrictions for my community. They indicated that they would schedule a meeting that week; but, then they went silent.

I ended up having to appear before the City Council & Mayor requesting that the OCE honor their commitment to hold a meeting.

Finally the meeting was held and the engineer, inspector, and an attorney showed up from OCE. I had the director of our management district present as well.

My community has only underground utilities and has no poles except street poles in the ROW on the public street.

It turned out that the management district had not completed the process for specifying decorative poles.

The end result was that the contractor moved the pole location from the front yards to the space between the sidewalk and the street where the street poles are located. The contractor was also in violation of that specific permit as they were supposed to install metal poles instead of wooden poles in the areas adjacent to our community in accordance with Chapter 284.

The damage caused by the contractor to our irrigation system was never reimbursed. They also never repaired the damage to the sidewalk from boring into the ground to install the various electrical lines. We ended up repairing the sidewalk to avoid being sued for a slip and fall or tripping incident.

No collocation with the street poles was permitted.

IV. Old Business

A. SNA S.W.O.T. Analysis - Survey Results re Threats:

Juan Antonio Sorto (SNC 49/50)

(10 minutes)

The last few of months the SNA has been working on an internal assessment. This is the first time in the SNA's 20-year existence that this has been undertaken. May 13th the SNA meeting included a workshop in which attendees split into groups that were asked to list the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats that the SNA faces. The responses from that assessment were gathered, and since then SNA members have been asked to respond to surveys aimed at ranking the responses. Last month we focused on outside opportunities; this month's focus is outside threats. The results of the survey on outside threats is as follows:

Lack of participation; Lack of active individual Super Neighborhoods; Lack of support by City Council; Lack of support by City departments; Lack of support by the mayor; Severe weather events; Repercussion for controversial issues like "Prop B"; City can stop recognizing and terminate the Super Neighborhood Program; Lack of support by nonprofits; Outside personal agendas, such as political parties, can influence the vision and goals of the SNA. The top outside threats identified by survey participants are as follows:

55% Lack of Participation

55% Lack of Support by Mayor

55% Lack of Participation by Civic Clubs, HOA, etc

40% Lack of Support by City Council

35% Lack of Support by City Departments

35% Change in elected officials

B. 2020 Nominating Committee:

Tomaro Bell (SNC 83), Jane West (SNC 22), Scott Cubbler (SNC 84)

(05 minutes)

Tomaro Bell (SNC 83) announced that during the January meeting elections will be held for all three SNA officer positions for 2020. The chair and vice-chair positions are one-year positions and the secretary position is a two-year position. Individuals may serve two terms in each position. Ms. Bell invited people

interested in serving in any of these positions to let the nominating committee know. The nominating committee will present its report at the December meeting.

V. New Business:

A. Discuss and Consider Plans for Holiday Celebration at December Meeting

Cindy Chapman (SNC 37) (05 minutes)

Following discussion lead by Chairman Chapman and Stacie Fairchild (SN22) it was decided that the SNA will hold a pot-luck holiday celebration starting a half hour before the regularly scheduled December meeting on Monday, December 9th. Ms. Fairchild will post on the SNA's Facebook page a sign-up sheet for the celebration. Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo is the speaker scheduled for the December 9th meeting.

B. Review of November Elections and December Run-off Elections

Cindy Chapman (SNC 37) (30 minutes)

The November elections resolved few of the races for city elected office, so there will be run-off elections in the races for mayor, all five of the at-large city council positions, and many of the district council races. The run-off election will be held on Saturday, December 14th and early voting will start on Wednesday, November 27th. The following candidates for the at-large city council positions attended the SNA meeting and were invited to address the audience for two minutes: Raj Salhotra (candidate for at-large position one); Willie Davis (candidate for at-large position two); Michael Kubosh (candidate for at-large position three); Anthony Dolcefino (candidate for at-large position four); and Sallie Alcorn (candidate for at-large position five).

VI. External Advisory Committees - Moving to WRITTEN Reports (05 minutes)

- A. Housing Work Group: J.A. Sorto
- B. Houston Coalition for Complete Streets: P. Salerno (written report attached)
- C. Complete Communities: J. A. Sorto
- D. Bicycle Advisory Committee: M. Van Dusen (written report attached)
- E. Houston Permit Center Advisory Board: C. Chapman and P. Salerno
- F. Planning Department's I-45: J. A. Sorto and P. Salerno (written report attached)

VII. Open Comments (05 minutes)

A discussion of the problem of noise generated by special events and certain businesses (primarily bars and clubs) was held. Cheryl O'Brien (SNC 32) offered to chair a committee charged with studying the issue.

VIII. Adjournment: 8:00 p.m.