

**Super Neighborhood Alliance**  
**Minutes from Meeting held March 11, 2019, at City Hall Annex**



**Guests**

CM Mike Knox, At-Large Pos. 1  
CM Michael Kubosh, At-Large Pos. 3  
CM Amanda Edwards, At-Large Pos. 4  
Kimberly Hatter, COH-Mayor's Office  
Brandon Denton, COH-Mayor's Office  
John Gibbs, CM Michael Kubosh  
Jordan Thoms, CM Amanda Edwards  
Daniel Santamaria, CM Gallegos (Dist. I)  
Teresa Geisheker, Planning Dept.  
Rhonda Sauter, DON-COH  
Jack Valinski, DON-COH  
Alyce Coffey, COH-SWM  
Veronica Baxter Lamb, H-GAC  
Du-Ha Nguyen, Harris Co. Clerk's Off.  
Shannon Martin, Harris Co., Pct. 1  
Francisco Castillo, Harris Co., Pct. 2  
Jacqueline Smith, FEMA  
Margaret Dunlap, METRO  
Tamra Emerye  
Sharon Hamilton, Windsor Village  
Dr. Letitia Plummer, At-Large 5 Candidate  
Daer Kyle, Dr. Plummer

**Super Neighborhood Representatives**

Philip Salerno, SNC 05  
E. Rain Eatmon, SNC 06  
Mark Klein, SNC 12  
Ashley Stubbs, SNC 14  
Pedro Ayaragoitia, SNC 15  
Randy Jones, SNC 16  
Steve Ashy, SNC 17

Judson Bryant, SNC 18  
Michael Huffmaster, SNA Past Chair, SNC 18  
Jane West, SNA Secretary, SNC 22  
Mike Van Dusen, SNC 22  
Stacie Fairchild, SNC 22  
Mark Fairchild, SNC 22  
Kay Warhol, SNC 24  
Doug Smith, SNC 25  
Terry Cominski, SNC 31  
Marcy Williams, SNC 36  
Cindy Chapman, SNA Chairwoman, SNC 37  
Lynae Novominsky, SNC 38  
Linda Scurlock, SNC 39/40  
Bessie Mansfield, SNC 39/40  
Barbara Blue, SNC 41  
Huey German-Wilson, SNC 48  
Juan Antonio Sorto, SNA Vice-Chairman, SNC 49/50  
Albert Coleman SNC 49/50  
Sylvia Cavazos, SNC 51  
Debbie Allan, SNC 52  
Keith Downey, SNC 52  
Noel Coward, SNC 62  
Kay Walton, SNC 62  
Jim Honey, SNC 62  
Jessica Hulsey, SNC 63  
Joise Jones, SNC 63  
Kathleen O'Reilly, SNC 66  
Leroy West, SNC 71  
Tomaro Bell, SNC 83  
Dave Durham, SNC 84  
Scott Cubbler, SNC 84

**Meeting called to order at 6:40 p.m.**

**I. Introductions**

**II. Acceptance of Minutes from Meeting Held on March 11, 2019**

Doug Smith (SNC 25) moved and Philip Salerno (SNC 05) seconded acceptance of the March 11, 2019, meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**III. Officers' Reports - Written Report(s)**

Written reports have not been distributed for April. Manner and means of distribution will be discussed at May meeting.

**IV. Presentations**

**A. At-Large Position 4 CM Amanda Edwards**

The City of Houston ("COH") is responsible for administering federal funds dedicated to the purpose of providing financial assistance to home owners' whose primary residences were damaged during Hurricane Harvey. To protect the intended purpose of these funds, there are provisions in the agreements and other paper work pursuant to which the funds are being distributed that includes a provision that makes being away from the home for 90 days or more an item of default unless the home owner obtains prior permission from the director of the Department of Housing and Community Development. CM Edwards "tagged" the item pursuant to which this provision would have been approved by city council meaning that city council's vote has been delayed for one week. In the meantime she was proposed an amendment to remove that provision from the relevant paper work. CM Edwards said that this item will impact anyone who receives financial assistance of \$20,000 or more. CM Knox shared a story about an HPD officer who was burned in an automobile crash who has been hospitalized for six months.

Ms. Scurlock (SNC 39/40) questioned if this provision would require people to stay in the home while repairs are being done? CM Edwards answered, "No."

Pedro Ayaragoitia (SNC 15) asked if repairs would have to be completed in 90 days? CM Edwards responded, "No," and explained that the duration of the lien would vary based on the amount of aid received to insure that the funds are being used by people for their primary residences and not for rental properties. CM Edwards said that she was seeking help from her colleagues and help from community members to persuade her colleagues to vote to approve her proposed amendment that would remove the provision that would make it a violation for an aid recipient to be out of their home for 90 days or more without written permission.

Mr. Ayaragoitia (SNC 15) asked why the 90 day provision is in the paper work? CM Edwards responded that she did not know. She also acknowledged that there are a variety of circumstances that could occur that would require someone to be away from their home for 90 days without violating the primary residency requirement.

Tomaro Bell (SNC 83) asked CM Edwards if she would like people to come to city council to speak to this issue. CM Edwards responded that she would welcome speakers.

Michael Huffmaster (SNC 18) asked if the Housing and Community Development Department has come forward with alternative language? CM Edwards responded that the department has offered

to add language stating that permission to be away from the home for 90 days or more would not unreasonably be denied, but that doesn't address the concern.

Juan Sorto (SNC 49/50) commented that the COH asked people to come out and give opinion about the plan for the funds about to come our way and he saw community respond enthusiastically, but he's disappointed that HCDD hasn't taken the same aggressive approach to come back to the community to say what's happening now, *i.e.*, to describe the plan that has been put in place and let people know they can receive needed. Mr. Sorto invited the council members at the meeting to come back to the community to explain what is adopted. CM Edwards responded that she would be willing to do that. She explained that city council was scheduled to vote on the issue on Wednesday, but that the public's opportunity to comment would be during public session on Tuesday afternoon. She urged SN leaders to advise council members to vote to remove the requirement that homeowners seek permission to be away from their homes for 90 days or more. She said that anyone wishing to speak to city council need to call the City Secretary's office to sign up to speak at 832-393-1100.

#### **B. Chief Resiliency Officer Marissa Aho**

The COH's new Chief Resiliency Officer, Marissa Aho, recently relocated here to assume her new position after serving in similar position in Los Angeles, California. She said that has questions for us. She's here to help make a plan. She asked for a show of hands to see how many people are familiar with Houston being the 101st city in the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities Program. She became Chief Resilient Officer in Los Angeles in 2015 so she's been a part of the Rockefeller network for the last four years and looks forward to making good use of her experience to benefit Houston.

She described the definition of "resilience": Resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. Stresses include issues such as homelessness and transportation-related challenges. She said the COH started this work in the fall with the survey and with an agenda-setting workshop held in November. The survey and the agenda setting workshop aimed to identify top shocks and stresses. No surprisingly, the list included rainfall, the lack of affordable housing, urban sprawl, education.

In tandem with the agenda setting workshop the COH hosted a conversation about living with water for people with technical expertise. That group started to identify ways to effect region-wide coordination of various public agencies.

Ms. Aho acknowledged that lots of background information has been collected, and some preliminary reports have been compiled, *e.g.*, a Plan Houston report around resiliency. The city's goal is to create a framework and move to implementation as quickly as possible. She's here for two years; the first six months will be figuring out the framework, the rest of the time will be implementing that framework. She arrived in late February, and anticipates effective stakeholder outreach to occur over the summer, and by the end of the summer she expects to be able to pull together the ideas which are basically being crowd sourced. She expects that about a third of the plan will likely be things that are already being done, *i.e.*, coalitions of groups that are already working together. Another third will likely be things we're already doing but need changes to address as many shocks and stresses as possible at the same time.

Her intent is to look at the importance of resilience at many different scales,, i.e., at the scale of individuals, neighborhoods, bayous, the city, the region and beyond. At the city scale she'll be looking at how the city can better use technology, and how the city can solve problems creatively and de-silo the city. At the regional scale, she'll be looking at the city can work with surrounding jurisdictions. Questions to be addressed include how we can live with and without water, how we can increase resilience of housing and mobility, safety and health, and inclusion?

Ms. Aho emphasized that the work is a planning effort but is not JUST a planning effort, but also a framework that looks at implementation, and innovative ways to finance the implementation. It's looking at developments in the concepts of Smart Cities, technology, and data, as well as at legal and legislative opportunities.

Ms. Aho's questions to SNA members include: What are SNs doing to build resiliency, and how best can they work together to do so?

Dave Durham (SNC 84) asked if Ms. Aho's presentation could be shared? Ms. Aho said, "Yes," that she would share her presentation with us.

Keith Downey (SNC 52) : commented that shocks and stresses present in under served communities predate Harvey and many groups have collected data, but few groups — including especially the COH's Housing and Community Development Department — have shared the results of their studies back with the neighborhoods from which data has been gathered. He said he serves on the COH's climate change and transportation committee which is talking about 2050 while people in his community are talking about how to get to work tomorrow.

Ms. Scurlock (SNC 39/40) commented that few people seem to be participating in these efforts.

Kathleen O'Reilly (SNC 66) commented that education must be embedded someplace in this initiative. Ms. Aho agreed and asserted that it is.

Ashley Stubbs (SNC 14) commented that she did not attend the agenda setting workshop, but she did attend the public session held thereafter. She said that if the COH wanted to learn about stresses and shocks, it had only to ask SNC members since the SN program was formed as a planning initiative. Agreeing that lots of planning is being done, Ms. Stubbs observed that few people know about the planning that is being done. For example, community leaders use TIRZs and Management Districts to address some issues. There's a TIRZ in her area that could be expanded to address the need for new infrastructure but that idea has been dismissed. She asked who's having the conversations to which Ms. Aho referred? Ms. Aho responded: "I get your frustrations and concerns." Acknowledging that many challenges exist, she said that she can't change what's happened in the past. The first six months of planning started in February when she arrived here from California. She asked that people bear with her as she works as quickly as possible. She said that she knows how important SNCs are, that there are parallels in LA where there are 99 neighborhood councils, some of which participated in the resiliency effort more than others. In Los Angeles they decided that each neighborhood council should develop their own resilience strategy, and create a template of what the neighborhood council plan should look like, i.e., how to meet, how to communicate, how to identify shocks and stresses, and how to assess the 96 actions identified in the Los Angeles plan and decide which ones to pursue in their individual neighborhoods. Ms. Aho said that she created an eco-system in which everyone had a seat at the table, and the ability to work on issues they wanted to tackle. She said that there is an opportunity for Houston's SNCs to look like

Los Angeles' neighborhood councils. She said that while she does not know what will work for Houston, that worked in Los Angeles, and could work here. There are also other strategies identified on the Rockefeller website which she encouraged all to visit.

Doug Smith (SNC 25) asked about traffic and mobility stating that those issues are critical, especially if the COH grows as anticipated and receives another two million people.

Rain Eatmon (SNC 06) asked if there were any solid dates for future workshops. Ms. Aho said that all she could say now was that public engagement is expected to take place in the summer and asserting that she's an office of one, that she hopes to have firm dates within the next few weeks.

Tomaro Bell (SNC 83) commented that Ms. Aho had used the terms "equity" and "inclusion" and asked what those terms mean within the context of this initiative? Ms. Aho responded that although these terms are not yet fully defined within the context of this initiative they include a host of issues based on a list of 20 factors that include, e.g., disparities in health, wealth, education, ADA compliance, and environmental justice.

Cindy Chapman (SNC 37) observed that because people travel during the summer it is hard to get quorums for meetings. Ms. Aho responded that she faced similar challenge in Los Angeles, but was able to over come those challenges. Ms. Chapman followed up with a question about funds needed for implementation. Ms. Aho responded that the plan will likely include recommendations for how to complete the plan, and commented that the plan is expected to create opportunities to look inward and outward to see how to fund implementation using funding streams that already exist.

Scott Cubbler (SNC 84) if Ms. Aho had been able to leverage federal resources for in Los Angeles. Ms. Aho responded, "Yes, we were. there are a lot of federal opportunities." As an example she said that she met with the national security group in Washington, D.C. last fall, and that there are on-going conversations with various federal government entities including FEMA.

In conclusion, Ms. Aho emphasized that although for the time being she is an office of one, there are consultants working on the initiative, i.e., Asakura Robinson and HR&A's Jeff Hebert who was formerly the deputy mayor of New Orleans. She said she started out as an office of one in Los Angeles, too, but over time grew to an office of two. She's anticipating a similar progression to occur here. In May and June she expects to begin the community outreach effort, and she expects to begin drafting a plan towards end of the summer with aim to having the plan adopted in the fall and implemented thereafter.

Dave Durham (SNC 84) asked how information from her office will be communicated to the SNA, and in response Ms. Aho shared her contact information: 832-808-2168 [marissa.aho@houstontx.gov](mailto:marissa.aho@houstontx.gov).

### C. Recovery Houston

A representative from the Recovery Houston office said that the Housing and Community Development Department has noticed that canvassers are having trouble working in some neighborhoods because residents are refusing to speak with them and are sometimes reporting them to the police. He said that the canvassers are trying to understand where the pain points are and how to solve problems. He asked SNC representatives to help distribute flyers to let community members

know that the canvassers are working under the COH's supervision and are there to help.

Ashley Stubbs (SNC 14) asked if there is a COH employee tasked with addressing drainage? The speaker did not know.

Michael Huffmaster (SNC 18) said that Jeff Weatherford of the Public Works Department is in charge of traffic and storm water, and that Stephen Costello carried drainage-related duties with him to his new position as the COH's Chief Recovery Officer. Mr. Costello is assisted by Laura Patino.

Barbara Blue (SNC 41) asked for more information about the type of problems the canvassers were experiencing. The speaker responded that the canvassers all have identification, and are seeking only to make sure that HOAs will allow them to survey residents.

Huey German-Wilson (SNC 48) commented that much canvassing has been done, and that while residents are open and willing to provide canvassers information, people are tired of being asked for information without any follow-up or return of information. She said that she's aware of people who have completed the survey, but still haven't been able to apply for financial aid. She emphasized that her community members need information about what's happening.

Tomaro Bell (SNC 83) commented that in the past the COH has included messaging in water bills. She said that community members are tired of not getting answers.

Juan Sorto (SNC 49/50) asked what type of training the canvassers receive. The speaker did not know but emphasized that the canvassers are working under the auspices of the COH's Housing and Community Development Department.

**V. Old Business:** Juan Sorto reported that the training session held on March 30th was well attended. A second workshop with the same agenda will be held on Saturday, April 27th, from 9:00-11:30 at HCC's North Forest Campus, 6010 Little York. An Evite email announcing the opening of registration will be sent out very soon.

**VI. Adjournment: 8:00 p.m.**

Tomaro Bell (SNC 83) moved for adjournment at 8:00 p.m.

Next meeting - May 13, 2019 (second Monday, monthly) at 6:30 PM, City Hall Annex.