

Council Member Mike Sullivan's Newsletter

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Council Member
Mike Sullivan



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Residents of District E,

I spent some time in last month's newsletter describing the dour economics we are facing at city hall. That has not yet turned around. Our latest sales tax payment from the state was 18.5% lower than the same month last year. That is a significant drop. There continue to be declines in other revenue sources such as parking meter collections (down by 50%), ambulance collection fees (down from a 40% collections rate to 27% collections rate) and new building permit fees. Parking revenue at our airports dropped \$615,000, and Combined Utility System Operating Revenues decreased by \$3.3 million mainly due to lower than expected water usage by the water authorities.

The red light camera program continues to be as controversial as ever. There are 70 cameras installed within the city limits of Houston, seven of which are in my council district. The number of notices mailed for running red lights has dropped significantly, as has the collections rate. In September of 2009, 33,655 notices were mailed, of which only 19,494 were paid, which is a collections rate of 58%. Three months later, in December 2009, 17,789 notices were mailed, but only 2,280 were paid, which is a collections rate of only 13%. This is a trend that is both telling and disturbing. The police department has used this money to purchase vehicles, pay police overtime, pay for additional in-car cameras and for traffic safety initiatives.

In closing, let me tell you that it is an honor to work for you as your District E Council Member. I take my responsibilities seriously and work full-time as your council member. My staff continues to focus on constituent service issues, just as I do, so please let us know what we can do for you. You can reach us by phone or email.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

Mike Sullivan
Council Member

Humble ISD Librarians Tour New Library

Council Member Sullivan invited all librarians from the Humble Independent School District to tour the new Kingwood Branch Library on January 20, 2010. A total of 31 librarians attended and learned about the many features of the new LEED certified facility and the many programs it will offer the community. Branch Librarian Christi Whittington and Council Member Sullivan urged the librarians to utilize the library in their lesson plans and to encourage their students to take advantage of the amenities offered.



Council Member Sullivan pictured with Humble ISD librarians and Branch Librarian Christi Whittington

City of Houston Turns New Kingwood Branch Library Over to Harris County



Lib Gilreath, Kingwood Branch Librarian Christi Whittington, Nancy Fulton, Pct. 4 Harris County Commissioner Jerry Eversole, Skippy Lupton, Halene Crossman, Council Member Sullivan and Betty Newton

City of Houston Council Member Mike Sullivan and Harris County Commissioner Jerry Eversole hosted a public ceremony on January 28, 2010 to celebrate the turning over of the new Kingwood Branch Library from the city to the county. The City of Houston built the \$8 million, 30,000 square foot LEED certified building, and Harris County will be in charge of its daily operations.

The Kingwood Area Republican Women's Club donated Texas and United States flags that will be flown outside of the new library. Council Member Sullivan presented the flags to Lib Gilreath, a parent of an active military soldier from the Kingwood community. She hoisted them during the ceremony in respect to her soldier and honoring all those serving our country in the Middle East.

A grand opening ceremony for the new library will be held April 19, 2010 at 10:00 am, and will be open to the public.

Lake Houston Chamber of Commerce's Transportation Meeting

Council Member Sullivan attended the Lake Houston Area Chamber of Commerce's monthly transportation meeting on January 12, 2010. Not only did he have the chance to update Chamber members on City of Houston projects, but he also was briefed by other agencies on current and future traffic projects to help local mobility. City of Houston projects that were discussed include traffic light synchronization along Northpark Drive, the widening of Northpark Drive from West Lake Houston Parkway to Mills Branch Drive, traffic control at Kingwood High School, the use of Mobile Response Teams's at Kingwood High School and recent LED upgrades to all traffic signals in Kingwood.

Kingwood Medical Center's "Sign the Steel" Ceremony



Kingwood Medical Center CEO, Melinda Stephenson, Council Member Sullivan and HCA Gulf Coast Division President, Maura Walsh

Community leaders, staff and friends of the Kingwood Medical Center attended the "Sign the Steel" event January 21, 2010 where they learned about the Center's new two-story expansion project to begin this year. The 54,000 square foot expansion will accommodate 4,000 new patients per year and will include 56 new beds and a renovation and expansion of the Laboratory and Radiology departments. Council Member Sullivan presented the Kingwood Medical Center with a proclamation, which was the first one signed for District E by the City of Houston's new Mayor Annise Parker.

HFD Retirement Ceremony for Tony Filar

Council Member Sullivan honored retiring Houston Fire Department District 102 Chief Tony Filar on January 23rd during a gathering with HFD personnel, family and friends. Hired in 1968, Chief Filar dedicated over 40 years to the department. His commitment to loyalty, courage and duty make him one of the reasons Houston is such a great city.

Council Member Sullivan congratulates him on retiring after a distinguished career of service to the citizens of Houston.



Mrs. Filar, Chief Filar and Council Member Sullivan

Project Updates

- Dedicated right turn lanes have been approved for all directions at the intersection of Kingwood Drive and West Lake Houston Parkway. Construction should commence in the first quarter of 2010.
- Designs are underway for a new community center, which will be located at the old library site.
- Widening of Northpark is under design. Construction is scheduled to begin in April 2010.
- An additional \$289,000 has been earmarked for the Kingwood HPD substations for overtime programs and Mobility Response Teams.
- Construction of the new library is complete. Keys were turned over to Harris County who will be in charge of its operations.

South Belt

On January 27, 2010 City Council approved a contract between the City of Houston and Brooks and Sparks, Inc. for construction of several sidewalks that fall under the city's Safe Sidewalk Program. Several locations in District E are to be constructed under this contract including the Safe Sidewalk located at Hughes Road from Sageglen to Sagecreek. Council Member Sullivan particularly cares about quality of life issues, and this new sidewalk will provide a safer route for students who attend Stuchbery Elementary to get to and from school.

Law Park Lights

In response to a specific request for Law Park, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department will install additional lighting in the park's main parking lot and along the walking trail. Overflow parking lot lights will also be added. Construction will take approximately 12 to 14 months to complete and will begin the first half of 2010.

Sagemont Community Center

Construction of the new Sagemont Community Center is scheduled to begin this year. The project is currently in design phase and is being modeled after the Townwood Community Center located off Buffalo Speedway. To the right is a model of what the new community center will look like.



Sunbeam Neighborhood Depository

The Solid Waste Department's Sunbeam Neighborhood Depository is scheduled to undergo rehabilitation this spring. It is currently in the design phase and construction will begin this year. Orientation of the drop off ramp, equipment and appurtenances will be changed to provide a more efficient facility.

The City of Houston has four depositories open to residents. These depositories are permanent drop off sites where residents can bring their recyclables on a regular basis. For more information please visit the Solid Waste Department's website at www.houston-solidwaste.org.

Project Updates

- Sagemont Community Center design work is underway.
- Outdoor lighting for Law Park has been approved and will be installed in early 2010.
- The new 12,000 square foot and LEED Silver certified J.S. Bracewell Library is open.
- Monroe Road improvements are complete, and open all the way to Beltway 8.
- This spring, METRO will be adding 150 new parking spaces at the South Point Park and Ride Lot offering a total of 766 spaces to patrons.

Ellington Field Tour for Haiti Relief Efforts

In response to the unprecedented earthquake in Haiti, Council Member Sullivan received a briefing about Haitian relief efforts staged at Ellington Field on January 16. Since Ellington Field is in his council district, he requested an immediate update and tour regarding this mission and emergency operations. During the tour, Council Member Sullivan saw many pallets of supplies and equipment standing by for transport to Haiti and learned about the emergency readiness plans. Ellington Field plays an important role for urgent missions such as this.

Council Member Sullivan thanks the Houston Airport System for arranging the tour and for their support of military operations at Ellington Field.



U.S. Air Force EOC Matthew Allinson and Council Member Sullivan

Texas Task Force 1 Breakfast at NASA Hilton



Council Member Sullivan pictured with District Chief Sparks (front, left) and HFD fire fighters on the Texas Task Force 1

On January 16, Council Member Sullivan met with the many HFD personnel who work with Texas Task Force 1. The Task Force had been activated to go to Haiti and conduct Search and Rescue Operations after the unparalleled earthquake that struck the country last month. HFD District Chief Steve Sparks (District 102) hosted Council Member Sullivan and introduced him to the HFD fire fighters who were all on the same mission.

ACLC Meeting

Council Member Sullivan was invited to speak at the Association of Clear Lake Communities monthly meeting in January. He spoke to the leaders of several homeowners associations in the Clear Lake community and gave updates on several issues affecting the southern part of the district and the City of Houston. Topics of interest were Ellington Field Recycling, METRO, Sylvan Rodriguez Park, the Parking in Yards Ordinance and upcoming town hall meeting dates.



Council Member Sullivan addresses the audience about the city's new bio bag program.

BAHEP's Quasar Award Banquet



Congressman Pete Olson, Council Member Sullivan and Harris County Judge Ed Emmett

The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership hosted their annual Quasar Award Banquet on Friday, January 22, at the South Shore Harbour Resort. Council Member Sullivan attended the event as a BAHEP member.

BAHEP's President, Bob Mitchell, presented Texas State Representative Craig Eiland with this year's Quasar award for his activity in the Bay Area community and for his outstanding efforts bringing UTMB Galveston back in service.

Council Member Sullivan would like to recognize and welcome Dennis Petersen as the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's newest 2010 Chairman.

Picture courtesy of Colleen Campbell Photography.

Houston Astros and NASA Plant Trees at Sylvan Rodriguez Park

Astros players Roy Oswalt, Geoff Blum and Pedro Feliz along with Astros and NASA employees joined together to plant 31 trees at Sylvan Rodriguez Park last month. Each tree represents the number of Astro home runs hit at Minute Maid Park last August and September. Council Member Sullivan supports the tree planting and thanks the Houston Parks and Recreation Department and all who were involved for putting on a successful event in District E.



Astros and NASA personnel who took part in the planting of the trees.

Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce's Membership Meeting



The Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce hosted their monthly membership luncheon at the Hilton NASA. Council Member Sullivan attended the luncheon and presented Chairman Michael Divine with a certificate of recognition for promoting local entrepreneurship and local service, improving the quality of life for Clear Lake residents and in celebration of the dedication of the newly renovated Chamber office.

Pictured to the left: Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce Chairman Michael Divine and Council Member Sullivan. Photo taken by Alissa Tutt.

Project Updates

- Railroad crossings along Highway 3 at Clear Lake City Blvd., Pineloch and El Dorado have been repaired.
- Concrete repairs have been completed on all major Clear Lake area thoroughfares.
- \$250,000 in overtime has been designated for use by HPD Clear Lake substation.
- Ellington Airport has almost \$50 million dollars in military construction projects now underway.
- Council Member Sullivan received the final draft of the Clear Lake traffic operations study draft, and it is currently under review.

CIP Meetings

Council Member Sullivan has scheduled two upcoming Capital Improvement Project (CIP) meetings for his district. CIP meetings are held once a year to inform Houstonians of upcoming projects scheduled for their respective communities. During the meetings, citizens are given the opportunity to voice their concerns and questions about said projects.

District E will have two meetings:

North	2/23/2010	6:30 – 8:00 pm	Creekwood Middle School
South	2/25/2010	6:30 – 8:00 pm	*Location to be announced

For more information, please contact Council Member Sullivan's office at 832.393.3008 or by email at districte@cityofhouston.net.

Council Member Sullivan’s 2010 Town Hall Meeting Dates

CIP

North	2/23/2010	6:30 – 8:00 pm	Creekwood Middle School
South	2/25/2010	6:30 – 8:00 pm	*Location to be announced

Town Hall

Kingwood	3/23/2010	6:30 – 8:00 pm	Creekwood Middle School
Clear Lake	4/27/2010	6:30 – 8:00 pm	UHCL – Garden Room
South Belt	5/11/2010	6:30 – 8:00 pm	San Jac College – Marie Flickinger Bldg

Hurricane Preparedness Town Hall

South	6/8/2010	6:30 – 8:00 pm	UHCL – Garden Room
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Flooding and Drainage Town Hall

South	7/14/2010	6:30 – 8:00 pm	San Jac College – Marie Flickinger Bldg
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Council Member Sullivan’s Committee Assignments

Water Resources Management Committee, *Chair*

Formed in January 2009 to deal with issues of water quality, water supply and conservation of water, as well as issues relating to the Coastal Water Authority. The long awaited Luce Bayou project will also be studied by this committee, as well as all issues involving Lake Houston and its watersheds.

Ethics and Council Governance, *Chair*

Considers Council regulation adopted in Chapter 18 of the Code of Ordinances and other matters involving ethical conduct by City officials and employees. Also considers matters relating to City Council governance rules.

Transportation, Infrastructure and Aviation, *Member*

Considers ground transportation and general mobility, issues regarding freight and passenger rail, management of public utilities and right-of-way infrastructure; and matters relating to the Houston Airport System.

Public Safety and Homeland Security, *Member*

Considers public safety and law enforcement, including Police, Fire and EMS; Homeland Security and emergency preparedness, and the Houston Emergency Center.

Neighborhood Protection and Quality of Life, *Member*

Considers strategies to improve the quality of life for neighborhoods including issues related to the enforcement of deed restrictions and building codes, abatement of dangerous buildings and weeded lots and management of illegal dumping and other solid waste collection.

Budget and Fiscal Affairs, *Member*

Considers all fiscal matters and initiatives to improve management and efficiency of City service delivery.

International Business Initiatives, *Member*

Encouragement of consular representation, maintenance of sister city relationships and promotion of international trade.

Compostable Bag Program

The City of Houston's Compostable Bag Program will not go into effect until **April 5, 2010**. At that time, residents who receive the City's trash pick up service will be required to dispose of their grass and lawn clippings in a new biodegradable bag available at select stores. This new, environmentally friendly bag can be identified by a logo on the box specifying "City Approved" and "City of Houston Biodegradable/Compostable Bag." This new ordinance affects *only* those who receive the City of Houston's trash service, and *not* those who are part of a sponsorship program with companies such as Waste Management.

Council Member Sullivan was the only council member who voted against this ordinance during the September 2, 2009 council session.

For more information please visit www.houstonsolidwaste.org.

Council Member Sullivan Urges Delay in Rate Increase

Council Member Sullivan and his colleagues voted in favor of suspending the effective date for yet another rate increase request by Entergy Texas, Inc. at City Council Session last month. The proposed \$200 million increase would result in a 23.2% rate increase to the monthly bill for residential customers. This intended increase is of great concern for Council Member Sullivan as ETI currently serves approximately 1,372 customers in the Kingwood area of his district. He has requested public meetings to be held in the Kingwood area this month for community input.

HPD Cadet Class #207 Graduates

On January 6, 2010, 79 men and women graduated from the Houston Police Department's Police Academy. Council Member Sullivan helped recognize the largest graduating class in HPD history during a ceremony held at the M.O. Campbell Educational Center. All 79 men and women will report as an official HPD officer in the community.

Council Member Sullivan has attended every cadet graduation ceremony since being elected.

Heavy Trash

The City of Houston's Solid Waste Department will pick up only **Junk Waste** during the month of February. Junk Waste is defined as furniture, appliances and other bulky material. Resident's who receive City of Houston trash pick up service can legally put junk waste out at 6:00 pm the Friday before their designated pick up day.

For more information and detailed placement instructions, please visit the Solid Waste Department's website at www.houstonsolidwaste.org.

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