

Willow Meadows Civic Club Security Committee Meeting

February 3, 2009

Approved Meeting Minutes

- I. Call to order, record list of attendees, and review agenda.
 - A. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.
 - B. Attendees included the following: Chair, Stephen Polnaszek; Mike Grossi, Robert Garza, Margo Barvin, Carol Brown, Jeff Peters, Lt. Mike Barrow, Scott Stjernstrom, Ken Anctil, and Emory Glover.
 - C. Agenda review: Mike Grossi asked that his suggestion, originally put forward at the local security awareness meeting held at the Stjernstrom/Mora residence, that the neighborhood should consider that retirees with vehicles, cell phones, and some other basic supplies, but no weapons, be organized to do patrolling during certain hours. He proffered an example report form with the statistics needed but has as yet not explored whether other retirees are interested in such a venture. The Chair noted that we should proceed cautiously in considering such a program in light of liability concerns of the Civic Club.

Carol Brown had worked with a citizen's patrol in the Westwood subdivision around 1994-1998. Mike Grossi felt that such a group as might be formed here would need a training session run by Lt. Barrow or another HPD Officer to explain the responsibilities and limitations that would be in order. Carol noted an HPD Officer did explain duties to the Westwood group. The Chair opined that having governing documents distributed to members of the citizen's patrol would also be wise.

Mike Grossi noted that because of the large number of retirees in the neighborhood, recruitment should not be problematic. However, weeding out unsuitable prospective participants may take some effort. Lt. Barrow will look into any successful models for such a program at HPD and report back to the committee.
- II. Review minutes from the previous meeting of January 3, 2009
 - A. **Motion:** Jeff Peters **moved** to approve the corrected minutes as presented. Carol Brown **seconded** the motion, which **carried**.
- III. Review security issues
 - A. January WM Crime Bulletin
 1. WM incidents: There was greatly increased criminal activity this month with eight burglaries of motor vehicles (BMVs), four home burglaries, and two other crimes.
 2. Analysis of crimes and suspicious incidents: Lt. Barrow said the BMVs were out of control. Most often these incidents occurred during the evening/overnight with vehicles at curbside or in the driveway, all too frequently in unsecured vehicles. Jeff Peters asked about how many of these incidents were known to Lt. Barrow prior to his digging them out of the HPD databases. Only half were. Therefore, Lt. Barrow committed to running these searches more frequently than monthly in order to discern any patterns which may be developing.

Margo Barvin expressed concern about the numerous door kick-ins and wondered what times these incidents occurred. Many of these incidents occurred during rather long time windows of several hours to several days,

making such analyses problematic. Lt. Barrow said that these incidents pointed to the need to have more Officers and fill more shifts and even time between current scheduled shifts, as requested back on January 20th.

The Chair expressed concern about how kicked in doors would go undetected for several days by family or friends watching a neighbor's house or why these absences were not reported to our Vacation Watch service of the Security Patrol. Neighbors are not being sufficiently vigilant about listening for such break-ins.

One attendee noted that a neighbor does not want to get involved for fear of retaliation if they reported a crime or gave a description of the alleged criminals.

The Chair reiterated his need to make residents become more proactively watchful through his newsletter articles. The Security Patrol cannot be everywhere at once.

Ken Anctil suggested doing a flyer about BMVs in the neighborhood and parking on the street or in the driveway. Lt. Barrow agreed that getting a flyer out would be a good idea, especially in light of the mission of this committee and the potential benefit. **Motion:** Ken Anctil **moved** that the Security Committee put out a brief security alert bulletin regarding burglaries of motor vehicles, as soon as possible, through the neighborhood block captains. Emory Glover **seconded** the motion, which **carried**. Lt. Barrow volunteered to obtain the most up-to-date block captain list from Mr. Rusciano for the current WMCC president and asked for some copies of the flyer for the Security Patrol to distribute as they see fit. A draft flyer is appended to these minutes.

- B. Neighborhood comparisons: Lt. Barrow noted the large increase in crime in HPD Beat 15E30, which included Willow Meadows; and, especially for this month, we were not immune to the criminal activity around us.

- C. January Officer Hours patrolled

The Officers patrolled 345.25 hr during the pay period ending January 20th. This was 35.75 hr below the 2008 level of 381 hr/month but 115.75 hr above the funded 2009 level of 229.5 hr/mo.

- D. Shift report sheets are available for viewing or reference by the committee

Ken Anctil asked about citizen contacts showing up on the shift sheets. The Chair noted that reports of citizen contacts were quite frequent on the shift sheets, showing detail of location and often even mentioning things like resident walking or walking dog(s).

- E. Improved communications/reporting plans

Robert Garza had called regarding children riding Go-Carts down Greenwillow toward the WMBC. An Officer on duty responded promptly. Calls that turn into answering service emails are handled expeditiously by Lt. Barrow if they are serious enough while the rest are handled by the next Officer on duty. The Chair noted that many shift sheets show the immediate handling of waiting answering service email messages when the Officer comes on duty. Ken Anctil promised to test out some situations where he wants the next Officer on duty to show up at his house.

IV. Recent and ongoing Security Patrol issues

- A. Patrol Officer Personnel issues

1. Staffing and payroll

- a. Officer O'Brien has left us after joining the undercover narcotics group. There were some bank account deposit issues which the Treasurer is handling.
- b. A hiring freeze would be prudent for 2009 until Security Fund donation levels are ascertained. The idea was to perhaps not fill vacated or missed shifts. However, Lt. Barrow has obtained a strong recommendation from Officer O'Brien for a candidate to replace him, Officer Juan Aldape, who has 14 years with HPD and is now in the Burglary Abatement Tactical Team. He would appear to be an especially appropriate hire in light of our current crime predicament and historical Friday evening activity. **Motion:** Scott Stjernstrom **moved** that the Security Committee recommend to the Board that Officer Aldape be hired to replace Officer O'Brien. Emory Glover **seconded** the motion, which **carried**.

Jeff Peters was concerned about overspending. If we have to cut hours later, will we cut his or some other Officer's hours. Lt. Barrow and the Chair have already discussed this, and other hours would be cut, not Friday evening.

2. Pay stub issues: Officer Nieto's new address didn't make it into the system on first pass.

B. Vehicle issues

1. 2002 vehicle: The spot light has been repaired. The license plate light is now apparently out.
2. 1998 vehicle: It seems to be just fine.
3. New GPS system
 - a. The first unit was installed on December 3rd (in Fluffy) and officially announced to the Patrol Officers on December 30th. One-minute data did not start appearing until January 15th. All data stopped on January 27th. The provider points to possible fuse problems. If the fuse is not an issue, rebooting the device may mean disconnecting the auto battery briefly. Ken Anctil will work on this shortly. The Excel spreadsheet issue will also be addressed some time in the near future.
 - b. Patrol patterns and out of neighborhood behaviors have improved.

C. Budget issues

1. Living with a greatly reduced budget for 2009
 - a. The increased crime levels in January have mitigated against reduced patrol shifts and even led to some extra coverage as per the Committee's recommendations of January 20-21.
 - b. Patrol shift reduction contingencies: We may have to go from 88 hr/wk to 53 hr/wk at some time in the future. Emory Glover asked, assuming that there are no contributions to the Security Fund or a changed budget, how long can we go on spending at the current rate on security before we run out of funds? The Chair said that we would spend all of the salary, etc., money by late July/early August at the current patrol schedule rate. Then Emory asked how long could we wait before adjusting patrol hours downward if there were no contributions? Barring any report on the level of contributions to the Security Fund, the Chair was unwilling to speculate about this. He assumed that contributions would neither be zero nor the

~\$60,000 needed. Emory said that it would be unwise to wait until we ran out of funds to make a decision about cutting patrols; he felt that we should make a decision now. The Chair agreed with not waiting until dollars went to zero but felt that making staff reduction decisions now before any reports on Security Fund contributions was imprudent.

Then Emory asked how long it would take to get the Board and the Civic Club to change the budget, and could this be done by the time of the March General Meeting? Ken Anctil felt that March was too soon but he and Emory felt that the June General Meeting may be too late. A Special Meeting could be called in April or May in conjunction with a mail-out ballot. Ken said that we should raise that possibility at the March General Meeting and have something in the newsletter about this budget amendment process.

Jeff Peters was concerned that this committee was going to continue to spend more money than it can afford without any end in sight. The Board should be making the decision about long term spending by this committee. **Motion:** Jeff Peters **moved** that the additional hours currently authorized by the Security Committee on January 21st be brought to the attention of the Board for their consideration in long term financing of these additional hours. The motion was **seconded** by Ken Anctil and **carried**. The Chair was encouraged to convert patrol hours used by the committee to dollars for consideration by the Board.

Motion: Emory Glover **moved** that in light of the current drastic rise in criminal activity and in light of the uncertainty of any contributions to the Security Fund, the Board instruct its Budget Review Committee to act by March 28 to recommend to the Board a 2009 budget adjustment to maintain security patrol hours no less than those in 2008. Robert Garza **seconded** the revised motion, which **carried**. [Consult the recording of Board meeting to find proper name for this committee.]

Ken Anctil noted that the Budget Revision Committee needed to get things in motion for the next three to four years and the Civic Club needs to look at the next 90 days. It may be difficult to do all of this soon but that is what Emory Glover would prefer.

2. Replacement vehicle

We may delay or cancel vehicle replacement during 2008 pending Security Fund donation receipts and adjust our outlays in light of resident support. This could redirect more funds to patrols, possibly from \$8,000 to 15,000. If \$20,000 was contributed to the Security Fund, that would leave a short fall for the 2008 Security Patrol levels of about \$30,000 to be considered by the Board.

V. The next proposed meeting date was chosen to be Saturday, March 7th, at 9:30 a.m.

VI. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.