

Greater Rockridge NCPC Minutes (12Y/13X)
Thursday, May 22, 2008
Rockridge Library 5366 College Avenue
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

Thirty-seven people attended the meeting including 8 officers from the Oakland Police Dept.

At the request of the police department, OPD reports and neighborhood issues will happen permanently at the beginning of NCPC meetings, to allow the officers and citizens to bring each other up to date and then let the officers get back on patrol.

OPD Sergeant Brad Young began the evening by presenting the officers newly assigned to the Greater Rockridge NCPC area:

Officer Nick Miller, PSO for beat 12Y

Officer Pat Gerrans, PSO for beat 12X

Officer Maureen Vergara, new beat officer

Officer Anthony Ramos, acting supervisor for district 2 (substituting for Sgt. Ortiz)

College Ave. walking officer Doug Chimpky wasn't present.

Officer Ramos and Sgt. Young each presented some of the OPD report. Here are the high points:

- Beats 12 and 13 are now completely covered by PSOs although some are part time.
- Officers have been visiting the area around the OHA project on Canning, beat 12Y's number 1 priority, and have made multiple arrests including 4 felony arrests.
- OPD plans to expand the use of bicycles and may eventually put the PSOs on bicycles. They've found them very useful.
- OPD has run several robbery suppression efforts; the bicycle officers have done robbery suppression on College Avenue, and Officer Gerrans has been coordinating robbery suppression on Colby Ave., following numerous reports of evening robberies. Officer Gerrans reported arresting 3 people, after which the area was much quieter.
- Officer Chimpky has been working with the juveniles they think have been "rat packing" on College Ave. and around the neighborhood. He has done a lot of outreach and has persuaded some of them to move to De Fremery Park. The mob on Boyd Ave. last week was an after-school fight, and Officer Chimpky broke it up. Some of the kids who stole items while running away were photographed in the act; Principal Chambliss has showed the photographs to the parents of the involved youths.
- OPD asks all citizens to help them identify criminals. They have many cases where witnesses won't testify out of fear; without the testimony, they can't make the *probable cause* case to justify arrest. Both Sgt. Young and Officer Ramos encouraged people to call the 911 line anonymously, or email Sgt. Young, or call the drug hotline (238-DRUG) – but *call*. The best callers are the ones who will leave a name and phone number for callback; the courts consider these people "reliable sources" and their evidence is given more weight. They particularly asked for information from the area around the OHA project on Canning, as their frequent visits have been generating citizen complaints – they need to be able to focus their efforts on the real perpetrators. But this is a requirement generally. The number of serious criminals is a *very small percentage* of the total population and they need information to focus on them.
- OPD expects crime to get worse during the hot summer months, and is trying to ramp up to prepare for it, by deploying Measure Y outreach, job referrals, etc. The hiring surge to get to 803 officers by year-end now has 94 trainees attending academies in Oakland and Santa Clara. It will take 6 months to get them on the street; once they are there, OPD plans to move toward "zero tolerance" policing.

Following the report, the audience asked a number of questions:

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- Why does it take so long for OPD to respond? It took most of 30 minutes for them to respond to the "rat pack" on Boyd. Answer: dispatch does triage on incoming calls and sends the officers to the greatest threat first; a weapon will always get a faster response than unarmed fighting school children.
- What happens to the people the police arrest? How do you find out what happened to a specific arrested person? Answers: to the general question, the District Attorney's office decides whether to prosecute a case or plea bargain, based on the evidence and the circumstances. The police try to build a case that will make jail a certainty but they can't guarantee. To the specific question, you need to find the name of the investigator on the case. The PSO can find this out; however, if everyone calls the PSO directly, he'll be overwhelmed, so questions should go first to the Neighborhood Services Coordinator or to the NCPC steering committee; they will see what they can find out and pass the question on to the PSO if necessary.
- What is the difference between a beat officer and a PSO? Answer: a beat officer responds to 911 calls, alarms, etc. The PSO takes a longer view, looking for patterns of alarms or robberies that may be done by one or a few people; the PSO is a strategic planner.

Most of the neighborhood issues were covered during discussions of the police report. There was no representative present from the Rockridge District Association. Pat Lichter, the Rockridge Librarian, reported that the library is much quieter since they have their own guard, and the middle school has a social worker who comes by regularly, so the kids feel safer at the library too.

Violence Prevention in Schools

Jackie Shoner of **Oakland Unified School District** reported on the 2 measure Y programs they've implemented, Second Step and Too Good for Violence. Beginning at the pre-school level, they try to teach social skills, including empathy, internalizing caring and cooperation. In older grades they also focus on impulse control, problem solving, and anger management. They try to teach the parents along with the children and hand out a set of refrigerator magnets with reminders. Jackie then introduced Gail Sadalla, consultant to OUSD.

Gail Sadalla invented the process of peer mediation in schools, based on the adult mediation model. Violence prevention formerly depended on overloaded teachers; statistics said the highest number of fights were in middle school. So they put peer mediation in middle school. They train interested kids to be peer mediators, help others deal with issues like rumors and gossip as well as open conflict. The training is similar to adult methods: active listening, open questions, guiding disputants to a specific, realistic, lasting solution, and following up to be sure the solution worked. 86% of students referred to peer mediation after a suspension are not suspended again. Without mediation, conflicts just repeat.

Greg Bailey is the social worker who runs the peer mediation program at Claremont Middle School. He teaches students to do conflict resolution. He spends Wed. afternoons (middle school early day) at the library. He has trained 20 students, from all backgrounds, as peer mediators. Academics is an issue, some kids with high academic skills didn't feel right doing mediation with "problem" kids. He has watched the playground for peacemakers, some of whom had "borderline" grades but really wanted to be a peacemaker. The students get 6 hours of training, and they really take it to heart.

Discussion followed with several attendees expressing concern over the "rat packing" - if people feel too threatened to shop on College, the whole community loses; everyone needs a safer neighborhood, including the kids. The school presenters suggested that the issue is that the kids don't live in the neighborhood and feel no connection to it; Jackie Shoner praised the merchant tour that took kids around and showed them the businesses; she suggested that merchants might adopt a classroom. The schools are all starving for resources, volunteering in the classrooms or as tutors are other ways to connect the kids to the people who live here. Greg Bailey commented that the kids lack trust, but when they know people, they learn to trust them.

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Jon Kidde described his program, **Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth**, which focuses on showing youth how their actions affect other people, and teaching them to empathize with their victims, rather than focusing on crime and punishment. A resident said that when surrounded by 10 or 12 kids demanding money, she didn't feel very empathetic, and Mr. Kidde agreed that at that point the need is to make the kids understand how their actions affected her and why they have to change. He suggested that any incident like that should be reported to the school.

David Chambliss, the principal of **Claremont Middle School**, said the problem is 2 layered:

1. There's a very small group of students (about 20) who cause most of the trouble, and the critical need is to identify them. He's been helped by neighbors who've taken photos; he can take the photos to the parents, and make them aware what's going on, and the parents are appalled. If necessary troubled groups can be split up. He encouraged people to call him if they see problems and gave his cell phone number.
2. There's a community connectedness gap: many of the students come from other neighborhoods which are socio-economically light years away from Rockridge. Claremont is their school but Rockridge isn't their community; somehow we need to make it their community, build bridges to them.

He and Greg Bailey plan to spend the summer planning these bridges; Denise Boisvert asked if someone in the group would like to sit in on those meetings as a representative of the NCPC? She suggested people think about it and call NCPC if they want to participate.

A resident asked if people should call the school as well as the OPD when there is trouble, and does the school need volunteers. Mr. Chambliss said yes, and yes – they always need tutors (a great way to build bridges), they could always use parent help in classrooms. There's also a parent patrol of College that people can join. The existing after-school programs aren't reaching all the kids they need to; some problem students have been steered to mentoring programs and summer activities. A resident asked if the school had a manual arts class, and remarked that his career as an architect began in a shop class. Mr. Chambliss said that the schools tend to focus what "shop" they have on the computers; Claremont teaches their students the animation software used at Pixar. The resident commented that it's a loss to the kids not to learn how a house is plumbed or how electricity works.

Jim Armstrong of **Rock La Fleche School** reported on their program. They are a very small school, currently about 30 students, all of whom have either been expelled or are currently on probation. School hours are 8:45 AM – 1:45 PM. There are only a couple of schools like this, and their turnover is very high, typical stay is about a semester. They don't have the violence prevention programs; all their students have individual therapists; the focus is on the rehab plan that will get the student back into school. The students really enjoy people coming to visit the school. Like Mr. Chambliss, Mr. Armstrong recommended to call the school if you think their students are causing a problem; they probably already know who it is. There have been issues with their students in the past, but less recently; the school has a van pool to take the kids to and from BART, but they can't prevent them from walking down the hill. They also can't physically prevent the students from leaving the campus, although for most there are serious consequences for doing so.

Richard Fairly of **Oakland Tech High School** said that they have 1,570 students, 7 security officers, and a conflict resolution consultant/trainer. They also have 3-4 therapist interns offering therapy, and a mental health clinic. They plan a summer program, for about 400 students; the campus will be closed for summer. (This is *not* the district summer school.) Chris Jackson asked if Oakland Tech will close the campus permanently, as wandering students are always an issue. Mr. Fairly said, it keeps coming up, nothing ever happens; very unlikely to happen this year. Mr. Fairly suggested that neighbors call the truancy hot line if they see students wandering around during school hours. Chris Jackson noted that Captain Toribio has ramped up the truancy checks. The resident asked again about shop classes; Mr. Fairly said it was "heartbreaking", all the shops have been converted to

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ordinary classrooms, they have no budget. Laney College and Merritt are the only places where they can teach manual arts. Oakland Tech has an upcoming performing arts program, they're getting very good *peaceful* turnout at evening events. Also they have a health academy that puts kids in hospital labs, and the computer academy is half software, half physical repair. Over the last few years, Oakland Tech has improved a lot while some other schools have had problems; Oakland Tech is now *the* place to be.

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Beat 12Y

1. 5700-5900 Telegraph – 5900 Block Canning
Monitor area for suspicious people/vehicles and juveniles loitering in relation to the adult bookstore and the Washhouse. Drug activity reported as returning to 59th & Canning area (possibly same subjects who loiter on the 5900 block of Telegraph).

There has been at least one more murder in this area and a robber shot by an armed homeowner. The bookstore not only makes itself a target (it has been robbed a few times now) but due to the element of people it attracts to the area, it also endangers many folks who walk from Rockridge BART to Shattuck via Forest to Ayala then 57th & over.
2. Claremont Middle School
Monitor students after school hours for unruly behavior on College Ave from Claremont Middle to College Point (College & Broadway) with attention paid to bus stops from BART to the Rockridge Library and rear of Trader Joe's parking lot. Also Forest to Ayala & Hermann.
3. Bicycle traffic on College Avenue
Bicyclists and jaywalking pedestrians on College Ave. are getting really out of hand.

Beat 13X

1. The area on Thomas Ave. just above the Broadway / Manila intersection, and also Broadway Terrace, have had issues with truants, students from Far West H.S., coming into neighborhood, aggressive behavior, discharging firearms, smoking dope.
2. The same areas have had a rash of auto break-ins and car thefts. He said "burglaries" but when I asked him for detail it seemed to be mostly car related. These 2 priorities may be related.
3. Broadway and Broadway Terrace around Lake Temescal on weekends: auto break-ins, to cars parked on the street, not reported as a rule because people don't live in neighborhood.

Traffic Priorities

13X – congestion on Broadway Terrace, traffic backs up onto Thomas.

12Y – traffic on College Ave., pedestrian and bicycle violations. This is an increasing problem, Chris really wants them to start ticketing.

Next Meeting will be Thursday, June 26th at the Rockridge Library. Stay safe and see you then!

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