

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting Agenda (12Y/13X)
Thursday, August 12, 2010
Rockridge Library Community Room, College and Manila, Oakland
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

Greater Rockridge NCPC:

Frank Castro – Chair

Vice Chair – **available – please volunteer!**

Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen - Treasurer

Karen Ivy – Secretary & Information Officer

OPD attending: Officer Tith (beat 13) plus Ana Martinez, beat 12Y/13X NSC.

7:00 PM Introductions

Frank Castro opened the meeting shortly after 7 PM. Attendees introduced themselves.

Recent changes in OPD

Frank Castro summarized the situation following the layoff of 80 OPD officers in July. Twenty-six of the laid-off officers came from area 1 (our area). Measure Y allowed for funding of Problem Solving Officers (PSOs), one per beat, to work with NCPCs on community problems, both public safety and traffic. The PSO unit is disbanded; the PSOs have either been laid off or reassigned to Patrol. There's no more Traffic division; traffic officers have also been reassigned to Patrol, along with a number of officers who had desk jobs. We've also lost our walking officer on College Avenue. And the layoffs may not be over. We could lose up to 120 more officers. That's the situation. What does that mean for the NCPC? Do we just quit, and fend for ourselves? No – we still don't know what will happen, we're still in flux. And we have a great police chief. We need to help out.

Question: were the 80 officers laid off based on seniority or Chief Batts' decision? We know that answer: it was based on seniority, it's a union requirement.

There's been a wide range of opinions on what to do now. Frank attended a meeting of area 1 NCPC leaders convened by Captain Toribio. The Captain feels, and Frank agrees, that NCPCs are as important as they were before the layoffs, if not more so. OPD now focuses on two main areas: responding to calls for service, and "hot spots" related to murders, shootings, and gang-related activities. OPD has published a list of crimes for which, if we call, they won't show up to take a report. They are mainly non-violent crimes like burglaries and auto theft, where the criminal has left the area. These crimes must be reported online, they won't take a call or email. This raises some issues which we can discuss.

We used to have 1-2 PSOs at our meetings, we had an NSC, and we discussed the previous month's public safety priorities and traffic priorities, and determined the priorities for the next month. The "priorities" were because of Measure Y – Frank doesn't think Measure Y applies any more. But we still have an interest as citizens in making sure the beats are safe, we want to protect the community enough to meet and discuss problems, to make our communities safe and a good place to live. So we still have priorities – but does OPD??

A resident noted that, even though they won't come to fill out a report, we must continue to call, and to ask for incident numbers. The calls are important because they are a record of crime in the area, and the number of police assigned to our area depends on the number of crimes reported over time. If people just don't call, the crime stats will go way down; and so will our police staffing. Also, depending on their load, OPD *may* come, even for these crimes.

Legally OPD officers must attend 1 community meeting per quarter for the purposes of the Negotiated Settlement Agreement. Those don't *have* to be NCPC meetings every month, although Capt. Toribio is encouraging his beat officers to attend NCPC meetings. We need them to attend when they can.

Lt. Freddie Hamilton attended the meeting and spoke to these issues; he is the night watch commander in Area 1, 4:30 PM – 4:30 AM.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

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Lt. Hamilton: OPD strongly encourages reporting non-violent property crimes online when they are not in progress. They're still taking calls for them, and they may respond from time to time, depending on what's going on in the area at the time. If a crime occurs, call – dispatch has discretion to see what is possible. This is still very new and we're all trying to figure it out.

Question: Should we both phone and use the online service?

FH: Yes, at least for now.

A representative of Rockridge District Association noted that many merchants don't have computer access; and merchants who do, can't leave their shop to be trained on the new system. They *have* to call, or not report the crime at all.

A resident asked if someone can do a flowchart, showing how it is now and how it will be? Lt. Hamilton agreed, that's a good idea. A resident commented that the form is confusing and the space for description is only 1000 characters; and when she tried to follow up, nobody seemed to know where the online report was, and the numbers didn't match. Lt. Hamilton said reports should end up where any report is filed, in the database. OPD is entirely computerized; the reports entered online go into a database. The reports you mail in have to be scanned manually into the database. The report numbers should match up.

Question: Should we still report suspicious characters?

FH: Yes, still make those calls. We need to investigate those. OPD hopes that not responding to "paper calls" (my house was burglarized, the guy is gone) will free them up to investigate suspicious characters and similar calls. Crime-in-progress calls will take priority.

Question: What does "non-response" mean?

FH: non-response means an officer won't come out to take a report, but it *will* be followed up, unless the dispatcher decides it's not a police matter.

Question: How much manpower can we assume OPD has, to follow up burglaries?? Will OPD hire civilians to investigate paper calls, like SF?

FH: this is too new, we don't know yet, we're still experimenting.

Lt. Hamilton noted that calls for service in this area are much lower than in other areas, so it's more likely that officers here will be dispatched to a non-violent call, than it would be in East or West Oakland.

Karen Ivy noted that OPD is more technically advanced than citizens, some people don't have any computer access, and they have to call. And OPD has to take the calls.

A resident complained that citizens don't know how to spot suspicious activity, they're focused on picking up the kids. And, they *don't call* when something does happen!

Lt. Hamilton commented that at 2 AM in this area, very few calls are coming in. His officers who work from 2 AM to 6 AM need stuff to do. If you don't call the incident in, it never happened. Call it in.

The lieutenant estimated that part 1 crime, city wide, is down 17% year-to-date; homicides are down 15%. In area 1, robberies are down about 11% but there are still too many. We have had a spike in homicide, but we had very few last year. Homicides in 2006-7-8 were comparable to this year but 2009 was *very* low. Crime across the board is down across the city year-to-date.

Frank Castro pointed out that we just heard information that he (Frank) hasn't heard anywhere else. This is why you come to the NCPC; to talk to the police. This is a forum where we can connect to our officers on the street. And, we need to learn from the police *how not to be a victim*.

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When the police bust a mugger, they ask him, why did you hit that person? And they say, *because it was easy*. OPD can tell us how not to be a victim.

A resident noted that this could all change, with San Francisco becoming more hostile to transients, and more people released to Oakland on parole.

Frank Castro explained why he went into the back story. The old ways are changing. He specifically asked Captain Toribio about this. "Priority" is not what it was under Measure Y – the issue now is, where can OPD concentrate its forces best? For OPD, priorities now depend on the *level of violence*, and the *call volume* that the problem is receiving. Gunshots are a priority – barking dogs, not so much. If they have to choose between rolling on a drug house and rolling on a homicide, they'll roll on the homicide. If you call when there are resources available, OPD will roll on your problem. The more of you who call about the same problem, the more likely that an officer will be dispatched.

Question: What about the drug house on Manila?

FH: are other crimes being committed around it, which would go away if they got the drug house closed? If there's a drug house *without* any other crimes, it may not get much attention. Call things in.

Question: should we call Child Protective Services because there's a young child in that house? If the site is a known priority, can officers just roll by to check in the small hours, or should we still call? Yes to both. If it becomes an area priority he'll assign a special team to investigate it.

Question: is the drug hotline still staffed?

FH: Yes, and those calls count, but he's *never* seen any calls come in on the drug hotline for that location. (Ed. NOTE: the drug hotline is 238-DRUG (238-3784)!)

Neighborhood Issues

Ana Martinez reports that the status of the Neighborhood Services Division, where she works, is uncertain. The NSCs will continue to do the best they can, attend meetings, and give support. She's not sure whom to work with to build a case for the city attorney about the drug house, but the calls from the neighbors are still very important. In the last budget meeting Neighborhood Services lost a dollar amount equivalent to 5 NSCs, city wide, which is about a third of the staff. They're still working on how to reconfigure to serve and fill in the gaps. They're losing *all* bilingual staff except her (and everyone who speaks Cantonese...). But as of now they still have the whole staff (about 12-13 people) and they're doing the best they can. Most NSCs cover 4-6 beats; the high stress areas have 3 beats.

Question: Suppose someone in 13X wants to call in and talk to a civilian, whom do they call?

Ana said that her phone is 535-5689 and she'll help figure out who the correct NSC is. A list of NSCs by area is on oaklandnet.com. (Ed. Note: it's at [this link](#), but it's out of date for our NCPC meeting and NSC!)

A resident commented that we've never really had enough NSCs. Ana M. works with one group who set up a mentoring program, where someone who's dealt with a drug house or other issue works with a new person who has the problem.

Status on the drug house on Manila: The house is frequented by scraggly looking people, with lots of scruffy vans without lights. They're growing pot, but they're selling other stuff in public, small items, too small to be bags of pot. Some of them have bad teeth and dry mouths that are not caused by pot. The neighbors can see into the back yard.

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Lt. Hamilton offered to put a group of officers on this and see if they can get probable cause to get a search warrant. He recommended contacting the landlord right away, to let him know the tenants are the problem. If OPD can get in and get evidence, they can proceed with a nuisance letter. Tenants should call the drug line, it's anonymous; call in everything you see. Ana Martinez asked the NCPC to forward any emails on this to amartinez@oaklandnet.com, she can use them to build a case. Also, residents should photocopy their logs, and bring them to the next meeting.

Status on Nude Sushi: one resident says it's much better now from her side of the building. Another resident says, they were quiet for 4 weeks and now they're loud again. She lives upstairs and can hear more. Apparently someone was away who's now back and making most of the noise. Ana Martinez noted that they met with the property owners and told them it's an issue. They didn't fill out a compliance form, but if the noise is getting worse again, we could go to a nuisance process. The owner seemed willing to comply. They've been inspected for code.

The resident complained that the Nude Sushi fan is on all night, it's very loud. Ana M. said that the code compliance number 238-3381, call in the problem of the noisy fan. If this reaches the nuisance state, the fine could be \$1000 per day.

Status on the Safeway parking lot: a resident suggested that neighbors call Starbuck's corporate HQ in Seattle and talk to them, you may be able to get the power washing hours adjusted. Also, the shopping center management may be willing to send private security out to deal with the auto repair person. A resident commented that, in beat 11X, car repair has been used as a cover for drug activities. If binoculars reveal anything resembling drug activity, call the drug hotline, **238-DRUG (238-3784)**.

Trader Joe's now has a contract with a man who goes around and picks up wandering shopping carts. If you see an abandoned shopping cart, call Trader Joe's and they'll send the man out to get it.

Merchants' Issues (new matters and follow-up on any previous issues)

The RDA representative reported a store breakin; the criminal took a landscaping rock and smashed a window. There was one restaurant takeover but it's been fairly quiet. He's seeing more police patrol cars than before. He's been working with the merchants on security issues.

New issues:

Two people from Glenview spoke about their organization for local email: they also went to 4 NNO parties. They have started a system on their block that lets you communicate with neighbors. It operates bulletin board style, users post only to neighbors; it's free, no ads. Communication is confined by a radius of 1000 feet around your house (a block or two in each direction). Every house has its own circle. Similar to block mailing list but more inclusive. Your email address never shows, only your first name and the street shows. It's a way to get to know your neighbors, and look out for each other. You may have to go door-to-door to get them to sign up. It's not specifically crime related, users can create communities for special interests and private groups. Crime is usually on the main list. The site is *Justmyneighbors.com*. The site isn't moderated, there's been no need. They only collect street address, first name, and email. The site indicates there isn't much membership yet from Rockridge.

A resident asked, why continue the NCPC?? To get the people interested in crime prevention informed, so they can take information back to the neighborhood, and get other people to come. We may lose more officers if the parcel tax doesn't pass. What kind of pressure should we put on the city council? NCPCs don't take positions, but it's a forum for discussion.

Frank Castro closed the meeting by saying: Thank you for coming. We have a big task on our hands. We're the ones who care. Thursday evenings between 7 and 9 are very hard. Can we try

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a potluck meeting in September? Bring something to share. When you break bread, it makes a sense of community. Put this in the *Rockridge News* and the *e-News*.

We don't have the ask-a-cop column any more in the *Rockridge News*; if somebody has an ask-a-cop question, submit it to the NCPC and we'll try to find the answer.

A resident asked if OPD officers still have to drive all the streets in a beat if they aren't busy. Also, can they be pulled off our beat if an emergency occurs in West Oakland? What schedules are the officers on now? We need to research these points.

8:20 PM New Priorities for upcoming month

We are leaving these priorities listed for now although only the drug house can expect any serious attention from OPD.

Priorities (three allowed per Beat per month, any combination)

If your issue becomes a priority, please attend the next meeting to give an update and to advise if it should remain a priority.

Beat 12Y

1. Suspected drug house at 5129 Manila
2. Employees of "Nude Sushi" (6228 Telegraph) making noise in parking lot behind restaurant between midnight and 3 AM.

Beat 13X

1. Noise issues from the Rockridge Center Safeway parking lot affecting the neighborhood just above it: possibly illegal auto mechanic every Sunday evening in the parking lot, Jamba Juice late-night deliveries, Starbucks power washing their outside café area after 10PM.

There are no more traffic priorities.

Our sincere thanks go to Bakesale Betty for their kind and delicious contribution to our meetings!

In 2010 all meetings will be the SECOND Thursday of the month.

*Next meeting will be **Thursday, September 9, 2010** at 7:00 PM in the Rockridge Library Community Room, College and Manila. See you there and stay safe!*

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