

Greater Rockridge NCPC (12Y/13X) - Minutes
Thursday, September 12, 2013
Rockridge Library, College and Manila, Oakland
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

NCPC:

Frank Castro – Chair
Barbara Minton – Vice Chair
Molly Singer - Treasurer
Karen Ivy – Secretary & Information Officer

Special Meeting to Commend Officers

The September meeting was preceded by a special meeting convened by Captain Anthony Toribio, specifically to commend two officers for a recent important arrest. Brenda Ivey, the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator, also addressed the meeting on the Neighborhood Watch process, after which Captain Toribio discussed recent crime trends and took questions. The special meeting began at 6:10 PM.

Officer Gunther Lee and Officer Daniel Lee received 2 types of commendation:

- *Captain's Commendation* - normally an internal award given to officers who have done good work. The people who really need to hear about this good work are the citizens; and OPD needs to recognize good work publicly. Captain Toribio read the text of the commendation, for recognizing a vehicle involved in a recent robbery and apprehending 2 suspects, stolen property, and a firearm. The suspects were subsequently linked to at least 2 other robberies in the area and probably more.
- *Area 2 Challenge Coin* – in 2008, Captain Toribio wanted a way to recognize people who did excellent work; one of the area officers designed the coin which is awarded. In 2008-09 only 24 coins were issued. The motto on the coins is: *Pride, Commitment, Professionalism*. Officers Gunther Lee and Daniel Lee are the 3rd and 4th officers to get this coin.

Officer Gunther Lee said he's patrolled beat 12 for 3 or 4 years, he likes the area. Officer Daniel Lee, a 7 year veteran, born and raised in Oakland, likes beat 12.

Captain Toribio added that last weekend, these same 2 officers talked down a suicidal teenager who was threatening to jump off an overpass. They're in line for another award.

Neighborhood Watch - Brenda Ivey

Neighborhood Watch started in 1966; all police departments have Neighborhood Watch. Citizens become an extension of the police department, and are trained in observation. Command staff use calls for service from citizens to assign resources to an area.

Oakland now has 800 Neighborhood Watch groups – people who know their neighbors and their children, and recognize the cars that belong on the block. Neighbors are usually the first ones to notice changes in the area.

The formal Neighborhood Watch organizational meeting goes over the following issues:

- Home security - The number one way to break into a house is through an open door or window. Thieves are only in a house for about 10 minutes. Don't open your front door unless you recognize the voice.
- CPTED stands for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design – a systematic way to make sure your house and neighborhood is secure. The [CPTED Security Handbook](#) is on the Greater Rockridge NCPC web site.
- Personal safety – your eyes are the main thing that will keep you safe on the street. Be aware of your surroundings.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

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- How to call 911, and how to talk to Dispatch. Remember – don't dial 911 on a cell phone; dial 510-777-3211.
- Asks the group to agree to host a National Night Out event every August (2nd Tuesday).

Since there was a little time after Ms. Ivey's presentation, Captain Toribio asked people to fill out paper copies of the OPD online survey recently released.

Q: how many blocks in a Neighborhood Watch?

A: You can do as many as 4 blocks at a time. The minimum Neighborhood Watch is 6 people. Once you're formally organized, you can get a Neighborhood Watch sign for your block, which is a big crime deterrent. When you book a Neighborhood Watch meeting, Brenda Ivey will send you flyers to distribute to encourage neighbors to attend.

Captain Toribio – Summary Of Crime Trends

Crime is trending down in Area 2, but it is still unacceptably high.

OPD has changed some of the time spans where they do "directed enforcement" (which takes officers off answering reports and put them in identified hotspot areas to deal with problems). These times change depending on crime patterns and trends. Hotspots in Area 2 include Adams Point, Rockridge, and College Avenue/Claremont/51st Street corridor and the nearby side streets.

Enforcement changes since last NCPC meeting:

Area 2 now has a Crime Response Team (CRT). The officers have transitioned to new jobs in Area 2. They're doing very good work. For example, on beat 10X (on the border of Berkeley and Emeryville) – conducted surveillance and arrested two burglars. They also arrested a drug dealer and recovered a credit card stolen in a robbery. During a motel sweep they arrested a parolee at large who was suspected in area robberies. The CRT is rotating time in Area 2 and in Area 5, where other CRTs have been assigned due to gun violence.

Area 2 will get a dedicated burglary investigator, Officer Peterson. He is in training now and his assignment is being covered by Officer Iqualdo, an experienced investigator. Area 2 is assigned a robbery investigator, and an assault investigator will be added as staffing in the Department increases.

Next week 3 PSOs will attend a 1 week course on investigation techniques, to increase their ability to conduct follow up burglary and robbery investigations.

OPD is deploying the mobile command post around the area. It was up here 4 times last month. It's a bus sized vehicle with OPD markings. They're also parking marked police cars around the area; the visible presence of police car some level of deterrence.

Officers on bicycles are patrolling in Area 2 four times a week in the early evening hours.

By the end of this budget cycle OPD should be up to about 697 officers.

Q: Why has crime gone up so much since they started calling the area Rockridge instead of North Oakland?

A: There are several reasons and it is important to note that robberies are up across Oakland. Reasons include: quick access routes in and out of the Rockridge area (freeways), lots of resident/patrons on foot, use of smart phones/small electronics that can be easily sold, and insufficient police resources—officers to respond to calls for service and engage in proactive enforcement, and investigators conduct follow up investigations. It is easier for criminals to commit

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robberies and make money than it is to sell drugs and risk being arrested or shot by rival drug dealers.

Q: Why people are stealing bikes so much?

A: We aren't aware of a high rate of bike theft, although the burglar they nabbed today had stolen a bike.

Q: Can we get a cop walking the beat?

A: We don't have dedicated foot patrol officers anymore due to staffing challenges; the PSOs do some walking, Patrol does some foot patrols in business districts and in crime hot spots. As staffing increases we plan to have more officers engaged in walking and hopefully have dedicated foot patrol unit once again.

Q: What is a safety ambassador and why don't we have them? Area 1 has them.

A: Those are paid for by the downtown business improvement district (BID), which has a big budget. Not sure what plans for the Rockridge BID are. They are used as a deterrent to crime and their job, as an extra set of eyes and ears, is to observe and report. They need to be professional in appearance and conduct. They need to be visible and engaging. Anytime the community engages in public safety it is a good thing. Communities that want to have security officers need to do their research to identify companies that can deliver what the community needs. Security companies are different as are communities. Do your homework.

Q: The crime stats don't indicate if robberies are armed or not.

A: The majority of robberies in area 2 are armed. Follow Area 2 on Twitter: area2opd. Weekly crime stats are posted every Monday and it breaks down robberies—strong armed, with gun, etc.

Q: Where do we go to get our heads around crime in the area?

A: Crimemapping.com for now, but OPD is working on a crime dashboard, we hope to have it up and available to the public in the next couple of months.

Q: What can we learn from New York City's 20-40% decrease in crime under Mayor Bloomberg?

A: They hired a lot of cops; they have a lot of officers on the street. They have resources for specialized units that we no longer have (foot patrol, traffic, etc.) Numbers do make a difference-Cops count.

Q: Is it really just money? With more money could you hire more officers? Are they available?

A: Money is a big issue (Mayor and Council have approved several academies in the two year budget cycle). Running multiple academies takes planning. We are looking at hiring lateral officers (police officers from other agencies), who are cheaper to train and get into the field.

Q: Did stop and frisk really help NYC reduce crime?

A: I'm not familiar with NYC stop and frisk policies. It's legal if you can articulate a *reason* to stop and why that person poses a danger/is armed with a weapon. You can't just stop and search people randomly.

Q: I went to Dan Kalb's meeting and he said we had 649 officers, have we already lost 30 officers??

A: We lose between 1-6 officers a month. Officers leave the department for various reasons (retirement, medical, go to other agencies, leave profession, etc.). Not all patrol squads are filled (max 8 officers per squad and in Area 2 we have six squads that provide 24/7 police service).

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Officers and supervisors are working mandatory overtime to fill openings. We are hiring officers and this needs to be a continuous process to keep staffing numbers up.

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting

At 7:02 PM Frank Castro started the official NCPC meeting. Seventy-four people signed in, but an unknown number of them came early for the commendation ceremony. The NCPC officers and Patricia Rose, the NSC, introduced themselves. Frank explained that Neighborhood Services Coordinator is the liaison between citizens and the maze of bureaucracy downtown, not necessarily only on public safety. Officers del Rosario and Trode introduced themselves. Frank explained about Problem Solving Officers, what the beat boundaries are, and what NCPC meetings do.

City of Oakland now organizes police services in 5 geographic areas, we are in Area 2. Captain Toribio is the area commander, responsible for crime and public safety in Area 2. It's a great honor to have him here, he deserves a round of applause for doing the commendation ceremony in front of the citizens instead of at police headquarters downtown.

Crime Stats

Frank explained that he compiles statistics for the 2 beats, color coding them by type of crime; he explained his coding system. Crime isn't as bad as the handout looks – there are some duplicates on the list! But there were 12 robberies in the last 35 days. There's been a lot of chatter on the Yahoo listservs about robberies. Frank doesn't specify robberies as "armed" - he feels a robbery is a robbery. But if it's wanted he can specify firearms or hands-fists-feet.

Q: Are we having home invasions?

A: Ask the PSOs, we can't tell from the statistics if a home invasion is a robbery or a burglary. Officer del Rosario noted that home invasions are specified as "home invasions," it's a specific crime type.

The NCPC is working on Google maps showing crimes in the beats, by quarters.

Officer Del Rosario offered to do trend analyses for each type of crime on request.

OPD Status Reports – 13X

Officer Trode asked the group to introduce themselves to each other. Citizens are his partners; you know who your neighbors are. If you don't, introduce yourself.

Looking at trends city-wide, auto burglaries are up in this district. There's usually a summer spike in auto burglaries, but it's up generally this whole year. There were 4 auto burglaries in 13X over the last month, all had purses or backpacks visible on the seat. If you have to leave stuff in the car, leave it in the trunk. The broken window will cost you \$400.

Home burglaries: beat 13X had 5 last month, down a little from last year. Get an *audible alarm*. Loud noises will scare the suspects away. Silent alarms don't generate a response fast enough to be any use.

Q: Are their private security companies working on your beat?

A: Yes, some groups of people have gotten together and hired them. They aren't armed, but they provide eyes and ears. Officer Trode has no idea how effective they are.

OPD Status Reports – 12Y

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Officer Del Rosario ran numbers from 8/11 – 9/11. Beat 12Y had 13 robberies (11 armed, 2 strong-arm), and 30 burglaries – 17 auto, 13 residential and business.

Robberies have gone nuts over the last few months. It seems to be the same robbers doing it over and over, and telling their buddies about the target rich environment. Don't sit on the street with your laptop; don't walk along the street talking on your phone. You're being targeted. We used to prowl the street at night looking for people talking on the phone, advising why they shouldn't do that; the people we warned ignored us. Robbers are specifically looking for smartphones; they'll pass up a flip phone. Robberies are very likely during the walking-to-and-from-BART periods. Over the last couple of months Officer Del Rosario has noticed a rash of robberies between 2 and 4 PM.

Q: Is it normal for these guys to frisk their victims? Isn't anyone watching? What about businesses? Where are the police?

A: The police have a very short time to get there; the robbers will be on the freeway in minutes. Yes they rob people in the middle of the day; they have guns. Guns scare people. Don't approach a guy with a gun to try to stop him. People get hurt when they fight back, mostly. Robbers just want to take the items and leave.

Q: I'm afraid to go out in the middle of the day, after reading all those emails. This is wrong.

A: Officer Del Rosario tries to drive up and down every street, including College and all the side streets. If you see a suspicious person, call the non-emergency line: DO NOT email the officer. Officers don't see the emails right away. If you call dispatch, dispatch can hand it off to ALL officers. Also, officers can't act on information that doesn't come from dispatch.

It isn't your fault if you're robbed, even if you're just walking down the street.

Q: I've called the police and no one answers the phone.

A: if all you can do is email, do that: cdelrosario@oaklandnet.com, or communitypolicingbeat12@oaklandnet.com

Q: is it safer on a busy street like College Avenue?

A: You can't predict when or where a robbery will happen. Get in the habit of locking doors and thinking safety. Pay attention to your surroundings.

In almost all auto burglaries, a laptop was in a bag in the car. Don't leave stuff visible in the car.

In recent residential burglaries, the robbers have all gone in through a window. She called all the victims and asked about those windows: in every case the shade was up, the window was open a crack.

Q: Would they come in through a window if we're in the house?

A: Yes, they will, and then you have a home invasion robbery. Keep your blinds closed, especially if there's a flat screen TV on the wall.

Dan Kalb

I'll talk about public safety and the improvements we've made – which doesn't mean it'll all be fine tomorrow.

We're very lucky to have Captain Toribio. He knows the area and the police force. He pushes his officers hard and respects the work they do. He's very open, he has a Twitter account and responds right away. I meet with him on a regular basis.

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We don't have enough police officers. One of the first things I did on taking office was to fund a new police academy (which starts next month). Three dozen new officers graduate to field training next Friday. We're funding 3 academies this year, 2 next year and 2 the following year. If more money comes in beyond projections, I want to fund a lateral academy. This is an academy for experienced police officers hired from other agencies. Lateral academies are less expensive because the recruits need less training, and a faster recruitment tool. It is a challenge to run multiple academies because of the shortage of training staff.

For most of past 15 years, OPD had police officers in the mid-700s. My goal is a minimum of 803 officers; we won't get that next year, but we want to fund that level continually. We also need to hire more trained civilians to free up sworn officers from desk work. A more adequately staffed police force will lead to a reduction in crime.

My focus on public safety is investigations. We aren't investigating enough crimes. If you can't investigate crimes, you can't solve them. My goal is to have fully staffed investigative units, including hiring more civilians for crime lab, and also hiring more civilian 911 dispatchers. We must have a fully staffed investigative unit and crime lab. We also provided additional funds to do background checks for all the new hires; background checks were badly backlogged, delaying new hires. We've also hired a human resources analyst to speed up hiring for open positions. Captain Toribio is redeploying officers so they aren't doing paperwork during high-crime times, and increasing walking and bicycle patrols. This isn't enough, but it's the right direction to reduce crime, here and in Temescal. Temescal has a lot of armed robberies as well.

Captain Toribio and the other captains did a presentation on crime in all areas – the general trend is slightly down *except* for armed robberies, which are up. We all know that.

We also have budget money to hire CHP officers to do supplemental patrols. This isn't a permanent solution; it's expensive; but for the next year or two we need to spend that money.

We want to get guns off the street. There are some 10 bills we've lobbied for, going to the governor – there's a sheet at the sign-in desk with the list of bills. Call the governor and ask him to sign them. Gun and ammunition control legislation isn't a panacea but it'll help.

Q: What progress are we making toward hiring civilians? And what about all the officers in Internal Affairs? When can we comply fully with the NSA?

A: On hiring civilians: in January we authorized hiring 20 police service technicians; after 5 months none were hired. The city council complained and funded a new HR analyst and provided additional funds for background checks, plus added new civilian positions. The hiring for those positions is in progress. We have actually hired a few; we're taking applications for others; some are about to be announced. They should all be hired by end of this year or shortly thereafter.

On the NSA: The NSA requires us to do many things that other police departments have done for years; after 10 years we still aren't in compliance. It should not have taken this long. Even before the new Compliance Director was hired, the current mayor and administration are closer to compliance than before, now we're even better. I met with the Compliance Director today. He thinks we can free up sworn officers to get into the field; he also thinks hiring civilians to take complaints will do the same. The Compliance Director has a broad mandate to bring OPD up to current operational standards. He can cut through possible problems with the OPOA.

Q: A couple of years ago our houses were being hit by kids with backpacks. The neighbors talked to the school police, who agreed to park in neighborhood to write reports.

A: Captain Toribio asks his officers to do that.

Q: We've talked before about putting cameras at on ramps and off ramps, can we do that? They'd have to be on public land, private houses don't always have the right angle.

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A: Most security cameras now are on private property, owned by a business or a person. I can look into the issue of putting cameras facing freeway on and off ramps. My staff has discussed this with the police and the City Attorney. I'm pushing for this and I have Mayor's support.

Q: How about improved street lighting on residential streets?

A: The city is putting LED lights all over the city. They're brighter and more efficient than the old lights. They're upgrading East and West Oakland first, then North Oakland. They did a test on Bryant Street. The new lights will go where existing lights are; if you feel you need additional lamps, request them from Public Works, and follow up with Dan Kalb's office. His office is most effective if you've already made a request and have a case number; then they can follow up on it.

Q: What about redirecting traffic at the freeway onramps, with speed bumps or roundabouts, or something like that?

A: The police don't think speed bumps deter criminals. Blocking certain streets might, but there isn't really much call for it, and it causes other problems. There are several ways in and out of Rockridge. We can explore it. To get a roundabout or speed bump, the people on that block have to petition for it, they have to want it.

Q: What about calling the police and never getting the phone picked up? Are they hiring any dispatchers? Can't they calculate how many calls they're getting, and hire more people?

A: We are hiring more dispatchers, but it's a very high-stress job and turnover is high because people burn out. It takes a long time to train dispatchers. We are continually hiring more dispatchers.

Q: What are the biggest roadblocks, financially or on city hall, that prevent more cops from being on the street?

A: There is now a consensus at City Hall that we need more police officers. There are a few people in Oakland who come to meetings and say we don't need more, and we hear them out, they have a right to speak, but we are focused on hiring more police. It may have been argued that we should cut somewhere else, but other services have already been cut to the bone; I don't want to cut libraries any more than they have been. Also, Congressional Republicans have cut a lot of funding from Head Start. Oakland decided to use general fund money to keep Head Start running for the next 2 years. We aren't increasing any departments significantly other than OPD. You can go through the budget yourself, but we did the best job we could on a "public safety first" budget. Money is still tight. We're hoping our budget projections are as conservative as we thought - that means we'd get more revenue than we projected. We're also trying to promote more economic development in district 1, including the San Pablo corridor, and the Safeway shopping center at Broadway and Pleasant Valley. We lose tax revenue when people go to Walnut Creek or Emeryville to shop; shop in Oakland when you can. We won't build any mega-malls, but we want more local retail.

Q: If people are afraid to go out on the street, they won't shop here, and we won't get the revenue. On allocating police: what are the other police units doing and how do we get them on the street?

A: Internal Affairs has a lot of officers; we now have about 620-630 officers, with another 36 graduating. As we hire more civilians, that frees officers from desk jobs to go on patrol. I've been pushing OPD to hire more civilians, especially for the crime lab. As we comply with the NSA we may be able to move more officers out of Internal Affairs to the street. We have a plan, but we have more work to do. We've done a good job getting federal grants to hire officers and do public safety related measures.

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NCPC Priorities for September 2013

12Y:

1. Robberies and burglaries in 12Y generally
2. Robberies in Shafter corridor (Miles, Shafter, Locksley), the street lighting is very poor. (NB: the city is replacing *all* the street lights with LEDs.)
3. Residents near California College of the Arts report increasing street robberies as students move back in for fall classes.

13X:

1. Auto burglaries near the school around Golden Gate and Ocean View.
2. Parking past the *No Parking* limit sign on Golden Gate, makes it really hard to drive up the street.
3. Auto burglaries, smashed car windows near south entrance of Lake Temescal.
4. Residents near California College of the Arts report increasing street robberies as students move back in for fall classes.

NCPC meetings are normally the SECOND Thursday of the month.

*Next NCPC meeting is **Thursday, October 10, 2013** at 7:00 PM
Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila*

See you there and stay safe!

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