Greater Rockridge
Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (12Y/13X) – Agenda
Thursday, April 11, 2024
Rockridge Library and
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
General Public: 7:00-8:30 PM

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC):
Michael Ubell – Chair
Lisa Hingley - Vice Chair
Eric Neville - Treasurer
Karen Ivy – Secretary & Information Officer
Officer Meeran Gichki – Community Resource Officer, beat 12Y
Officer Sylvestre Triana - Community Resource Officer, beat 13X

7:00 – 7:05 PM – Introductions

Mike Ubell opened the meeting shortly after 7. Nine people signed in to the meeting, including the NCPC officers and both Community Resource Officers (CROs). Brian Guenther, the Rockridge Library manager, also attended. Mike introduced himself, me, and Lisa Hingley; Eric Neville was present on Zoom. About 8 people signed in on Zoom.

7:05 – 7:20 PM – Oakland Police Dept. (OPD) Status Reports, beats 12Y and 13X

Officer Gichki: I know a few people here, I've been a CRO for 4 years. We're short staffed, and we often have to deal with issues in West Oakland. I usually have crime statistics to present but the computer is down. Crime in the last couple of weeks was way down. When we make major arrests of chronic offenders, it reduces crime for a while. I'm in an operation right now, we have a car break-in on College Ave. Chasing criminals is harder than you think – we have rules, they don't. And they get better at their act the more they do it. A group of criminals dodged a helicopter recently by going under a freeway.

Officer Triana: I've also been here a few years, about like Officer Gichki described. We're working with Crime Reduction Teams (CRTs), we try to respond right away to a hot call. We can't chase running cars, so we try to see and identify them. It's very challenging. They know we're there, and they look out for us. But we're out there for all of you.

7:20 – 7:30 PM – Discuss neighborhood issues and problems

Resident: Whose policy says you can't pursue?

Officer Gichki: It comes from City Council. Say we get a call on a stolen U-Haul van, and the van got into an accident while we chased it. We don't want to hit a mother trying to cross the street with her kid, by accident. We have to ask permission to go over 50 mph in pursuit, which is silly. Policies are made after a call turns out badly. It's not the chief who makes the policy, but these are all policies we have to deal with. We ask for priorities on the beat, what should we watch for?

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNCPC/
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNeighborhoodWatchNetwork/

Karen Ivy: For several years, since the pandemic, the only beat priority we've had is for 12Y, car break-ins on College Ave., especially in the library parking lot. There's no official priority for 13X.

Officer Gichki: Is there a time in the library parking lot that's more of a problem?

Brian Guenther: Not really; the library parking lot gets a lot of use, break-ins just happen.

Officer Gichki: I'll ask some patrol units to roll by from time to time.

Officer Triana: We work with the CRTs trying to find this sort of thing. Do you have cameras?

Brian Guenther: Sorry, no cameras.

Officer Triana: It's no good if we officers see a break-in – we have to have independent evidence to act on it.

Officer Gichki: If we arrest, and we don't have other witnesses, they won't get charged even if they have stolen stuff, even if the car has no plates.

Resident: The criminals I see on TV don't seem very remorseful. Is that true?

Officer Gichki: The real question is, why do these people drive here from Stockton to rob people? In other counties they will charge these cases, but Alameda doesn't.

Resident: What about better lighting on College Ave.? Who would pay for it? Trader Joe's has huge lights and cameras.

Mike Ubell: The merchants pay for that lighting. It's harder for the city because of government surveillance issues, they've had pushback. The city could do it if they have the will – if constituents tell the city council they want it.

Resident: We need to talk to the City Council about this, this is ridiculous.

Mike Ubell: The police can ask citizens with security cameras to provide them with video. Oakland approved license plate readers in 2023.

Officer Gichki: People commit crimes in stolen cars and they switch the plates; but if we catch those guys in that car with the switched plate, we can use this.

7:30 – 8:00 PM – Paula Hawthorn, Coalition for Police Accountability, will speak on the function and authority of the Oakland Police Commission.

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Mike Ubell: We wanted a speaker from the Police Commission, but they meet on Thursdays. This is Paula Hawthorn, from the Coalition for Police Accountability, who helped write the legislation that created the Police Commission.

Paula Hawthorn: I'm a Rockridge resident for 30 years. I worked on getting the Police Commission implemented and follow it closely as part of gun violence prevention work. If you can't trust the police, then you'll buy your own gun. I wanted to increase the earned confidence in the police. Measure LL was written by the Coalition for Police Accountability and council member Dan Kalb's office, and it passed.

The Oakland Police Department reports to the City Administrator (Jestin Johnson), who reports to the Mayor. The City Council approves policies and budgets. The Police Commission, created by Measure LL, is independent of all that. OPD is also supervised by the NSA monitor, Robert Warshaw.

What does the Police Commission look like?

It is the most powerful Police Commission in the USA. It has 7 members. Three are appointed by the mayor, and 4 by the Selection Panel. There are 2 alternate Commission members, one appointed by the Mayor, and one by the Selection Panel. The Selection Panel has 9 members appointed by the Mayor and City Council. Members serve 3 year terms, with a 2 term limit.

The actual charter amendment says the Police Commission members must be Oakland residents with NO association with OPD. No member can be a current police officer, current City employee, former Oakland police officer, or current or former official, employee or representative of a union that represents police officers. Our group was advised by the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, who advised us to allow NO association with police, to maintain complete independence from the police. You don't want policing experts. You want ordinary citizens who can listen and make a judgement.

What can the Police Commission do?

They can fire the police chief. They can nominate 4 candidates for a new police chief; the mayor may choose one. The Community Police Review Agency (CPRA) reports to the Police Commission. The CPRA investigates complaints and holds the police accountable. If OPD and CPRA disagree on a fault, the Police commission decides. The civilian Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reports to the police commission and audits OPD compliance with policy.

Police commission web site: https://www.oaklandca.gov/boards-commissions/police-commission

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The Police Commission reviews requests for militarized equipment, and considers the appropriateness. The American Friends Service Committee asked for a policy on what militarized equipment OPD could purchase. The Police Commission has passed many policies, including:

- Choke holds
- Flash-bang crowd control
- Specialty impact munitions
- Use of force documentation

The Police Commission doesn't make all rules. They weren't involved in rules on high-speed chases – the high speed chase rules pre-date the Police Commission. They weren't involved in rules governing pretextual searches (stopping people for a non-criminal state like a dead tail light). That rule came from the NSA Monitor, because pretextual searches are more often used on black people than on white people. Mr. Warshaw hired a consultant from Stanford to investigate that, and she proved it. OPD now has to have a reason to stop a car in Oakland.

If you go to the Police Commission meetings, you'll see reports from CPRA, OIG, and OPD. They have Ad Hoc Committees on community policing, racial profiling, and the Negotiated Settlement Agreement (NSA).

History of Police Accountability in Oakland:

2003: Riders lawsuit results in Negotiated Settlement Agreement

119 plaintiffs, 4 OPD "riders"

51 named objectives in NSA

2010: Chief Robert Warshaw named Monitor

2013:Thomas Frazier becomes Compliance Director

2014: Frazier fired, Warshaw named Compliance Director in addition to Monitor

2016: Charter Amendment Instituting Police Commission passes

2020: Charter Amendment for independent Inspector General passes

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OPD has too many groups overseeing it, starting with the never-ending NSA and Robert Warshaw. Mr. Warshaw says OPD haven't fulfilled all the requirements because black and white officers aren't treated the same, however, the similar treatment of black and white officers is not specified in the NSA. Certainly we all want that, but the NSA is being expanded to cover many new things than were in the original agreement. Under these circumstances it will never end. I believe if Oakland wanted to they could end it, but they don't seem to have the political will to do so. I think we need to get out of it. We also should combine OPD internal affairs (which investigates stuff that didn't come from outside) and CPRA.

NSA is the only consent decree in the country that is not overseen by Dept. of Justice, but by a federal judge.

Mike Ubell closed the meeting a little after 8:30 PM.

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council Priorities for February 2024

Beat 12Y:

1. *Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council Priority:* Car break-ins on College Ave., especially in the library parking lot.

Beat 13X:

1. *Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council Priority*: No current priority.

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council meetings
are normally the SECOND Thursday of even-numbered months.
*Next meeting **Thursday, June 13, 2024** at 7:00 PM*
Rockridge Library and virtual meeting
Zoom link is available at https://rockridgencpc.com, NEXT NCPC MEETING

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