

**Greater Rockridge  
Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (12Y/13X) – Minutes  
Thursday, June 8, 2023  
Rockridge Library and  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
General Public: 7:00-8:30 PM**

**Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC):**

Michael Ubell – Chair  
 Vice Chair position is open  
 Eric Neville - Treasurer  
 Karen Ivy – Secretary & Information Officer  
 Officer Nathanael Estifanos – Community Resource Officer, beat 12Y  
 Officer Silvestre Triana - Community Resource Officer, beat 13X

**Introductions**

Mike Ubell opened the meeting at 7:10 PM, announcing a hybrid meeting. There were 97 people attending when the meeting started, 48 who signed in personally and 49 on Zoom (more may have come in on Zoom later). Karen Ivy was in person, Eric Neville attended on Zoom. Officer Nathanael Estifanos attended in person, as did Council Member Dan Kalb. Neither Captain Thomason nor Officer Triana attended. Mike asked attendees please to raise a hand to be recognized, because of the number of people attending. He also asked them to stand to talk so the OWL could see them. As the meeting started, we hoped Captain Thomason would arrive.

**OPD Status Reports, beats 12Y and 13X**

Officer Estifanos didn't present any statistics at the meeting. He sent us some statistics via email.

*Crimes Stats in Beat 12Y—Auto/Residential/Commercial Burglary, Vehicle Theft, Assault w/Deadly Weapon, Robbery, Murder*

<b>CRIME TYPE</b>	<b>MAY - JUN 2022</b>	<b>MAY - JUN 2023</b>
ROBBERY - GUN	0	1
ROBBERY - KNIFE	1	0
ROBBERY - STRONGARM	3	7
ROBBERY - ALL OTHER	1	0
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	0	1
BURGLARY	20	3
LARCENY - FROM VEHICLE	14	2
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	7	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>24</b>

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*Crimes Stats in Beat 13X—Auto/Residential/Commercial Burglary, Vehicle Theft, Assault w/Deadly Weapon, Robbery, Murder*

<b>CRIME TYPE</b>	<b>MAY - JUN 2022</b>	<b>MAY - JUN 2023</b>
ROBBERY - GUN	1	0
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	0	1
BURGLARY	2	1
LARCENY - FROM VEHICLE	2	4
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	5	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

**Conversation with Council Member Dan Kalb**

Mike asked people online to mute, then asked Dan Kalb to start the meeting. Mr. Kalb asked Officer Estifanos to introduce himself. Officer Estifanos said he was the Community Resource Officer for beats 12X, 12Y, and 11. He said that as OPD gets more officers in future, they'll each be assigned to individual beats instead of multiple beats.

*Dan Kalb:* OPD has reassigned Captain Thomason, as of June 10. Lisa Asmus will take over as Acting Captain of Area 2 shortly. I don't know her. I've always found the captains assigned here very competent and helpful, I'm looking forward to working with her as needed. I just got the notice of this change.

Mike Ubell then asked Mr. Kalb to discuss some of the major issues he's aware of and to take questions as they arise.

*Dan Kalb:* The city budget is the big issue now. I'll try not to repeat the news. Oakland has a significant budget shortfall over the next 2 years. The mayor's proposed budget, released 5/1, had major cuts to virtually all departments funded by the general fund. OPD gets substantially less money for overtime, which is used to fill gaps in service due to vacancies. Every city does this. But she also proposes to freeze some unfilled positions. Freezing unfilled positions, even if they aren't going to be filled, means less money in the budget for overtime; it's called "salary savings." It's used along with the separate budget line item for police overtime and is a significant resource. We've scheduled 6 police academies over the next 2 years, which I'm sure will stay in the budget, to fill police vacancies. I'm told that if the academies graduate more officers than currently expected, we'll be able to hire those people. We're successful in recruiting, although not as good as a few years ago.

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Another budget issue is reducing funding to the Dept. of Violence Prevention; this would reduce the funding to Violence Prevention grantees, who work on these strategies in Oakland. They were promised 3-year grants (which is standard practice), they've received some money, and they're now being told they'll get big cuts. The department web site has details ([City of Oakland | Department of Violence Prevention \(oaklandca.gov\)](http://www.oaklandca.gov)). The city budget director just told me there may be a little over \$1 million not programmed in the mayor's budget. That's essentially nothing. There's always been a little more money here and there, this year there isn't. The Council doesn't have a buffer to play with.

*Resident:* Why is there such a shortfall?

*Dan Kalb:* The Finance Department makes income projections on a 2-year basis; they try to be cautious and conservative. They sometimes project more money than they'll get; the city tries not to spend money they won't have. But sometimes the City Council or the mayor will assume that the Finance Department is too conservative and add "a little more money" to the budget. That's not really smart; but we have occasionally changed the Finance Department projections.

Coming out of COVID, interest rates are up. Less real estate is being sold, the real estate transfer tax is down, prices are going down. Sales tax revenue is down, all sorts of categories are down, activity is down in general. People are back at work, but they aren't back at work downtown, there's a lot less economic activity in the commercial districts. And we don't have the big COVID bailouts anymore, we spent most of that. Did we hire too many staff? Maybe, but a lot of positions are vacant or being frozen anyway. We have to deal with this. We're aggressively trying to get more revenue, with not much luck. The City Council President will present her budget next Wednesday (6/14); will she open up new funds for OPD over the next 2 years? Each position is \$225K-\$240K/year –unfreezing 4 positions is \$1 million. If you save that for OPD, where do you cut? It's all in the general fund – libraries, senior centers, parks. But a lot of places that could be cut are already on the block. OPD has assigned more walking officers, especially to commercial districts and possibly neighboring residential areas, but there aren't enough officers, so they won't be there all the time. The proposed budget has more walking officers.

I want to share a note from my staff: I've always asked OPD to concentrate investigations on violent offenders, so we can catch them and get them off the street. I know the current acting chief agrees with this.

The hold time for 911 is ridiculous, I've complained about this before. We're not cutting 911 dispatchers; we have continuous recruiting. It's a very stressful job, we're always trying to get more people. That's a very high priority. Let's take a question.

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*Mike Ubell:* Those of you online, please use the *Raise Hand* option. I can't tell you where it is because it varies from device to device. I'll try to be fair. Please keep your questions short, and raise a hand.

*Resident:* I've seen police around, including some on bikes. What about those 9 kids that were arrested, aged from 12 to 17? What happened with them? Is there some accountability? Also, is someone looking after them? I just saw 2 cars full of kids in ski masks driving down the street looking around – what's happening? There's still a lot of activity.

*Dan Kalb:* I just finished drafting a letter to DA about those situations. I believe that all but one of those kids were released, and that one was charged with misdemeanor possession of stolen property. I heard (third-hand) that the others were released due to lack of evidence, I can't verify that. I'm trying to find out. I'll share what I find out.

*Resident:* Does "release" they go back to where they were?

*Dan Kalb:* I believe so. Juveniles can be put in pre-trial diversion programs, and also in post-trial release programs. In exchange for not going to jail, you have to attend these programs, your movements are restricted. Some programs are more successful than others. They may not be in juvenile hall, but they are put into these programs. These kids need to have some kind of consequences. I'll tell the DA what I think.

*Resident:* Is there anything we can do?

*Dan Kalb:* Anyone can email the DA and ask for general information. If necessary I'll try to find the email address.

*Mike Ubell:* I have a question from chat: Why does Oakland seem to have more budget issues than surrounding cities?

*Dan Kalb:* I don't know the answer to that. You can't compare Oakland with smaller cities, but we do seem to be worse than comparable size cities (San Jose, Fresno, LA, Sacramento). I'll keep asking.

*Resident:* Back to the 9 juveniles – there are a lot of cameras around here, people have tried to provide camera evidence, there are many dozens of videos. What should we do that we aren't doing? We collected a lot of evidence but it didn't seem to help.

*Dan Kalb:* You're saying that people submitted video files. The files go to the police, who review them and send them to the DA, who then reviews them. In this case they apparently decided they weren't evidence; we don't really know what was done. There were cases years ago where people submitted evidence to an investigating

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officer who didn't accept it. If that happens to you, let me know and I'll take it up with the captain. This time the evidence was collected.

*Resident:* We have a video that shows the attack. 2-3 kids attacked that woman. How could that not be used? We turned it in. Did the DA get it?

*Dan Kalb:* I'll find out what happened to that video. Did OPD get it, pass it on to Investigations, and then to the DA? I'll try to find out. I could try to talk to the DA, I don't know her well.

*Mike Ubell:* Ofc Estifanos, is there a procedure to get evidence to police?

*Officer Estifanos:* We have a web site where we post the video evidence we get. The DA gets an email with the report number and can look at any evidence under that number. The DA has full access to that web site.

*Dan Kalb:* So, if the evidence was uploaded, did the DA look at it? I can ask that question.

*Mike Ubell:* This is a question from chat: how much revenue has Oakland lost by losing the A's?

*Dan Kalb:* That's irrelevant to the current 2-year budget cycle, the A's will be here for at least next 2 years. Any revenue loss will be at least 2 years out. We aren't giving up hope.

*Resident:* You know about all the car break-ins. Why is there no increase in parking enforcement? In Berkeley I see the parking enforcement people there *all the time*, but not here. We have parking permits in our area, we have street sweeping, we don't see them. The presence of parking enforcement vehicles would be a deterrent, and we're losing revenue.

*Dan Kalb:* I'm always asking, where are the parking control technicians? They are civilians. We've hired a lot of them. OPD says they're out there, it's not as regular as they like. Parking control focuses on downtown, also on street cleaning, but not 100%. I'll bug them again. They now have computer handhelds, that should make it faster and improve the ground they can cover. I want to know why they can't identify stolen cars to OPD, not to do anything but just to tell OPD if they identify one. We haven't done that yet and I don't know why. I'll put in a budget directive asking for a timeline and report for why parking control can't do this and when they can.

*Resident:* My son is at UC in grad school, he was very disappointed in the John George facility, it has no facilities for the homeless, it's a revolving door. Why aren't we pulling in Kamala Harris? Can she get us some money for youth activities? We don't have parks that have access for middle school kids, healthy activities for them to do. And if the A's do leave, we could use that stadium, maybe for a new mental health hospital.

*Dan Kalb:* Oakland has always been aggressive in applying for grants, even before Kamala Harris got in the White House. We just got a grant for the Fire Department, about \$25 million, which we'll use *not* to brown out a

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fire station (the mayor's budget includes a browned-out fire station). Some grants for OPD and Violence Prevention require a high match. We do have some events for kids, not as much as we'd like but they're successful. The mayor would have to talk to Ms. Harris.

*Resident:* Can't we offer housing in a neighborhood to officers working there?

*Mike Ubell:* Please don't answer that, we need to move on. You in the back.

*Resident:* We've had multiple car break-ins since April 20, stealing catalytic converters.. I've seen most of them, mainly between 4 am and 6 am. I talk to police officers, I call dispatch, nothing happens. There's no consequence. The laws don't let us get these kids off the street. Can we get rid of catalytic converters so they can't steal them?

*Dan Kalb:* That's not something the city can do, and I wouldn't support that anyway, catalytic converters are very important. The state has passed a couple of laws recently that they think will deter catalytic converter theft. I can't remember the details; call my office and we'll send you the information. We hope that will help.

*Mike Ubell:* We have a question from Zoom.

*Resident:* The budget is about priorities. I'd love to have library open, and the grass cut in the parks, but my priorities have changed. If we don't feel safe going out in our neighborhood, or leaving our car on the street at night, shouldn't our priorities change? Safety has become a top priority. Oakland has about 15 officers for every 10,000 users, San Francisco has about 23 point something. Are we chronically under-policed, and shouldn't the budget reflect that?

*Dan Kalb:* I'll take the second question first. Yes, some people believe we have fewer police officers than many other cities. But other stats suggest that the crime rate doesn't really correlate to police numbers. I'm in favor of more police, I think we should have 800 or more officers. We've topped 800 once in the last 20 years. We'll have 6 police academies.

*Resident:* How many people are in each academy?

*Dan Kalb:* Usually about 40-42. Not that many graduate; you don't necessarily want them all to graduate. In recent years, graduation numbers have been in the 20s, a few years ago they were in the 30s. I don't know why. We've asked OPD if they talk to the students who didn't quite make it. Exit interviews and extra training sometimes bring people back who then do a good job. We've tried lateral academies, where we hire officers from other cities, but often laterals are people trying to get out of other cities, and some chiefs don't like that. We can't fit more than 6 academies in a 2-year period, we'll see what we can get.

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About prioritization and getting more officers, or more overtime slots – what do we want to cut to get that?

*Resident:* His question wasn't really about all that. His question was, we all feel the bureaucracy in Oakland just isn't paying attention to us. You're not listening to us and you don't do anything. You haven't adjusted to the new topic.

*Dan Kalb:* I understand what's happening, I get regular reports, I talk to police captains, since I got into office. We try to do what we can. The question was, how do we get more dollars for police. We need to reprioritize, which means less of something else. That's what we have to ask. I'm ok to unfreeze open OPD positions to have more dollars for overtime over the next 1-2 years. When OPD has needed overtime, they've done it, and then the Council has had to find the money to backfill that. In a good economy we've had the money, we're afraid we won't have it this time, the money may not come in for unbudgeted overtime. I don't think they'll do mandatory overtime, but many officers want overtime. I don't know if the council will put the money in for that. The next budget meeting is next Wednesday. And lots of other people are asking to put money back in the budget, for multiple departments.

*Resident:* How will you get us all the information you say that you'll send to us? I looked on your web site, do you have a newsletter?

*Dan Kalb:* I do have a newsletter, it comes out once a month. You can sign up for my newsletter, there should be a form you can fill out, or send an email to my office. [Ed. Note: the link to the sign-up form is on this page: [City of Oakland | Councilmember Dan Kalb \(oaklandca.gov\)](http://www.oaklandca.gov/councilmember-dan-kalb)]

*Karen Ivy:* I maintain the NCPC web site. On our site, under *Resources > Important People*, you can find out how to contact Dan Kalb's staff. I recently updated the names and numbers.

*Resident:* We're forgetting important things. I've had to pick people up off the sidewalk. They're bleeding, they're bruised, they're shaking; this is awful. That should send a message of what we're trying to say here. You're our representative? Why don't we have all the players on these meetings? Where's the legal side? Why wasn't Pamela Price invited tonight? She should hear the stories that we've heard. We need all the decision makers at the table. Everybody needs to see what I've seen.

*Mike Ubell:* We meant this to be a conversation with the captain, who was reassigned after he agreed to come. We can try to get a representative from the DA's office. I just organize this meeting, I have no power at all.

*Dan Kalb:* I'll be happy to try to help you reach out to the DA's office. We may get a chief deputy.

*Resident on Zoom:* I care about public safety, I'm worried that we're only talking about more police. Is there data that says whether that will actually increase public safety and reduce crime? There's data out there that

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deals with it, why aren't we talking about it here? There's \$360 million for police in this budget, \$21 million for violence prevention, \$26 million for economic and work force development. Those are the programs that support safer communities for all, that's been demonstrated in research. We should do something that actually reduces crime overall and not just spend money on police.

*Dan Kalb:* Oakland has tried to take a comprehensive approach to violence prevention, those programs and our Ceasefire program (in OPD) have been very successful. They try to get people off the path of violence. We do invest in that. We have less control over what the county does, and the NGOs that work with it. "Re-entry services" are mostly done by the county, not the city – the sheriff's department and the probation department, and some NGOs. Alameda County has some programs that are good. The state doesn't spend nearly enough on rehabilitation at state prisons, or re-entry services at the county level. But right now everything is being frozen or cut. I've seen the numbers about police numbers versus crime rates, but it isn't just that.

*Resident:* This is my first meeting. Things have just gotten so bad that we feel that more must be done. We've actually put up signs, "please don't break the glass." We need to prevent violence against property as well as against people.

*Dan Kalb:* Yes, "smash and grab" and other property crimes are important too, but OPD will prioritize efforts where they feel they must, usually to violent crime, and hopefully not ignore the others.

*Mike Ubell:* People on chat want to hear what the situation looks like to our CRO. Officer Estifanos?

*Officer Estifanos:* Do you mean car break-ins or violence? I think those crimes are spreading from other parts of the city. It hasn't been here as much, but now it is here, affecting everyone; but it's all over the city. The statistics are there to support that. Car break-ins are really obvious, brazen, you see it happen. As far as Berkeley having more control and more visible officers – in BFO 1 [Bureau of Field Operations, which includes Oakland Police Areas 1, 2, and 3] there are 19 officers covering 3 police areas. In district 2 [Oakland Police Area 2, North Oakland and Uptown], there are 6 officers covering an area from W. Grand to Berkeley. We're spread very thin. We may be on West Grand when we have to respond to a call in Rockridge. And walking officers are assigned to "business districts" – in *all* the business districts in Police Area 2 (College, Temescal, Piedmont). They aren't everywhere at once. And the car break-in crews know about all that.

*Mike Ubell:* You have the community policing van parked outside the library. Is that for a deterrent?

*Officer Estifanos:* Yes. It works but it's like whack-a-mole.

*Resident:* Did we approve the city administrator?

*Dan Kalb:* Yes. He's on duty, he just started. He came from outside, so he's still learning.

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*Resident:* Everyone is frustrated. Should we protest? Should we be outside Sheng Thao's office tomorrow morning? Everybody says we can't do anything, but – something has to happen!

*Mike Ubell:* You can sign up to speak at the city council budget meeting, it's next Wed. at 4 PM. There's a signup on the city web site. Go and say your piece. There will be hundreds of people there.

*Dan Kalb:* Wednesday the 14th is a key meeting. We won't make any decisions, but it's the last meeting before we do make the final decisions on what we'll do. Be there, speak, tell people what you want. And we still allow Zoom comments as well as in person.

*Resident:* I want to feel safe, we all want to feel safe. Can we have this neighborhood feel and be more safe without ignoring the concerns of other communities that have different risks, like people of color? I'm concerned that by calling police, we're increasing their risks.

*Dan Kalb:* We know about the issues with people of color, it's awful, all over the country. Oakland tries to recruit police more carefully, we try to weed out people who shouldn't be carrying a gun. Bad actors slip through everywhere. Every police chief I've ever met has said, there are people on their force who shouldn't carry a gun. So some people get put behind a desk, in an administrative position. We need a robust Police Commission and CPRA (Ed. note: Community Police Review Agency), to hold bad cops responsible and if necessary kick them off. This situation has improved over the last 20 years. But we can't be afraid to hire more officers; we must hire the right officers and hold the wrong officers responsible.

*Resident:* Are homeless people causing crime because they're hungry? (Sorry, this resident spoke very fast and softly at considerable length, I couldn't understand her.)

*Dan Kalb:* Do economic problems cause crime? 8-10 years ago, there were armed robberies all over the city, including Rockridge. But very few people were beaten up or shot. Recently it's gone beyond mere robbery, it's violent behavior, even when they could get the property without beating people up. It seems to have gone beyond the economic issues. Is it domestic violence at home? Studies suggest that children raised in a violent home will behave violently. Reducing homes with domestic violence could reduce violent crime down the road, but it won't happen right away.

*Mike Ubell:* Here's a question from chat: is the city spending any money on restorative justice programs?

*Dan Kalb:* The school district spends money in high schools and middle schools trying to do restorative justice, including peer remediation, to try to stop violent behavior. The city has given money to the school district in previous years to help cover a deficit and support this.

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*Mike Ubell:* I see the chair of the Public Services and Oversight Committee – she happens to be my wife! [Ed. note: the Public Services and Oversight Committee oversees the use of Measure Z money.]

*Paula Hawthorn:* There are restorative justice programs. The current budget will cut them by 22%. You should go online and look at the Oakland budget ([City of Oakland | Fiscal Year 2023-2025 Budget \(oaklandca.gov\)](https://www.oaklandca.gov/fiscal-year-2023-2025-budget)). I hope restorative justice and violence prevention won't be cut. There are 4 different organizations that are supporting this. We need to keep these.

*Resident:* I've seen several car break-ins, and people driving cars without license plates. I don't know what to do, should I put my camera away? And there is a difference between rich and poor, you can see it on the street, in people's clothes. What can we do?

*Dan Kalb:* That's a big question. We've tried to invest more in job readiness over the last few years. We try to teach kids what getting a job means and how to do it. It is a priority.

*Resident:* We have to leave before it gets too dark to walk home safely.

*Resident:* (Sorry, she spoke very fast and softly and I couldn't understand her.)

*Mike Ubell:* We should be out of here before 9. I've heard talk that the highway patrol might be coming in to help.

*Kalb:* I'm not sure, I hear some things.

*Officer Estifanos:* I haven't heard anything about this. Sometimes the Alameda County Sheriffs patrol the area. CHP does a lot on retail crime, but I haven't heard them doing anything else but traffic enforcement.

*Dan Kalb:* It's happened before, they've come in to do that and release OPD staff for other duties. It could happen again but it's not free. We've had contracts with the FBI to help with investigations; that's also not free. I've always supported that. We'll keep doing that. I have to leave, my ride is waiting.

*Resident:* This is frustrating. We're up against a bureaucracy. We're not all on same page. We have to push for things we want. We keep paying for police and they're not solving the crime. We need to talk to other communities, people of color, and see what they're doing that's working and do it here. I've seen OPD doing awful things to a black father and his kids on Father's Day last year, in front of his children, in front of his home; I filmed it. They had 12 police cars. Let's find a better solution.

*Resident:* Where do I get actual detailed data on the Oakland budget? And who do I contact in NCPC to donate a microphone?

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*Mike Ubell:* Google Oakland Budget 2023. [City of Oakland | Fiscal Year 2023-2025 Budget \(oaklandca.gov\)](https://www.oaklandca.gov/finance/budget) And talk to me.

*Resident:* I've started a project that will help Neighborhood Watch and the Safer Rockridge project. It's called The Lighthouse Project, and it's a feet on the street way to help stop these problems. You can download a volunteer packet, get people out to deter threats. It's at the north Oakland neighbors email. I have a document that describes crime prevention programs.

The meeting closed about 8:50 PM. No new area priorities were suggested.

## **Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council Priorities for April 2023**

### **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, August 10, 2023** at 7:00 PM  
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Zoom link is available at <https://rockridgencpc.com>, NEXT NCPC MEETING*

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