

Greater Rockridge NCPC / RCPC Joint Town Hall - Minutes (12Y/13X)
Thursday, January 22, 2009
Rockridge Library 5366 College Avenue
General Public: 7:00-9:00PM

Chris Jackson called meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Seventeen people attended including the following OPD attendees:

Anna Chang Lai, NSC
Officer Pat Gerrans, PSO beat 12Y
Officer Randall Chew, PSO beat 13X
Officer M. Contreras, PSO beat 13Y
Officer Jason Scott, Patrol
Officer C. Stone

Also attending:
Jane Brunner, City Council district 1 and council president

Vivek Bhatia presented his 2008 recap of crime statistics for beats 12Y-13X compared to other Area 1 beats and Oakland citywide trends. Vivek's statistics are available to registered users at www.rockridgeresidents.org.

Basic trends: 2008 is about the same as 2007 ($\pm 5\%$) for property crime. Violent crime was up 8% across the city over 2007, but was essentially flat for beats 12Y/13X. 2007 saw a sharp uptick in violent crime around Thanksgiving; in '08 it was basically flat, and Lt. Hamilton said at the Oct. meeting that OPD was moving resources elsewhere. The consensus: stay vigilant, keep the neighbors vigilant, don't let recyclers onto private property.

Vivek's projections assume that violent crimes are more likely to be reported than minor property crimes. Violent crimes are too rare in Rockridge for really good hypotheses (6-10 over the last 3 years), fortunately. The neighborhood was very concerned over violent crime a year ago, and we should be just as concerned today because the level is about the same.

Rockridge didn't have much property crime around Christmas '08; other beats doing much worse. Overall crime is up in all categories compared to '05 (when virtually nothing happened). Chris Jackson commented that downtown crime is off the charts; AskJeeves is *escorting* their people to BART. The levels Rockridge is seeing are not bad, comparatively.

A resident asked, what's Area 1? Vivek explained that it is North Oakland, west Oakland, and parts of downtown.

OPD Report

Officer Gerrans, PSO for beat 12Y, reported on the last priorities: mainly recyclers and the problem area around 58th and Canning/Telegraph. The 58th and Canning/Telegraph area generated several misdemeanor arrests and a couple of felony arrests. The owner of a vacant property at 57th and Telegraph was extremely cooperative in cleaning up the building and getting squatters evicted; Public Works has cleaned up the general area. OPD ran a couple of operations focusing on recyclers; the new deputy city attorney is working with them, and will charge the recyclers individually for minor crimes. They only had 7 over the last month. OPD has to catch them in the act of going through the garbage to charge them; it isn't illegal to push carts full of cans or pick up cans off street. Officer Scott has given out warnings to all the recyclers on his beat. A resident asked, what if a resident sees this, can they call it in? Yes, you can come out and witness the citation.

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The problem area at 59th and Canning is much quieter, there are still a few loiterers and a lot of vehicle traffic – but, it's right by Telegraph. OPD has made a few misdemeanor drug arrests but many fewer than last summer.

Chris Jackson asked for any information about College Ave.? Officer Gerrans reported some complaints about Claremont Middle School, not as bad as last year. OPD ran a pedestrian trap, and ticketed people for speeding and running lights.

Officer Chew, PSO for beat 13X, had not much to report. He's still investigating the home burglaries from last fall. OPD is running a few operations but he can't talk about them as they're ongoing. Chris Jackson asked about the story about the woman who opened the door to a guy who then forced his way in, it may have been related to a black Suburban, above College, near LaSalle. There's no new information.

Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen asked if the Safeway/Long's parking lot is in beat 13X. Officer Chew said no, that's 13Y. Officer Gerrans said actually, its beat 9. Denise reported a huge RV parked in the Safeway lot near the recycle drop-off center; she's seen it two weeks in a row and wondered who would look into it. Officer Chew has seen it, it's been tagged, and is in process of being towed.

A resident asked about the gunshots heard up around Golden Gate/Margarido around 2 AM. It sounded like it was coming from the College Prep area, but it's odd geography and the echoes make it hard to tell where the noise came from. The resident emailed Capt. Toribio, but never heard anything. Officer Chew noted that officers are always sent to gunshot calls but nothing was reported out on that one.

Jim Dexter, of the beat 13Y NCPC, reported on a PSO SARA (scan, analyze, evaluate, assess) Project performed by three PSOs in Area One, who have worked with the City Attorney's office to legally put metal recycler businesses on notice to follow the law, including having the vendors ensure that the metals they purchase are not stolen and to report to OPD anyone trying to sell stolen metal. There have been moves to bring a couple of the businesses into court for egregious violations. This is a currently on-going project.

Officer Jason Scott reported that he came to beat 12Y in July from Traffic. He set up a project on Miles by the Claremont Middle School; he wrote close to 200 citations between July & October. He has a PST working with the crossing guards, evaluating putting a crossing guard there; and he has put up a radar trailer. He's writing 10-15 tickets a day even though he's also a Field Training Officer. He just opened a project at Broadway & Manila to get speeders there. He noted that he enjoys writing tickets.

Neighborhood Issues

Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen reported a 20ish black man soliciting door-to-door on Broadway, who said he was from Atlanta. (He probably was.) She called it in, and got an incident number. This is probably that company that pulls in young people from outside the city, and even outside the state, to canvass door-to-door. The young people are only paid if they sell stuff; if they don't get paid, they get aggressive and loud. The company knows they're all supposed to have white permits hanging *visibly around their necks*, but they don't want to pay the money; they consider the citations a business cost. A solicitor with no *visible* permit has no *valid* permit. There are *no* valid door-to-door solicitor permits for this area right now. There was some discussion on whether "No Solicitor" signs do any good; even solicitors with permits are not supposed to approach houses

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where there's such a sign. Soliciting signatures for Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, etc., with no permit is OK, but if they ask for money, they need a permit.

Jim Dexter from the 13Y NCPC suggested that when you call in to report a solicitor, tell Dispatch that you want to be contacted by the officer. Chris Jackson stated there are almost no permits issued, and they're area specific. Most solicitors haven't even applied. The latest illegal solicitor is the guy soliciting "for Children's Hospital", selling magazines. He has a white card visible around his neck, but it's not a valid permit, and Children's says he has nothing to do with them.

A resident asked whatever happened about the gunshots up by the cemetery several weeks ago? Officer Chew repeated that officers always go out on gunshot calls, but there are no shot-spotters in Rockridge because the geography makes it impossible to locate the sound.

Karen Ivy raised the issue of the carpool problem at Broadway and Manila, which Nila Kim of Jane Brunner's office reported to the NCPC by email. Ms. Kim reported that the carpooling situation seems to have settled down, and nobody from the area was at the meeting. Officer Gerrans pointed out that's *exactly* where Officer Scott has just set up his latest project, so that should take care of that.

Chris Jackson raised the issue to Jane Brunner that OPD walking officers are carpooling, they can't get cars, and this is impacting police coverage. The College Ave. walking officer specifically has no car. Ms. Brunner asked Officer Gerrans if all those cars are now out on the street. Officer Gerrans said yes, they're out. Ms. Brunner suggested that if he's in a car, he's not on the street walking; and how about motorized bicycles? She'll talk to the captain about it. Riding his (non-motorized) bicycle up here from downtown is probably not a good option.

A resident raised the issue of jaywalkers, saying they're jumping the lights all down College Ave. The NCPC had already agreed on this month's traffic priority and agreed to file this issue as a priority for a later month.

Merchant Issues

Chris Jackson announced that he's now working for the Rockridge District Association and is addressing quality of life issues to make College Avenue a very shoppable street: street cleaning, repairing street lights, etc. He hopes to get an art deco sign moved, and set up lighting. He's trying to make College a "green street" - they're auditing the merchants and hope to get the whole street retrofitted and certified.

Chris had "Lawrence" (a regular homeless person) 5150'd, the man hadn't been contacted before, he's now receiving some services. He was back at BART today. The white man who goes around and screams at people is a known problem, Chris is trying to get him off the street, he's actually a safety issue.

RDA is working on getting solicitors off the street; there's a guy who "helps" people with parking kiosks and then expects to be paid. The RDA has just had a soliciting permit *denied* to the S.F. Homeless Coalition for aggressive soliciting.

Scavengers recently sawed loose a metal trash can for scrap - those cans cost \$2500 each, and this will not be replaced with a similar can. There was a burglary in a store: electricians working on the premises used bolt cutters to open the cash box. Some burglars are now cutting the phone lines to disable alarms - the RDA is encouraging merchants to put phone lines inside conduit. A resident asked whether there may be more scrap thefts because the price of scrap is going down.

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Chris Jackson displayed an illegal advertising sign from a home improvement company, which he's been pulling up from the freeway landscape areas.

Relations with Claremont Middle School are much better this year; they're still taking groups of kids around to the merchants, to show them how business works, and they'll continue to do this.

A resident asked, what about the guy in black who sits around and stinks? (This is the older man, with a long gray beard and large black raincoat with the hood up, who walks along College, and often sits at bus stops at College & Broadway for long periods of time.) Chris Jackson replied that we can't arrest him because he stinks.

The business district spent \$80K last year on security, they use Statewide; they had lower crime last year.

When the NCPC asked the attendees if there were any items they'd like to put on the priority list, Nila Kim of Jane Brunner's office reported problems with the Water Lounge: the neighbors have lodged noise complaints. They've had a cease and desist letter from the city administrator. Their operating permit is very specific, and they're not following the rules laid down in it. Add this to beat 12Y priorities.

Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen brought up again the elderly drunken man who parks on Miles and then passes out in his car. Add this to beat 12Y priorities, although he seems to do his drinking at Kerry House on Piedmont.

Priorities

Beat 12Y

1. Water Lounge is causing problems at night: music out of hours, noise bothering the neighbors. Problems are late at night. Upstairs neighbors have complained before. NCPC can send a letter to the owner.
2. Persistent drunk driver, seems to be associated with Kerry House; parks on Miles and passes out in the car. Officer Gerrans has the license plate number; car description is now a Honda.

Beat 13X

1. Continue investigating burglaries from last fall.
2. Concentrate on peddlers/solicitors. Has been an increase in activity in 13X.

Traffic Priorities - Both Beats

Speeders on Broadway near Manila, and also coming down Broadway Terrace from H'wy 13.

Next Meeting will be Thursday, February 26th at the Rockridge Library.

Stay safe and see you then!

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