

Greater Rockridge NCPC (12Y/13X) Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 10, 2013
Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

NCPC:

Frank Castro – Chair
Barbara Minton – Vice Chair
Denise Jorgensen – Treasurer
Karen Ivy – Secretary & Information Officer

Frank Castro opened the meeting at about 7:08 PM. Fifty-seven people attended the meeting, so he skipped the usual round of introductions and merely introduced the NCPC officers. He then asked how many people had never been to an NCPC meeting? Probably 10-15 hands went up (we didn't take an exact count). Frank then described the geographical boundaries of the two beats and asked a show of hands of who lived in which beat. About 7 people indicated they live in 13X, rest of the room is in 12Y.

Frank explained that he joined the NCPC because he was curious. He likes being able to talk to actual police officers; this is where you find out what's going on, and we all want to be safe. Frank described the crime report he produced since the last meeting (for November and December); he handed out copies and explained the color coding. Karen Ivy explained that the crime statistics are emailed weekly to the NCPC's two Yahoo groups, and suggested people email her at secretary@rockridgencpc.com if they are interested in joining a Yahoo group.

A resident asked, how big is the gap between reported crimes and crimes that are not reported? Are crimes against the person reported more often than crimes against property?

Frank replied that we have no way of knowing. Unreported crimes never happened. Report all crimes – OPD allocates police resources based on calls for service. More calls for service can lead to more resources in our area. A resident suggested that it's very easy and fast to report crimes online, there's no waiting on phone. The online crime reporting form is at:

[Online Crime Reporting form](#)

The summary crime numbers for the last 2 months show that 73 crimes were reported in a 60 day period, more than 1 per day.

Validate existing priorities

The last meeting's priorities were pretty general (robberies and burglaries in the area) except for noise from The Hut; the complaining resident said the recent cold is keeping the noisy customers indoors. Frank Castro asked Patricia Rose to introduce herself and explain that she works for OPD and with the PSOs on local problems. She is a liaison to the city of Oakland. Patricia said she had cards with her contact information if anyone wanted them.

Joint OPD Report, beats 12Y and 13X

Officer Balaoro said it was good to see the large turnout. He mentioned that on 12/5 there was a robbery with violence in the 5400 block of Carlton, a jade bracelet was stolen; so far OPD has found nobody who saw the thief. Anyone with information about this case, please call Officer Nick Calonge, 238-3326.

In a notable success, beat 13X has had a series of burglaries over several months. OPD caught a suspect, and the case has been sent to the DA for charging.

Following a series of burglaries a victim got a photo of a license plate, the police are looking for a car full of female burglars.

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On 12/30, the police arrested 2 suspects in a burglary in progress; the owner was on vacation, the neighbors saw the activity in the house and called it in. He urged people to work with and depend on your neighbors.

On 1/7 someone broke into a house in beat 13X and also stole a car.

This is a summary of reported crimes in beat 13X since the beginning of November (60 days). (The secretary didn't get all the numbers for beat 22X and the city.) Citywide homicides for 2012: 131.

<i>Crimes Reported</i>	<i>Beat 13X</i>	<i>Beat 22X</i>	<i>Citywide</i>
<i>Burglaries</i>	7 residential 7 auto 1 attempted	22 27	?
<i>Robberies</i>	1	7	777
<i>Stolen vehicles</i>	7	44	1,387
<i>Thefts</i>	4	13	835
<i>Assaults</i>	4	11	479
<i>Homicides</i>	0	0	22

Most burglaries happen between 8 AM and 5 PM when people aren't home. There are exceptions. There's no set day of week for burglaries, it's random. People leave items in plain view and don't close blinds – crooks smash windows and grab. Officer Balaoro asked how many people have house alarms – about 20 people raised their hands. He then asked, how long does it take to go off? The answer was, about a minute. A crook who sees laptops on a table can break the window, grab the items and go before the alarm goes off.

Write down your electronic equipment serial numbers. Of all the thefts reported only 1 included the serial number in the police report. If GPS-traceable cellphones and laptops are stolen, tell the officer immediately if it can be traced, they've had good luck retrieving traceable electronics.

Don't leave stuff on the car seat. The burglar doesn't know it's just your gym clothes.

Q: About the robbery Dec. 5 on Carlton – was that the same guy as the 2 other robberies that night? A: There's no physical evidence, so they don't know, although the time frame was close.

Officer Lane reported that he's been busy down in Temescal. Of the 72 incidents in the last 2 months, 47 happened in December, mostly vehicle theft or auto burglaries. (The secretary didn't get the complete list of crimes in 12X.)

2 attempted robberies

2 attempted burglaries

4 robberies, one with a firearm

Don't leave temptations in the car. Auto burglaries are crimes of opportunity. Most robberies happen around BART, to people walking along, talking on cell phones, not paying attention. Officer Lane said he has pulled his black-and-white up to people talking on the phone and flashed his light bar at them without getting their attention!

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Do write down your serial numbers, that really helps if the items can be traced. The police now have a 24/7 dept. with computer access, tracking stolen phones. He recommended a program called LeadsOnLine.com, you can store all your serial numbers there and print them out when you need them; open a free civilian account.

Q: Was there less crime in December? A: No, there was probably more but we don't have full data; there were 17 car burglaries from Dec. 1 to today.

Q: Speaking of the gunfire incident near Ayala, at 58th & Canning there were *several* gunfire instances in November, people driving thru neighborhood apparently firing in the air. A: OPD now patrols that area more often, they have evidence of a white truck driving through, but no evidence anyone specific was targeted.

Q: Wasn't someone shot near 60th & Telegraph? Is that related to the gunfire? A: We don't think so.

Q: Is the area west of Claremont and 63rd kind of a hotspot? An elderly woman was just assaulted, and there was a break-in last night on Hillegass at 61st. Why is that area so bad? A: We don't know why and we're understaffed, we can't be everywhere. Q: Is it because it's close to a freeway on-ramp? A: Yes, that's always an issue but we can't predict it.

Q: Is there more activity west of Telegraph? A: People come up to this area because that's where the nice stuff is. It's a nexus. We're trying to encourage people not to do things that get them robbed, as a deterrent. More than 3/4 of the reports we get are stolen cellphones; it's an easy \$200. Average robbery loss used to be \$15, now it's \$200.

Q: Any statistics for 2012 yet? A: We're working on it.

Dan Kalb, new District 1 city council member

[Ed. Note – I took notes on Mr. Kalb's talk as carefully as I could but do not assume this is a verbatim account.]

I have crime on my block too, at Manila & 51st. I'm frustrated about the "uptick" in crime – the word is insufficient, we've had a substantial increase in crime. Some neighborhoods are used to crime, but they have an increase too; it's now in all neighborhoods. With the police force so understaffed, we feel helpless, fearful. NCPC meetings have larger turnouts.

I've been in office for 3 days, I need at least a week or two to solve all the problems! I'll attend an all-day session tomorrow on public safety with senior city staffers including the chief of police.

I see 3 levels of needs, all important:

1. Right now, over the next few months
2. Intermediate term, a year and a half to two years out
1. Longer term, what can we do in the next 6 months that will help us a couple years out

I share everyone's reaction: who has time to think long term, we need to act *now*. But we can do things in each of those areas – all of which cost a lot of money which city doesn't have. Initial draft projections of next 2 year budget suggest we'll have a little more money to work with. Given the existing 2 year budget, what do we spend the new money on? He thinks we have to spend most of it on public safety, to get more police on street.

Does anyone know about a new proposal on civilian staffing of OPD, from city council members Schaaf and Reid? It includes some one-time expenses to contract with Alameda County Sheriff's Department for some patrol work; that would be temporary only, that's a stopgap, but it's worth considering. The bulk of the \$2 million proposal would spend money on new permanent staff over

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the next 2 years. I'll consider this very carefully and very seriously; I support it in principle but it's still very new to me. I expect to make up my mind this month.

Short term: How do we get our hard-working officers patrolling, and responding to calls? They *must* respond to serious crimes in progress, as fast as they can. Do call in crimes; have the local emergency and non-emergency numbers on your cellphones. But – how do we free up sworn staff resources? There's a proposal out to hire experienced civilians to do administrative work, tasks like record-keeping and report writing. I don't know if it'll work but it's worth a try.

Intermediate: There's a proposal to create 5 policing zones with a captain in each area. This would give a better connection between the captain and officers and the area. Have officers stay in their beats, if possible for years, and get to know the neighborhood. Oakland used to do this; we'd like to transition back to that but we're badly understaffed.

We need to increase investigative capacity – this is very important. OPD used to take fingerprints regularly, now they don't bother. We need more thorough reports, and real investigations; these days we're not seeing enough of that. We should assign sworn officers to investigative units, and put more civilian technicians in crime labs. He will commit to increasing police investigative capacity. We need data to deploy officers where the crime is; investigations will produce more data to make better decisions.

I understand everyone's gut desire: we need more officers on the street who come when we call. This is important, but we must also get more investigative capacity.

Longer term: We need effective programs to reduce recidivism. We know who commits the crimes. They come out of jail and come back here. Do they need literacy training? GED? Drug rehab? Job support? All of them don't all need all of that, but most of them need some of it. There are programs that have been productive around the country; we aren't getting enough results here in Oakland for the money we're spending, given the size of the city. Some people will never stop committing crimes – but some will, and they can become productive citizens. That reduces crime long term.

Q and A with Dan Kalb

Frank Castro suggested that Mr. Kalb can take questions but asked the audience to keep to single questions, as we're running over our scheduled time.

Q: I have 2 residences, one here, one on 2nd street. The education system is failing, leaving children in homes with no supervision, they grow up and start selling dope. There is a total failure of system. MIT and CalTech offer free computer education.

DK: Public education is a major challenge. Oakland has some good schools, some less good. I'm talking with Jody London, North Oakland's school district member. I'll meet with her every month. Who knows about the KidsFirst program? There's a lot of money that must be spent on programs for children and youth. Are we spending that money in the highest priority way? Would it be more effective to spend the money in larger chunks on fewer things? I'll look into that. Literacy is a problem, the kids fall behind and they don't catch up. Literacy is one way to help. Can we work on literacy and truancy? There are no magic answers.

Q: Replacing officers with civilians is a good idea, we should do it. How about training civilians to take evidence?

DK: I need to learn more – this isn't like CSI on TV. We need to understand the process of gathering evidence and solving crimes. Some positions can be civilianized, but the current proposal is to add new civilian positions that would do things officers now do. No one suggests replacing officers, just freeing them up to do more of the work only they can do.

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Q: Are there training programs for volunteers to work with the police?

DK: I don't know.

Officer Lane: There are Citizens' Academies; anyone can attend, and citizens' academy graduates can volunteer to help the police in some situations. Karen Ivy added that she had attended a citizens' academy, anyone can sign up, there's no compulsion to volunteer afterward. She has also volunteered with OPD for several months doing data entry and database cleanups.

Q: Is this a union issue?

DK: OPOA has to be in on any discussions, to help decide what positions could transition to civilian. If they don't get involved, someone may make the decision for them, which they may not want.

Q: Is the city testing mounting HD surveillance cameras on telephone poles in some neighborhoods, following the Rockridge experiment? Is it true the police are so overwhelmed they can't even use video evidence?

DK: To the second point, it's very important to support more investigative capacity. To the first point, I've heard that it has but I don't know.

Frank Castro explained that the Logitech program started in Montclair, and Rockridge NCPC followed their lead. It is not city sanctioned; individual citizens are buying the cameras. They're not installed on street corners to monitor streets. Our volunteer has coordinated the sales of about 70 cameras, some of them have produced usable evidence.

DK: I've heard that some commercial establishments are putting up these cameras. You'd have to make sure the camera can't look in someone's window. It's one thing to have a camera on your property, another to have them on a street. They're worth discussing.

Q: There's a proposal to hire Alameda County sheriff's deputies to help OPD – do you support that?

DK: I have no official position yet, I'm in favor but haven't decided. I'm on the Public Safety committee.

Q: How can we help you come to a decision? I encourage you to support this option.

Q: I've read that OPOA opposes hiring Alameda County sheriffs as a waste of money – do you know why?

DK: All I know is what I read in the paper. Unions are there to protect union jobs, that's part of what they do.

Frank Castro: If the sheriffs come in, they won't respond to 911 calls. They'll drive around, they can stop and make arrests if they see something.

Officer Lane: I don't speak for the union, but I know the Sheriff doesn't have jurisdiction in Oakland – and would deputies come under the NSA? Will they have the same restrictions as OPD? They can do things that OPD can't do. This is a very complex issue. What would they actually do? Why not just hire officers on overtime?

DK: This would be a temporary, short term thing, if we do it at all.

Q: Don't we have some CHP officers patrolling? Is that a precedent?

DK: Yes, Jerry loaned Oakland some officers.

Officer Lane: CHP officers can and do patrol city streets. They can't respond to 911 calls.

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Q: What about literacy issues? Mayor Quan had a program to get volunteers in the schools, get involved with that if you want to help. But really – *how much* new money can we expect? \$2 million? \$5 million?

DK: Budget projections don't always look the way you think they will. I don't have the document memorized so I can't confirm any numbers. Will we be able to get more employee concessions, given we now have more money? Most of the new money should go to public safety, who knows how much? It won't be a huge amount. We all want to get to 800 sworn officers but it won't happen next year.

Q: About the number of officers: we're at 613 now, will be in 500s in a few months. How do you feel about police academies?

DK: I absolutely support them. Some of this new money has to guarantee funding for next academy. Police officers are expensive, getting to 800 will not happen in 6 months or a year. We need a multi-year plan. I don't want to cut so badly we're only funding police and fire; I'm not going to propose cutting library hours. If we put a tax on the ballot now, it wouldn't win, people don't trust city hall and money's tight anyway. We'll have to piecemeal it: a little pay cut for the police, a little increase in their retirement payment, a little more money for Measure Y when it renews. The city needs to do more, but we and our neighbors need to do more too.

Q: Will William Bratton really have a contract with the city?

DK: Yes, the contract isn't approved yet but he'll probably be added to an existing contract to evaluate the police department structure. He's expensive; I'm not sure he's a good idea; I hope he takes time to talk to people. He needs to look at models in cities that are our size that are also understaffed; he's from LA and NY. What can we do given what we have?

Q: Is he the right guy?

DK: I don't know yet. We have to look at what he suggests.

Q: I was mugged with a gun and a knife. It does no good to give a report, no one responds. I have no police protection. Individuals feel free to threaten us.

DK: We all feel like that, that's part of the problem. We all feel helpless and fearful, it's worse than before. They want to be here, but they aren't here. There aren't enough of them. I hope to get more officers on the street and increase our investigative capacity – but neighbors must help too. Call everything in; keep your eye out, work with your neighbors. Bug me, call my office, I've hired three staffers.

Q: Do you have the same phone number as Jane Brunner?

DK: Yes.

Frank Castro: We'd like to invite you to come back in, say, 6 months or so. Our last council member never did that.

DK: I'm happy to do that.

Frank Castro announced that our next meeting will be in February, but not on the 14th (the second Thursday), which is Valentine's Day. We'll announce the changes once we settle on a new date and location for this one month.

[**Ed. Note:** see the bottom of this document, after the priorities, for the new date and location.]

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New Neighborhood Issues and Priorities for the Month

No one suggested any new priorities so we will carry forward the priorities from November and December. If you want to add an incident or incidents to the NCPC priority list, email the NCPC at chair@rockridgencpc.com.

Priorities for January 2013:

12Y:

1. Late night noise from The Hut
2. Robberies in the area generally
3. Burglaries in the area generally

13X:

1. No priorities requested for 13X

Meetings are usually the SECOND Thursday of the month.

In February 2013 we will meet on the THIRD Thursday.

Next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, February 21, 2013** at 7:00 PM
Seneca Center for Children & Families, 6925 Chabot Road, Oakland

See you there and stay safe!

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