

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting Minutes (12Y/13X)
Thursday, December 8, 2011
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

Introductions

7:06 PM Frank Castro opened the meeting at 7:06 PM. Twenty-four people attended. At Frank's request, the attendees briefly introduced themselves and explained where they live.

Representative from OPD 911 Dispatch Unit

Our speaker was Regina Harris from the Oakland Police Department Communications Section, the team that answers all 911 calls.

Communications is authorized to hire up to 70 dispatchers –ideally they want 12-13 people on duty at any one time. They can't meet either of those goals. At the moment they have 63 dispatchers, with another 10 in training, who will be available when the training is over. Training dispatchers takes 40 weeks, all on-the-job training. They have to learn penal codes, radio codes, how to tell an emergency from a non-emergency situation. People sometimes complain that dispatchers ask a lot of questions when they take a call. All the information they ask for helps them identify and prioritize calls for service, and tell the officers what they need to know. Callers to 911 should expect to answer a lot of questions. Oakland's center is very busy. They answer roughly 10,000 calls a week, and about 600,000 calls a year. At times there may be as few as 5 or 6 dispatchers on duty for whole city. Do not call 911 from your cell phone; in an emergency call the OPD emergency number from a cell phone (**777-3211**); 911 calls from cell phones go directly to the California Highway Patrol dispatch center in Martinez, where they have to be evaluated before re-routing to Oakland. Call direct and save the time. The Oakland Communications Center is looking into arranging to take cell calls to 911, but it's a big change and would increase the number of calls by as much as 20%. It's also very expensive.

After the presentation, Ms. Harris asked if there were any questions.

Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen commented that the NCPC has had reports of "attitude" from dispatchers, who sound African-American, and who don't seem to want to take suspicious person reports from north Oakland about African-American suspects. Has that been addressed?

Ms. Harris: Dispatchers take calls from everyone; they're mostly pretty professional, if that is happening, it's a training issue and is taken very seriously. If you get that sort of response, ask to speak to a supervisor, who will listen to the recording. All 911 calls are recorded. Ms. Harris asked residents to report the incident directly to

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

- RockridgeNCPC.com & OaklandPolice.com
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNCPC/>
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNeighborhoodWatchNetwork/>

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting Minutes (12Y/13X)
Thursday, December 8, 2011
Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

her if it should come up again. A resident remarked that maybe it really is “walking while black.”

Ms. Harris: We can't act without detail, but with details we will act once we know we have the problem.

Frank Castro: If I call 911 from a land line, does it go to the center? If I call the emergency number from a cell, does it go to the center? *Ms. Harris* answered yes to both questions. Frank then asked how the center handles non-emergency calls. *Ms. Harris:* The computer identifies the calls by phone number and routes the emergency calls first, then non-emergency. The same people handle both types of calls. They usually take about 1 minute per call. Dispatchers have to prioritize the calls they get and respond first to the incident that's currently in progress.

Call 911 for incidents that need an immediate response: when life or property is in danger. If they are, call 911. Call the 7-digit emergency number 777-3211 if you see an argument going on, or people casing the neighborhood; call 911 if the people casing the neighborhood go into the neighbor's yard.

Question: How many dispatchers are there per police officers today as compared to a year ago? When the number of officers is reduced, are dispatchers also reduced?

Ms. Harris: No – dispatch has always been understaffed, in fact they're hiring now.

Officer Vergara noted that PSOs sometimes put out information on car they want that is involved in a felony, and ask people to call 911 if they see it. Those calls don't always get the attention the PSOs would like. *Ms. Harris* urged people to tell the dispatcher if they're calling with information the PSO said to report; they need to know that, then they can put the information out at the daily lineup.

Question: A resident said that as they pulled into their driveway, the house alarm went off, and the alarm company called her husband. He went into the house. The baby's window was wide open, which they had left locked. Nothing was taken. This was a Friday at 6pm. They called 911, waited, and no one came. They got a callback at 4 AM, asking if they wanted OPD to swing by. The husband asked if OPD could come the next day to take a report. They never got a police report taken. *Ms. Harris* pointed out that there was no immediate danger, so the officer didn't come by. It depends on what you said to the dispatcher; if you say, “I don't know if someone's in the house or not,” the call has a much higher priority.

Officer Vergara commented that OPD just doesn't have enough people to respond promptly to property crimes; while Chief Batts was in charge, he announced there would be *no* police response to property crimes and residential burglaries because of lack of officers.

Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen: What time of day is “busy”? *Ms. Harris* said, as soon as it's dark. Dispatch is busy when it's dark. And a single incident can tie up all the available officers.

Question: Does every call get a tracking number? *Ms. Harris:* yes, every call gets an incident number. Ask the dispatcher for it.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

- RockridgeNCPC.com & OaklandPolice.com
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNCPC/>
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNeighborhoodWatchNetwork/>

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting Minutes (12Y/13X)
Thursday, December 8, 2011
Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen said she has called to report cars parked across her driveway, and then called back later to say the car had moved and was no longer a problem; the dispatchers appreciated the follow-up.

Crime Stats, Frank Castro

We are now tracking crimes stats from the date of the last NCPC meeting, this evening's handout covers that period. Red entries represent violent crimes, crimes against the person. There were three robberies. There were sixteen crimes against property (coded light green); eight crimes against autos (dark green); and one quality of life crime (blue), disturbing the peace. Frank noted that there were more robberies in last 30 days than in previous 2 months.

Question: How do you let people know this is happening?? If she'd known Ocean View was being targeted she wouldn't have walked there. Why not put up flyers? People shopping in the area won't be on the email list. Frank Castro said that sort of thing has to happen at the street level. The NCPC doesn't have the resources to respond to every single incident in every single area. People only come to this meeting if they're personally affected, otherwise they don't bother. Patricia Rose noted that flyering a block about an incident is a Neighborhood Watch function. Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen added that the NCPC encourages people to form neighborhood watch groups, and get to know if there are existing neighborhood watches. Ideally, neighborhood watch groups tell the NCPC what's going on. A resident said, someone was canvassing to add us to a list. Frank Castro admitted that was him! He now has a spreadsheet on his neighborhood with everybody's name, address, phone number, and email. He's doing that as a concerned neighbor, not as the NCPC chair. A volunteer reminded everyone of National Night Out, every August 2, an opportunity to get all the neighbors out, and get to know them. If you register your National Night Out with Neighborhood Services, a policeman will come. She does it in her small front yard. Or you can have a neighborhood happy hour where people can mingle and meet.

A resident said that it's commendable that the NCPC does all it does; but how do we strategize on how we'll grow and move forward. If we could organize the whole beat, we could do great stuff. We should spend some time planning and strategizing, not just listen to presentations. Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen noted that we could use a volunteer to do community outreach and other public relations for us. Perhaps we can get a presentation on how to start a Neighborhood Watch on a block.

A resident asked about the Neighborhood Watch Steering Committee meeting? Frank Castro said it's the first Wednesday of every month.

13X OPD Report

There were 2 robberies in 13X, apparently related. Officer Vergara has information about robbers who seem to be working both sides of Broadway on Ocean View. There are always more robberies in holiday season when it's

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

- RockridgeNCPC.com & OaklandPolice.com
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNCPC/>
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNeighborhoodWatchNetwork/>

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting Minutes (12Y/13X)
Thursday, December 8, 2011
Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

dark and people are out shopping. Be alert.

There were more burglaries and stolen vehicles in 13x than any other month this year. DON'T leave items visible in the car - put it in the trunk, or cover it with something. Cars are sometimes broken into even if the doors are open. Unlocked garages will be rifled. The beat had eight stolen vehicles and eight residential burglaries. Stolen vehicles sometimes reappear - the thieves may be joyriding, or using them for a crime and dumping them. The burglaries are all different methods, they aren't similar. In some places the house was ransacked even though it was still locked. Shoot those deadbolts, and close windows, even on the second floor. Make it hard for them to get in. The robberies take precedence over other projects right now; the PSOs plan to do robbery suppression around Ocean View. They have a report of a possible associated vehicle, a late 90's Honda, no color, no model, parked somewhere in neighborhood. You know your neighbors' cars; if you see such a car that you don't recognize, or unfamiliar people getting out and walking around without an obvious purpose, call the non-emergency number and report. Officer Vergara observed that they park cars pointed at an exit route heading back to West Oakland; most thieves here come from West Oakland. They move very fast, it's hard to get a good description and solid ID for the D.A. to take to court.

12Y OPD Report

Officer Vergara reported that the PSOs haven't been on the beat since October because of Occupy Oakland. They've tried to keep their projects alive. Beat 12Y has had 6 armed street robberies in 60 days; two of the ones Frank Castro mentioned aren't really comparable. That's actually low for Christmas in Rockridge. Ocean View isn't specifically targeted; crime just moves around, crime in Oakland is up and they're getting more violent. We're trying to tell people how to conduct yourself when you're walking around. A resident asked, is it one guy or a group, or what? Officer Vergara: we're not sure, there are a couple of cases where it might be the same 2 guys, but the descriptions aren't good. They can't stop a guy with no better description than "male, black, wearing a hoodie, about 18 years old, 5'7" to 6'". Robberies tend to happen later, after dark. Burglaries happen during the day. Auto burglaries happen at night while the car is parked on the street.

Officer Vergara reported that she moved out of Oakland because she kept running into parolees she had arrested, in Safeway; she was never off the job. Huge numbers of parolees come out of San Quentin back to Oakland, the parole officers are overwhelmed. The problem is not just parolees; there are large groups of youngsters (18 or so) doing very violent robberies. They are fearless, they don't care about the consequences; this is happening all over the city. She doesn't know how you'd find this out. If OPD had more officers they could deter by presence. They ran a very high visibility patrol on the freeway exits looking for suspects, but they hide.

The Rockridge District Association has hired private security guards to patrol College Ave. from 3 PM to 11 PM through December 24. Officer Vergara remarked that Chad at Market Hall is very competent.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

- RockridgeNCPC.com & OaklandPolice.com
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNCPC/>
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNeighborhoodWatchNetwork/>

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting Minutes (12Y/13X)
Thursday, December 8, 2011
Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

Officer Vergara noted that they try to change the environment to discourage crime. Ocean View is a nice street to commit a crime; there's an easy exit to the freeway by McMillian, and lots of landscaping offering places to hide. Also, it winds. It's very hard to patrol.

Projects:

Bikes on sidewalks – she's watching for it, she patrols on bicycle herself.

Catalytic converter thefts – this has been an issue before. Three to four years ago it was about 6 a week. Lock up your stuff. Back your car into the driveway. This is a citywide focus, it's a major problem, and there isn't really a foolproof way to prevent it.

Robberies – street robberies are 211s (the penal code number, used for quick reference), that's their main focus right now.

Illegal repair shop on 63rd Street – activity here has slowed way down. Barbara Minton said she thought they had moved out. Officer Vergara said no, but they're lying very low due to a threat of fines; the city has sent them letters. They may leave.

Nude Sushi – she's still looking at it, and planning more inspections; this was set way back by Occupy Oakland.

The PSOs have a new joint project with beat 11, night-time auto burglaries around Bushrod Park seem to correlate to recyclers walking around. Auto burglaries are more common on recycling nights. The recyclers get familiar with the neighborhood, they know who lives there. OPD won't come for people going through recycling bin.

Denise Boisvert-Jorgensen said the NCPC would like to have the Logitech security camera presentation next month if we can arrange it. Officer Thompson commented that beat 13Z is very vigilant and organized, their meetings are huge. He thinks it'd be really good for beat 12, not so much for beat 13X, beat 13 people just don't show up here. Denise asked if it has to be a whole area, or can it be just a street?

Officer Thompson: Logitech has hi-definition cameras with night vision; they mount anywhere, you can access them from a laptop, they back up to the iCloud, the HD quality is very good. Camera systems are great deterrents, but poor quality images are crummy in court. Montclair set up cameras in large areas – not just the robbery areas but the exit routes are under surveillance. Denise asked how they paid for it. Officer Thompson: A large number of people, 40-50 houses/areas, chose to buy on a big bulk order at a substantial discount; individuals paid for their own cameras. This is a pilot installation.

Officer Vergara reported that she has been assigned to investigate a problem with vandalism at the Eritrean/Ethiopian Center at 5255 Claremont Ave. She is to determine whether to classify it as a hate crime or just ordinary vandalism. She thinks Investigation should handle it but she may have to and it'll affect her ability to do anything else. She will need an unbiased translator who reads Ethiopian. A resident suggested she

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

- RockridgeNCPC.com & OaklandPolice.com
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNCPC/>
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNeighborhoodWatchNetwork/>

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting Minutes (12Y/13X)
Thursday, December 8, 2011
Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila
General Public: 7:00-8:30PM

contact the University of California at Berkeley for possible sources.

BART Police Department report

There was no BART officer present.

Setting of Priorities

Due to the impact of Occupy Oakland on the PSO's ability to work, and because they are already treating the street robberies as a priority, the meeting decided to leave the November priorities in place for December.

Priorities for November:

12Y:

1. Rash of car burglaries along Colby between 60th and Alcatraz, and generally from Claremont toward Berkeley.
2. Patrol Shafter & Cavour area, teenage burglary suspects active during the day, casing houses, ringing doorbells to ask for non-existent neighbors.

13X:

1. Catalytic converter thefts on Carlton.

Meetings are the SECOND Thursday of the month.

Next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, January 12, 2012** at 7:00 PM

NEW LOCATION for this meeting only:

The Seneca Center for Education and Training, 6925 Chabot Road.

See you there and stay safe!

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

- RockridgeNCPC.com & OaklandPolice.com
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNCPC/>
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNeighborhoodWatchNetwork/>