

Greater Rockridge NCPC (12Y/13X) - Minutes
Thursday, March 12, 2015
Rockridge Library, College & Manila
General Public: 7:30-9:00PM

NCPC:

Michael Ubell – Chair
Barbara Minton – Vice Chair
Molly Singer - Treasurer
Karen Ivy – Secretary & Information Officer

Mike Ubell opened the meeting at 7:35 PM. Seventeen residents attended. The NCPC officers introduced themselves. Officers Jurgen (CRO, beat 13X) and Lane (CRO, beat 10, covering beat 12) introduced themselves. Problem Solving Officers are now Community Resource Officers (CROs). Mike asked the group about priorities. Chris Jackson noted that the Rockridge District Association is posting signs up and down College Avenue about a rash of car break-ins. District 2 command is planning a massive campaign, all over North Oakland, to persuade people not to leave stuff in cars. The restaurant A16 had 5 business travelers who came in to eat; thieves broke into their car and stole 5 laptops from the trunk, which weren't even visible.

OPD Status Report, Beat 12

Officer Jurgen reported on beat 12Y. Seven robberies is still a lot but it's better than last year.

<i>Crimes, Beat 12Y</i>	<i>Year to date</i>	<i>Last year this period</i>
Robberies	7	13
Auto burglaries	34	27
Stolen vehicles	15	About the same
Residential/ Commercial burglaries	39	20

Auto burglaries tend to happen along Telegraph Avenue, in the 5500 and 5600 blocks of College Avenue, and near 410 Alcatraz. The CROs are planning an event, they'll be doing flyers, and asking citizens to come out and flyer cars. .

OPD Status Report, Beat 13

Officer Jurgen reported that crime is down in beat 13X.

<i>Crimes, Beat 13X</i>	<i>Year to date</i>	<i>Last year this period</i>
Robberies	3	0
Auto burglaries	13	10
Stolen vehicles	6	7
Residential/ Commercial burglaries	9	17

If you see people casing a neighborhood, call it in, especially if you can get a license plate. The police need to document who was in the area.

Q: Where were the robberies in beat 12? Was there a pattern?

A: Crooks tend to hide in bushes, or come up on bikes. They follow people home from Rockridge BART, especially people with earbuds or staring at phones.

Chris Jackson reported that people are being followed home from stores. Always be aware of your surroundings.

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Q: What about packages stolen off front porch? The resident got an early parcel delivery. FedEx left, but there was an emerald green & black van, just out of sight of her front door, and when she picked up the parcel it drove off. This was near Locksley and Clifton. Do they follow the FedEx trucks?

A: Yes, they do. If you see something like that, get all the data you can and call it in.

A resident reported that her son was attacked by 2 young men when he pulled out his cellphone, one pointed a gun at him. She also asked if she should report a parked car with young African American men sitting in it smoking pot?

Officer Jurgen said yes, call that in at once, if possible with the license plate number.

The officers agreed that auto burglaries are already a priority in this area, so the NCPC decided not to add it as a separate priority.

A resident reported that the dead end of Chabot near Roble is now a hot spot, especially the trail that goes off to the right behind the EBMUD area at Golden Gate. And Miles is getting auto burglaries all over, the hot spot there is the west side of Presley. Karen Ivy said she had reported a homeless camp under Highway 24 on Presley to CalTrans. A resident reported that the fencing by the freeway near Presley is compromised, needs to be fixed. Also, the community needs to report issues like stolen shopping carts; Trader Joe's will send someone to retrieve stolen carts.

Q: What about the arson at Claremont Middle School? Is that solved yet?

A: It's still under investigation.

City Council Member Dan Kalb

Mr. Kalb said he wanted to talk about public safety and the budget process.

Public safety: The meetings he attended last year to a year-and-a-half ago, were packed – people were terrified by armed robberies and strong-arm robberies. The small turnout tonight means people aren't as scared as they were. We need to keep reducing crime, but things have improved. District 1 statistics suggest crime is down all over North Oakland, but we've had shootings, armed robberies, and home burglaries in other areas not far away, like Longfellow, and Bushrod. We still have a serious crime problem. The police are doing best they can, doing a good job with their current resources – they're being present where they can, and focusing on hot spots where crimes are worst.

City hall's job: Keep the police on their toes, including making sure they're visible (visibility can deter crime). We have almost exactly 700 officers on the force now. We need to get to 800 and stabilize there. Measure Z said if the force is less 800 officers, you can't lay officers off (except for cause); this was a change from Measure Y.

The mayor is working on a budget (to be made public around the end of April) which will increase the police department over the next 2 years. Mr. Kalb plans to support that, subject to seeing the numbers. The city council is focused on bringing police department up to size. Council members will submit their *specific* priorities to mayor by end of next week: these could be anything from improving library functions to adding police evidence technicians. This is just the beginning of the budget process, we still need to prioritize spending. Oakland doesn't have the economy bump that San Francisco has – we're doing better, but we don't have their tax base. Oakland hasn't fully recovered from the recession. The council will adopt a final budget by the end of June. There will be budget forums in every district, later this year. Mr. Kalb wants the process to be open and accessible, but we can't pay for any but the most important new functions.

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Investigations: Beefing up the police investigative units is high priority for Mr. Kalb. The last budget did some of that; Chief Whent is increasing the number of investigative officers and hiring civilians such as evidence technicians and crime lab specialists. Mr. Kalb thinks more crimes have been investigated than we used to see, OPD is doing better.

The Public Safety Committee heard a report from Whent on handling of recent protests: how many officers we had, how many we had to request thru mutual aid, who was arrested, and for what. That's available online on the Public Safety Committee web page. The hardest questions to answer were the why-were-windows-broken questions. Protesters didn't act perfectly, but as few as 3% of people involved were violent, breaking windows and committing other crimes. The other 97% were passionate, non-violent interested protesters. Mr. Kalb asked the chief, what are the police doing to arrest the criminal types, the window breakers and looters? We want police to focus efforts on the window breakers. OPD responded they couldn't find all the violent people, but they arrested almost 2 dozen and some of them will be prosecuted. This is what we want. We support legitimate protest but not violent crimes under cover of legitimate protest. A protest in Berkeley got out of hand and Berkeley PD was goaded into response – which didn't lead to any reduction in violence. OPD has tried to learn how not to be drawn into violent situations; they're trying to learn from the last round.

Q&A

Q: Can you confirm a newer strategy at OPD – making fewer arrests during violence but using video evidence to arrest suspects later?

A: They arrested some offenders on the spot, when they safely could, but used video in some other cases. At least half the violent criminals were not from Oakland, and were Caucasian.

Q: What is the latest progress toward hiring a permanent city administrator?

A: The new permanent city administrator is hired, but she won't start till end of June. She was the city manager of Emeryville, and was also the former Oakland budget director.

Q: Housing prices and rents are skyrocketing. Does the city know how much extra money they're getting and how to spend it?

A: The Revenue Office knows how much comes in, quarterly – the numbers for the last 3 quarters are in, and available online. Updated projections suggest the projected \$30 million shortfall is now an \$18 million shortfall. The next quarter numbers will be available at the end of May, when the budget is still in discussion. The Mayor and Council have to decide how to spend new money. We expect that much will go to public safety, but public safety goes beyond the police department: for instance, robust youth recreation programs. But you must have police.

Q: Does the city understand who's moving out of Oakland and why they're leaving? Her neighbors moved out because of crime. Will new people choose to live in Albany or El Cerrito?

A: This is 2 questions: yes, hyper-awareness of crime is causing some people to leave. He doesn't think it's that widespread. He doesn't think it'll impact people moving in at all, because the demand is very high. *Someone* will come here and fill those vacancies. Housing demand is really high, with really high prices – there isn't enough housing to meet the need. We need to build more housing at all income levels, and also protect long-term renters.

Chris Jackson remarked that people know about Oakland, they come here with eyes open, and that rents in West Oakland are higher than in Rockridge right now!

Mr. Kalb said that Golden Gate neighborhood rents are going up the fastest *in the nation*. He wants to make sure that teachers and police officers who work here can live here.

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Q: How does the city account for the possible loss of our sports teams?

A: The direct revenues we get are fairly modest. We're not calculating on the loss because we don't plan to lose them. The indirect effects are net positive but it isn't a large effect. We don't plan to spend tens of millions of public dollars to support them. We'd like to give them an opportunity to make money, so they can build a stadium. But the owners have to want to stay here. What they say doesn't count, only what they sign.

Q: Crime looks to me like it's going up, from police statistics. You ran on 800 officers in the police department, we only have 700; and you diverted Measure Z monies to Youth Uprising, which an OPD officer said was "a school for criminals." These are patronage dollars that could better be put to use hiring police officers.

A: I disagree. No one including the Chief thinks all crime prevention dollars should go to the police department. Police can't be everywhere all the time, gang intervention and prevention has to happen too. We evaluate the Measure Z programs and have defunded programs we don't feel are performing as we want. We choose smaller groups that can have greater impact, and I believe most of those programs provide value. Pre-measure Z polling showed that directing all money to the police was not popular, and neither was directing all money to social programs. The current 60-40 split was the most popular option. The records of group evaluations are on the city web site, email him for the link. (The city is working on the web site, which everyone knows is hard to use.) Program evaluations are presented in public meetings.

Mike Ubell said that Measure Y was very broadly focused on youth, that is, people from 18-24; it turns out that most crime is done by people in the 24-32 range, but the money couldn't be spent there by law. Measure Z was more carefully focused on programs that worked with older people. Council Member Desley Brooks wants a new evaluation team.

Q: About deficits – the city budget office projects decreased deficits with no increase in spending. Does council have a set of ground rules on what should be in the budget? How will you pay for new spending in an area?

A: The specific priority requirement is new, there are no guidelines yet. There will be discussion, but the councilmembers will make their requests public. This is a trial balloon of a new process, hopefully more transparent. We may improve it later.

Q: About the number of police officers: there were national studies on numbers of officers and percentage of attrition. The studies are no longer current; officers don't want to work here because we're shorthanded.

A: We don't have trouble getting applicants. We get thousands of applicants. But our attrition rate is unusually high – 5 ¾ per month, not 4 as we assumed. It's harder to expand the force with that attrition rate. We're trying to get to 720 officers. OPD was asked to evaluate the attrition rate to see if it can be addressed, and to formalize the exit interview process. Officers who go through academy and leave within 1-2 years, have to pay back the cost of the training – but SFPD will pay it for them! Also, the current repayment requirement doesn't cover all costs – we need to increase the repayment and spread it over more years. All this has to be negotiated with the union. We also hire working officers in Lateral Academies.

Officer Lane pointed out that when people apply to work for OPD, testing and training takes about a year and a half. It doesn't happen overnight.

Mike Ubell added that the process weeds out something like 98% of initial applicants.

Mr. Kalb noted that we particularly want to keep Oakland residents and African Americans.

Mike Ubell added that the rate of black OPD applicant acceptance is 1/2 that of white applicants.

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Q: What about those pensions? Are we just heading for a cliff?

A: It's problem. We were able to refinance some debt at a good rate. We are projecting \$10 million per year for next 2 years toward old pension liabilities. CALPERS is the current system for most workers, over the next 2 years our payments there will go up. We may need to start renegotiating that. City workers know this. The health care retiree pot is the major problem: health care premiums are paid for retirees. We're working on a solution for retiree health care but we don't have one yet.

NCPC Priorities for March 2015

Under new OPD rules, each beat is allowed a single priority, instead of the previous 3; and new priorities must be *identifiable* and *measurable*. PSOs will also work on a *Crime project* and *from time to time (?)* a *Call reduction project* for the beat. Remember that 12Y and 13X are only part of beats 12 and 13.

No one offered any new priorities for either beat.

12Y:

1. *NCPC Priority:* No current priority.
2. *Crime Project:* High visibility vehicle patrols on College Avenue between Broadway and Claremont
3. *Call Reduction Project:* to be announced

13X:

1. *NCPC Priority:* Speeding auto traffic up and down Lawton above Broadway.
2. *Crime Project:* none at present.
3. *Call Reduction Project:* to be announced

NCPC meetings are normally the SECOND Thursday of the month.

*Next NCPC meeting is **Thursday, April 9, 2015** at 7:30 PM*

Location to be announced later

See you there and stay safe!

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