

**Minutes from the
May 28, 2009 meeting of
Greater Rockridge NCPC
(Beats 12Y and 13X)
Rockridge branch library
5366 College Ave.**

NCPC co-chair Chris Jackson called the meeting to order at 7:10.

Present:

Seven area residents

OPD Officers Patrick Gerrans, Jason Trode, Randall Chew, Maureen Vergara,
and Sgt. Jamie Kim

OPD Neighborhood Services Coordinator (NSC) Anna Chang-Lai

Substituting as secretary: Janet Somers

Absent:

Denise Boisvert, co-chair and treasurer

Karen Ivy, secretary

1. Presentation: Blue ribbons for fallen officers - Don Link

Community activist and former CPAB member Don Link, from Beat 11, displayed a bolt of blue ribbon and a pair of scissors that he suggested the NCPCs all over town buy in order to distribute pieces of blue ribbon to residents for them to attach to their car antennae to show support for the fallen officers. He suggests that you also give a high sign to officers, in conjunction with the ribbon on your car, when you see them on the street. Officers have told him how surprised and appreciative they've been when this happens. "Little symbolic things can make a big difference."

2. Presentation: Crime trends - Vivek Bhatia

Vivek said that each month he has been taking weekly crime reports from OPD, loading them into a database, and looking for trends, which he then reports on to NCPC in addition to numerous websites, reporters, and city officials. But he said the OPD weekly stats have stopped due to lack of manpower, and they now come only every so often. So this time he took stats from the City of Oakland's "Crimewatch" database, which records "incidents" rather than actual police report. An "incident" consists of a call to dispatch, which may or may not turn into a police report. Therefore, this is a larger set and the numbers will generally be higher here than in the OPD database. But it is still possible to look for trends.

The main trend, he said, is that incidents in all categories were up in March but seem to have settled down now. The data is from from 2/22 thru 5/16 and includes Rockridge (Beats 12Y and 13X) and the surrounding Beats 9X, 11X, and 12X. The complete presentation is available on Vivek's site RockridgeResidents.org.

Discussion:

Vivek noted that the lower crime is reflected in the relatively low attendance at this meeting. Chris said he monitors various crime-related Yahoo groups, and that the slow traffic on these groups is also consistent with the trend towards lower crime in the area. A resident asked about which reports the city council, in particular Councilwoman Jane Brunner for North Oakland,

receives. Chris said he thinks they get an internal report put out by an OPD captain. Vivek said he sends his report to Brunner as well as to some OPD officers and brass.

3. OPD Report

No new crime trends right now

Officer Chew said that OPD hasn't seen any new crime trends in particular although they continue to look for trends. Officer Vergara: "We go into the police reports and look at specific MOs and see if we can id the same suspect doing certain ones and target our efforts toward certain crimes." Officer Chew: "We're just following all crimes that occur on the beat – there's nothing in particular right now." A suspect in the "craigslist robber" case is in custody for the second time and has been charged.

5552 Kales "problem house"

Officer Gerrans noted that last months priority was the unit at 5552 Kales with the problem residents. He said he had spoken to Arturo Sanchez, a lawyer with the city's nuisance enforcement division. He said some affected residents are getting involved and it's moving towards a city administrative action with nuisance abatement division. There's nothing they can do in the way of criminal action. He is hoping the affected residents to come forward and make statements to Sanchez. After that Sanchez can talk to the landlord and try to put pressure on him using the city nuisance ordinance.

A resident reported a recent incident at the house where the woman living there screamed and yelled "call 911! Call 911!" The resident asked Officer Gerrans if he knew what happened there. Officer Gerrans told the resident he would try to find out what happened and report back. PRIORITY AGAIN FOR THIS MONTH.

4. Old and new issues

Stealing of car registration stickers

Chris said there are still ongoing incidents of people slicing off car registrations. "Somebody had their license plate removed and got a fixit ticket." He said the solution is to slice the sticker so the person stealing it can't really get it whole.

RV's parking on streets

Chris said there is still the issue of RV's parking on streets from last month.

Solicitors

Chris said there is still the issue of soliciting from last month, in particular the "prop 8" and "Save the Children" solicitors. Officer Gerrans said the prop 8 solicitors don't (didn't) need permits, because it's for a political purpose and falls within First Amendment rights. Chris said the issue is on College Ave., where there are Save the Children solicitors whom he said have now sued the city. (Chris said he has seen the same people, just dressed in different t-shirts, sometimes soliciting against prop 8 and sometimes for in diff t-shirts for prop 8 and other times for Save the Children.)

Traffic abatement on MLK?

A resident from the area of MLK between 58th and 59th (outside of Rockridge) came to the meeting to reports a car accident there where a pedestrian was killed. She said there was also one like it last year in the same area and complained that traffic is not being monitored on MLK. "It's fast and there are senior citizen homes there." She said she wrote to Jane Brunner who at first was

responsive and then afterwards rejected her request for help. “I’m not quite sure what to do – I’m not sure where else I can go.”

Chris told her that her own NCPC is allowed one traffic priority, so if she reports this situation to them OPD can perhaps start setting up enforcement there. He said Jane Brunner also purchased a radar speed monitor that could be used to help calm the traffic. But Sgt Kim said the problem is “there is only so much you can do on MLK. If you slow down traffic on main arteries they come to the residential streets. When I was a traffic cop used to work on MLK. We just can’t get everybody. But radar trailer is good idea.”

Gang feuds between North Oakland and South Berkeley

Sgt. Kim said the bigger problem on the MLK corridor is an ongoing feud between gangs in North Oakland and South Berkeley. “We’re trying to address it. It’s been quiet lately. You should be seeing a lot more police officers out there now – we’re trying to generate intelligence from there. There have been retaliatory shootings.”

5. Merchant Issues

Crime

Chris says things are pretty quiet, the restaurant break-ins from last month have subsided. He said there’s a video of a guy doing a robbery but with his hoodie and baseball cap there’s not much to go on. He said the restaurants will get their door locks secured. He said this month there’s just been a little shoplifting .

Maintenance

Chris says curbs and fire hydrants have been repainted and some Earth Day cleanups were done.

Claremont Elementary - problem kids and new principal

Claremont: will have a new principal, who Chris said is a “younger black woman out of East Oakland.” Chris had talk with her, including about one specific problem pupil. Officer Gerrans mentioned that a couple of students have been expelled since last semester. “Overall things are calmer.” He said the previously there were “big fights, people being threatened” etc

Supporting local merchants

Chris implored people to “please go out and spend money so these merchants can stay here.” Vivek agreed we should ask the community to patronize the Rockridge merchants, but thinks the merchants “should do some outreach, be better integrated w the community.” He suggested that merchants email the yahoo groups, etc. Chris agreed with Vivek that instead of relying on the Rockridge News the merchants should use things like Facebook and Twitter, as some merchants in other areas of the city are starting to do.

“Suspicious individuals” especially near Chabot Elementary

A resident said she has noticed what seems to be an increase in 5150 (suspicious individuals) in general and near Chabot Elementary in particular. “They look mentally unstable, maybe on meth or other drugs, hanging out under freeway areas and under the ivy.” She is surprised that Chabot Elementary seems to tolerate or be oblivious to it. She wants to somehow involve the principals and parents at Chabot to get them to call these incidents in to OPD. She took photos, said there are shopping carts and a garbage can – “they’re camping out there, the usual bottles and

trash – and if you’re on Patton facing south behind the cement wall you can see bottles and the ivy’s all gone.”

She said she got a call from person who lives near there on Miles whose house was ransacked. She said the officers said the suspects probably saw the victim leave house at two in the afternoon from their location near Chabot. She wants parents and staff to become more observant.

Crazy guy “Shane” on College

Chris and a resident talked about a guy named “Shane” (probably in his early 40s) on the street who is crazy although he looks “normal, like a Berkeley hippy.” Some merchants have issued stayaway orders. Shane knows about the orders and has been heard saying, “Someone is trying to get rid of me.” There has been on his part yelling, swearing, nudity, masturbation, defecating in the street, etc. A woman with a newborn baby approached Chris recently and told him. she’s afraid.

Chris: “His brother takes his SSI money and uses it for drugs...At night 3 in the morning he’s screaming and yelling.”

Officer Gerrans: “They can send him in for 72 hours in a psych ward and then he’s out again.”

Chris: “There really aren’t places any more for these people, no community resources. He attempted to assault the owner of Crepevine. He jumped on a woman coming out of a professional building on College. He comes in to the library and yells at the top of his lungs.”

A resident: “It makes me think of the broken window theory. The community tolerates him and he gets away with it .. the merchants won’t call it in –

Chris: “We’re trying, we have a new security person for Market Hall, he’s fairly aggressive. I’m making it uncomfortable for these people to be around. Officer Chimky interfaces with him on a daily basis. We’ve handed out the stayaway order for all the merchants up and down College. It prohibits someone from being at a certain place or within 50 feet or whatever.”

Officer Gerrans: “He’s arrestable.”

Chris: “But as soon as OPD shows up he calms down, he knows the drill. ... It will be a project with Officer Gerrans and Officer Chimky (when he gets back – he’s now injured).”

Officer Gerrans: “If the store owners don’t let us know what’s going on, and we have no proof, we can’t act.

Chris: “Shane is becoming more paranoid, he’s actually been calling OPD on himself.”

Presentation on safety to kids at Chabot Elementary - Anna Chang-Lai

Anna reported that last week she and a co-worker from another PSA gave a presentation to 3rd,4th and,5th graders at Chabot Elementary on personal safety. She called the presentation very successful.

6. Traffic

Chris recalled that last month the traffic priority was speeding on Claremont. This month he notices that drivers are not yielding to pedestrians at crosswalks. “Start writing those tickets and let’s slow that traffic here on College.”

There was a discussion about when a pedestrian has a right to the crosswalk, and does a motorist necessarily have to stop if, say, the pedestrian is still completely on the other side of the street. Sgt. Kim, who used to work in traffic, said that the way courts look at it is that if a driver is completely on the other side, its OK. not to stop. “Consider how close you are to the pedestrian and what’s the traffic like behind you. A pedestrian can’t just step in the roadway when there’s cars, both sides have to use common sense.”

TRAFFIC PRIORITY: ENFORCE THE RIGHT-OF-WAY

Priorities for the coming month:

Beat 12Y: 5552 Kales “problem house”

Beat 13X: none

Traffic: Enforce the pedestrian right-of-way.

Information and Resources

NCPC officers

- Chris Jackson and Denise Boisvert, co-chairs
 - Denise Boisvert, treasurer
 - Karen Ivy, information officer and secretary
- OPD problem-solving officers (PSOs) for Rockridge

- Beat 12Y: Officer Patrick Gerrans
- Beat 13X: Officer Randall Chew

Oakland Police Department neighborhood services coordinator (NSC) for Rockridge:

- Anna Chang-Lai

NCPC, OPD, and neighborhood-crime-related websites:

- Rockridge NCPC:
<http://rockridgeNCPC.com>
- Oakland Police Department:
<http://oaklandpolice.com>
- Neighborhood crime reporting:
<http://.groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNCPC/>
- Neighborhood crime reporting and issues discussion:
<http://.groups.yahoo.com/group/RockridgeNeighborhoodWatchNetwork/>
- United Neighborhood Councils of Oakland (including information on NCPCs):
<http://uncofo.com/index.html>