

**Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting Minutes (12Y/13X)**  
**Thursday, May 10, 2012**  
**Community Room, Rockridge Library, College & Manila**  
**General Public: 7:00-8:30PM**

**NCPC:**

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

At 7:06 PM Frank Castro opened the meeting and began the introductions. Twenty-seven people attended including 4 OPD officers. Since Karen Meredith, the representative from the District Attorney's office, was checking some last minute data on Occupy Oakland, we moved the OPD report to the top of the agenda.

**Joint OPD Report, beats 12Y and 13X – Officer Vergara, Officer Balaoro**

Robbery numbers are way down over the last 30 days. Robbers are still after iPhones and electronics generally, they frequently use guns. Robberies happen most often between 10 PM and 1 AM, away from main avenues.

Oakland had over 10,000 burglaries citywide in 2011. In the last 30 days beat 12 had 17 burglaries, 11 auto and 6 residential. The area around Canning near Telegraph is hit by burglars a lot. The PSOs have a project in process around 5200 Canning, trying to identify suspects who may live there. Stolen vehicles are an issue on the other side of 51<sup>st</sup>, the PSOs are working with an Alameda County task force to identify where they go. Secure your car if you have no garage – The Club is not 100% effective but it's a deterrent. Driveway parking is better than street parking to deter burglary.

**PSO Projects**

OPD's top calls for service sometimes correlate with ongoing projects – the Canning area gets a lot of calls, as does the area around 63<sup>rd</sup> and College. Claremont Middle School generates a lot of calls for internal problems: theft, assault, drug sales. Soon OPD will have a team of officers who will only work the middle schools.

Nude Sushi, at 6228 Telegraph, is still being looked at; it was a horrifying mess. The owners are now back in business after training on required health processes. They have been very cooperative.

Officer Vergara has made very slow progress on the illegal auto repair shop on 63<sup>rd</sup> Street; she will need to involve the city administrator.

The noise problem at The Hut is still going on – the PSO is working with ABAT (Alcoholic Beverage Action Team).

We've had a problem with aggressive panhandlers on both College and Telegraph; Chad (the Market Hall private security guard) is really good at keeping College Avenue clear. Panhandling is a misdemeanor without a certificate from the city. If officers are available they will cite illegal panhandlers.

Some burglary suspects were caught last Friday on Ayala, and are now in custody.

PSO projects take a long time to resolve, some are never solved at all.

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Officer Balaoro reported that he is working on a series of auto burglaries near 6100 Broadway (The College Preparatory School), in the parking lot and surrounding streets. He's also following up on some robberies on Ocean View drive.

Q: when are robberies likely to happen? A: Any time, but usually at night.

Officer Balaoro is working on a joint burglary suppression project on "the hill," beats 13, 22, and 25.

In the past 30 days, beat 13 has had 7 burglaries (versus 813 citywide), one residential (an unlocked rear door), the others auto (vehicle was unlocked, items were left in view). There was 1 strong-arm robbery (322 citywide) on Broadway Terrace; the victim was using an iPhone with earbuds. Other crimes in beat 13: 4 stolen vehicles (436 citywide), 3 thefts (420 citywide), no assaults or homicides (versus 627 assaults and a number of homicides I didn't get). Residents should lock doors, and report suspicious activities.

### **Speaker from the Alameda County District Attorney's office - Karen Meredith**

Ms. Meredith, an Assistant District Attorney, substituted for Nancy O'Malley who was unable to attend the meeting.

Ms. Meredith said she lives at 51<sup>st</sup> & Broadway in Oakland, and has been a District Attorney for many years. She asked if people understand what a District Attorney does. A crime happens and is reported, and the police investigate the crime, a process which varies in depth depending on the problem. A police investigation can take months or even years. The finished investigation is submitted to the District Attorney's office, which decides three things: was it a crime; did the person they think did it really do it; can we prove it.

Alameda County has a child abuse center in Hayward, Oakland has the family justice center, the District Attorney works with both. Ms. Meredith was at the Hayward child abuse center for 8 years, and heads the Hayward office, so her personal focus is on child abuse and human trafficking. The District Attorney also works with OPD on human trafficking. A District Attorney on site at OPD deals with the strike force on major crimes. When the District Attorney decides to charge a case, she takes the case to court. Misdemeanors are handled in Oakland, felonies are first dealt with in minor court, and referred to Superior Court for jury trial if not resolved.

Q: How many felony charges go to trial? A: At a guess, maybe 1%. The standard is proof beyond a reasonable doubt – the District Attorney's office has to prove the case to 12 people, which means they have to believe it themselves. Many cases are negotiated, but they're always looking for a just result. Murders and child sexual abuse cases often go to trial – the sentences can go to life.

Q: What about this new change in the law, realignment? A: Ms. Meredith is the "realignment person." On 10/1/11, California law changed – felons convicted of *non-violent non-serious non-sex crimes* (a legal term) are no longer on parole when they leave prison. They now leave prison on "community supervised release." They are now eligible for discretionary release at 6 months, and for mandatory release at 1 year. These people could have really bad crimes in their background, but if they were in prison for a minor crime, they'll come out under community supervision. Also, people convicted of non-violent non-serious non-sex crimes no longer go to state prison. This includes auto burglars, drug dealers, business burglars, etc. These criminals now stay in Santa Rita.

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Historically if you went to county jail you could only do a year, or until your case was resolved. You can now spend *years* in the county jail, maybe up to 20 years. Alameda County isn't currently doing that, the District Attorney doesn't think it makes sense. They have the option to split a 4 year sentence into 2 years in local jail, 2 years of "supervision" (under the Probation Department). The Probation Department now supervises parolees of non-violent non-serious non-sex crimes. We have about 14,000 people on probation; all but 2,000 - 3,000 are "banked" (i.e., not doing anything); but they have search clauses associated with their probation, so if they're seen doing something suspicious, the police can search them.

Q: We attended a community meeting about violence in East and West Oakland. Reygan Harmon from the City Administrator's office was there, and said that Project Ceasefire will be implemented in Oakland, but they find it's very hard to get witnesses to speak out. Everyone in these neighborhoods knows someone who has been murdered because they snitched. In Ceasefire book, the author talks about identifying shooters and jailing them on non-murder charges (such as drug deals): is that something the District Attorney can do?

A: If a crime is there, the District Attorney can charge it and take it through the system, but murder is a huge crime with a huge penalty; to "get" suspects on another crime, you have to identify another crime to charge it. Prosecutors often work with people who are afraid; there are areas in Oakland where people are very afraid. People do come forward; but they are afraid. The District Attorney can relocate people if need be. "Anonymous" means it isn't given to the defense, it's a privileged communication. It doesn't mean the District Attorney doesn't know who you are. You can't be forced to testify. We can't say it isn't a valid fear; but people do step forward, and if they don't, it will go on. If you're afraid, call your law enforcement person on someone else's phone and don't give them your name.

Q: The problem isn't just child abuse, there's also a lot of work on elder abuse. A: Yes, the family justice center has wraparound services for any domestic violence, including elder abuse. Elder and child center cases have vertical prosecution; the same District Attorney handles an entire case, to give the situation more focused attention.

Q: Human trafficking isn't widely discussed in Oakland but it's widespread. A: The District Attorney has a "heat unit" to act as advocates for children and women who are abused, also a tip line. Kids sometimes get arrested for prostitution and jailed; but they're still victims. They're doing a lot of work in Oakland to find other solutions for exploited women and children.

Q: Can you rank Oakland in the 9 counties on human trafficking? A: We're not sure of the number but Oakland is way up there. We get kids brought down from Sacramento now. You have to work across county lines. We have lots of collaboration on human exploitation (all ages) in Oakland.

A resident commented that the new law says the reason for the change is not finances: it is to increase public safety by reducing recidivism, by methods other than incarceration, on the grounds that counties know better how to do this than the state.

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Q: Is there excess capacity in Santa Rita, how will they manage with Occupy? A: Alameda County hasn't been jailing large numbers. Lesser crimes go on probation; violations are handled with a probation hearing (not as stringent as a court trial). Alameda has a thousand beds available in its jails; it has been doing what the state wants all along (so it got less state money). All charging is case by case. There are no quotas, no policies: they look at each case and ask, did he do it, can you prove it? Are there better solutions than sending someone to jail?

Q: The Oakland crime rate is still pretty awful, do we know why? What does the District Attorney think? A: It takes a community to protect a community; OPD is hard pressed to do its job without community support, and also *extremely* understaffed on officers who can patrol and investigate. We don't have the staff that law enforcement needs for what it has to do. Ms. Meredith moved here at the start of the cocaine surge; we're looking at 3-4 generations of people affected by drug abuse, and whole communities harmed by epidemic drug abuse. She works in communities that suffer violence. Family structure there is not what you expect; we need to engage communities that don't work, to support families and kids. The high school dropout rate for young African-American men is 70% in OUSD. Crime rates equal dropout rates. We must engage all communities to fix this.

Q: This was an emailed question from someone who couldn't attend: how does the Oakland city attorney work with the Alameda County District Attorney? What is the relationship between OPD and the County Sheriff? A: They work together. The sheriff's department handles unincorporated areas. Robbers move between jurisdictions, the agencies are always in contact with each other. They meet together to share information and get training. We need more people to *investigate* cases, officers on the beat can't investigate; we just need more people. The City Attorney tried some lower level cases a couple years ago.

Q: Are there groups people can join to help the community? A: there are all kinds. You could volunteer in a school, or create a neighborhood group. A resident suggested [OCO](#) (Oakland Community Organizations).

Due to lack of time, Frank Castro didn't present his crime statistics, although he passed around a handout, which is also [posted on the NCPC web site](#).

### **BART Police Department report (if in attendance)**

Lieutenant Alvarez, the area commander for Oakland BART stations, spoke to the meeting. Rockridge station gets the least crime, although BART PD does have problems with Claremont Middle School kids - they get in fights, jump on the tracks, and do "kid things." BART police constantly deal with bicycle thefts and auto burglaries; don't leave anything visible in your car. We need to educate people; they still do the stuff they shouldn't. Theft is a crime of *opportunity*, thieves look for the easy victim. There's a big market for anything beginning with "i"! A lot of thieves are kids.

Q: Can BART police intervene in crime in Oakland when driving between stations? A: Yes, there's a lot of cooperation between departments. BART Police authority comes from state of California, they can and do act if they see a crime. BART Police worked on the 100 block program.

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Q: OPD seems to have financial cycles; are you guys up in the cycle or down? A: BART is hiring, they're having trouble finding candidates. A lot of people apply, but they lose candidates in the approval process. They're allowed 215 officers, they have 205, and they can go 15 over the official maximum to 230. They use regional academies (Contra Costa and Alameda County sheriff academies).

Q: What's your worst station? A: All the stations in city hubs: Coliseum (auto thefts, assaults), Fruitvale, West Oakland, 16<sup>th</sup> and Mission, Hayward. They get domestic violence cases in BART stations, because people do custody exchanges in BART stations – they're a neutral public space.

Q: Why is BART a separate force? Crime is crime. A: It's a jurisdictional issue; BART passengers are transients. Also, officers have to know how BART operates – you can't run onto the track pursuing a suspect. They get a lot of in-house training on handling on-train assaults.

Q: Are you trained to look for someone who's going to commit suicide on the tracks? A: You can't stop people from doing that.

### **Logitech camera program update by Paula Stringfellow**

Since January we've been partnering people to buy cameras at a discount, you get the discount if you buy 6 or more cameras on one order. When we've partnered people for 6 cameras, one person does the ordering, Paula gives them a special code, they work out the money themselves, keeping Paula in the loop.

We've arranged the sale of 30 cameras to about 10 households, we still have about 5 people waiting for partners, who just want 1 camera each. Email Paula Stringfellow if you're interested, [paulaps@mac.com](mailto:paulaps@mac.com). She plans to speak to schools in her area about the camera offer. There's a lull right now, we need to get a new group interested.

Three people who bought cameras have told her they love them, both indoor and outdoor. Many of them want more cameras. There is still no Mac support for the cameras until June, then new people will come in to purchase cameras who only use Macs. Frank Castro asked if Paula can get one of the satisfied camera owners to address the June meeting.

Q: Have we organized people to get coverage of the street? Do the police know where the cameras are? Paula Stringfellow: I think that's the next step. Some of these purchases are organized by neighborhood watch groups. Resident: he offered to do this but nobody ever got back to him.

*Karen Meredith Discussed Occupy:* There was a rumor that Occupy was supposed to demonstrate at the Greater Rockridge NCPC meeting on May 10, but they didn't show. The District Attorney's office worked with OPD on Occupy issues, and after a false start they now work very well together. They've made decisions about protests: peaceful protest is fine, but violence and property damage must be dealt with. You must be able to prove an act against a *specific person*, always an issue in a crowd. They intend to deal very strongly with people who commit vandalism and violence against police; they've charged close to 100 people. About 10% of those charges were felonies, including one for violent resistance of a lawful order and one felony resisting arrest. The jury just convicted both those people, there's no sentence yet. Oakland is very serious about controlling

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violence in protests. Cases from demonstrations may be tried from different jury pools – felony juries come from the whole county, misdemeanor juries only come from Oakland. Out of 500-600 arrests they've charged about 100 people, each case is looked at very carefully. Some people may have gotten stay-away orders barring them from some public properties. If you are on probation, you can be arrested for violating a stay-away, then the trial goes before a judge and has a lesser standard of proof than a jury trial.

Q: is there less crime in Berkeley than Oakland? A: there are fewer people in Berkeley; Berkeley has an even stronger economic split, the lower economic areas have just as much crime. East Oakland problems are spilling into Hayward now.

Denise Boisvert announced that the NCPC had pepper spray on sale.

### **Setting of Priorities for Upcoming Month**

We had no new priorities for May, although a resident asked what about George & Walt's. Karen Ivy explained about the new ["noisy neighbors" page](#) on the web site, but dealing with noise nuisances is just a lot of work. The resident agreed that she'd tried so often to shut down the noise at George & Walt's that she just gave up. The group agreed to eliminate the robberies all over beat 12Y as a priority.

Frank Castro asked if anyone had heard of the CPAB (Community Policing Advisory Board). That organization technically oversees NCPCs. Frank Castro was recently elected to Neighborhood Watch Steering Committee and nominated as liaison to CPAB. The CPAB wants more NCPC people to attend its meetings (the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month, 6:30 PM, City Hall 1<sup>st</sup> floor). Chief Batts' OPD strategic plan was about community policing. The CPAB wants to develop stronger policies and ideals, they encourage residents to comment and send suggestions. Please attend what meetings you can, the next meeting is Wednesday June 6.

#### **Priorities for May 2012:**

##### **12Y:**

1. Rash of car burglaries along Colby between 60th and Alcatraz, and generally from Claremont toward Berkeley.
2. Noise reported late at night by patrons of The Hut.

##### **13X:**

1. Muggings in Ocean View.

*Meetings are the SECOND Thursday of the month.*

Next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, June 14, 2012** at 7:00 PM  
*Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila.*

*See you there and stay safe!*

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