

Greater Rockridge NCPC Meeting Minutes (12Y/13X)
Thursday, August 11, 2011
Rockridge Library Community Room, College & Manila, Oakland
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 7:05 PM. Attendees introduced themselves. Sixteen people attended, including NCPC and OPD officers.

13X OPD Report: Officer Thompson said he was glad to see a person from beat 13 here. Beat 13X has been very quiet lately. The most frequent calls were 28 “ringing alarms” (false alarms). The second most frequent calls were medical emergencies. OPD officers attend both medical and fire emergency calls. There was one robbery in beat 13X, at the Union 76 at 5300 Broadway: three African American males, masked and carrying guns (which may have been real), walked into the office, demanded money, and took two cartons of cigarettes. There was a burglary on Mendocino (off Broadway), suspects were two dark complexioned African American males, 15-17 years old, with short natural hair. In total there were 4 residential burglaries, 2 stolen vehicles, and 2 indecent exposure calls. The really busy sub-beat in beat 13 is 13Z is, Montclair Village.

Officer Thompson reported on a recent trend in robberies, coming from across Lake Merritt – two men drive up in a car (a white American sedan), get out and ask a passer-by for directions – then snatch any gold necklaces they can reach and run. They’re looking for people wearing jewelry. There’s been a lot of this on Macarthur around Diamond. They apparently put the gold in “gold for cash” envelopes and mail it, bypassing the pawnshops. Pawnshops are required to help the police. The “gold for cash” people are not helping the police at all; the mail-in envelopes don’t show where they were mailed. Frank Castro noted that this was mentioned at the 17Y NCPC meeting he recently attended too, this is all over the city. There are no reports of firearms involved, it’s just snatch and run. There was a burglary the day of the NCPC meeting (8/11/11) on Manila above Broadway where the front door was kicked in. Over the entire month there were 6 “suspicious people” calls.

Question: what happens if we call about a suspicious person? Officer Thompson: it's triaged by Dispatch. If there's a murder or rape in progress, a suspicious person call is pushed down.

Question: is there that much going on all at once? Officer Thompson: yes, there is – in police jargon, “code 33” means hold the air open, we have something major going on; they've had double “code 33's” going on all the time recently.

Question: what about youth curfew Chief Batts wants? Officer Thompson: it's not happening. The ACLU objects because it's considered to discriminate against minority youth. Another resident mentioned a recent Tribune article which reported that Oakland has twice the number of murders as either San Francisco or San Jose, with half the population. And Chip Johnson's column asked, what about a youth curfew? Is a youth curfew a tool we can consider? Officer Trent noted that a group is still fighting the North Oakland gang injunction because of the curfew associated with that, even though it's limited to 16 named persons. A resident asked about opening gyms on weekend nights to give kids something to do? Officer Thompson said OPD is doing it now, they get maybe 13-15 kids. Young people just don't come in.

A resident objected to the curfew on the grounds that curfews punish people before they do anything; then admitted he didn't realize the curfew was only for minors. Oakland has the highest number of parolees and probationers per capita in California. Half of the victims of violent crimes last month were probationers or parolees; half of the persons determined to be prime suspects

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were either on probation or parole. The majority of Oakland's "shooters" are in their early teens: 13-16 years old.

A resident complained that we always try to figure out how to react to things, we never work on how to prevent them. We're always trying to control people. We need to get people to know each other, strengthen the crime watch units, sweep the streets, and be aware of their surroundings.

12Y OPD Report: Officer Vergara reported that she had just returned from a 3 week vacation. She noted that a major 12Y issue is still the Manila drug house – none of those neighbors attended the 8/11 meeting. Residents from the area around 62nd and Canning have reported a spike in burglaries. Residents from that area, attending the meeting, reported more this week. Officer Vergara will review the crime reports. There seems to be a problem house at 62nd and Canning, attracting people who commit crimes coming and going, including breaking into cars. It's a couple of blocks north of the Oakland Housing Authority unit. There doesn't seem to be any drug activity, and the neighbors think the issue is not the guy who lives there, but his friends. Officer Vergara asked the neighbors to write down all the license plates they can find and email the numbers to her, she can check the records for them.

A week before National Night Out, a house that had just changed owners was broken into, also in the 62nd and Canning area.

Officer Vergara urged attendees to get people to call the drug hot line (238-DRUG or 238-3784), and report any suspicious activities. Reports on the drug hot line are very widely disseminated and completely anonymous. If you see a crime in progress, call 911. If you just want to report non-drug related suspicious activity, use the OPD non-emergency number (777-3333) and *follow up* with an email to Officer Vergara (mvergara@oaklandnet.com). The drug hotline is anonymous even if you leave contact info; she'll call you back. License plate numbers are definitely a plus.

Question: What do we do if someone is pulling a catalytic converter (not theirs) and gets aggressive when challenged? Officer Vergara: Call 911. Get cell phone photos or videos. You decide whether to challenge them or not.

Officer Vergara wants to look into Nude Sushi again although it has dropped off the priority list, it's a blighted property, and looks awful. A neighbor in attendance reported that Nude Sushi hasn't been very noisy for 5 months or so, but the noise is now getting worse again.

There are reports of homeless people around College Avenue, who may be breaking into cars.

Question: What can we do? Our neighbors don't report incidents because "nothing will happen." Officer Vergara admitted, OPD is getting to be worse than Comcast! She encouraged attendees to report everything, use the online form (<https://reporting.oaklandnet.com/start-report.html>) to report crimes not in progress (like burglaries), all that goes into the statistics, and shows trends. *If you don't report, it didn't happen.* Reporting crimes draws resources to the problem areas.

Question: what's the law about loitering in a residential neighborhood, if the loiterers don't live there? Officer Vergara: We can't touch them if they're just hanging out. They have to be doing something; and they can hear the engines in the Crown Vics coming for blocks, and they stop doing whatever it is. If you see something going on, especially drug dealing, *call the drug line*, and describe the people and activity in as much detail as possible. Reports on the drug hotline give her *probable cause* to stop and investigate loiterers, probable cause which stands up in court.

Frank Castro expanded on "what can we do" - report *everything*. Those 4 unreported car break-ins would have become a series that OPD could look into. OPD has limited resources, it has to respond to the murders and rapes *first*. The police have to depend on public to call in problems, and fill in reports online. If a crime happens and you don't report it, *it never happened*. It doesn't exist until it's reported. You have to make the effort, even if it's annoying.

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Last month a couple of people from Kales were very upset about illegal fireworks, 1-2 families just won't stop setting them off, and wondered if Officer Vergara could talk to them? She reported that she had talked to them, and they have a preliminary plan. One of those houses has been on the police radar for years, and may be about to be foreclosed. She's also considering taking on one or two properties on Kales as blighted property projects.

A representative from Rockridge District Association reported a merchant issue: an RDA employee was assaulted by 3 white males, on Oak Grove just past the Pharmaca store. The victim was not robbed.

Crime stats

Frank Castro asked if everyone picked up the handouts. They show the second quarter 2011 Crime Statistics for our beats. Crime in 2Q was way down over 1Q. We'll hand these out in paper; we can also upload these to the *Rockridgencpc.com* web site every month, and you can download them. They're just spreadsheets. They will have everything that's happened within the last 30 days.

Officer Vergara commented that the criminals coming into this beat don't live here. OPD is trying to compare crime movements around the city. She can provide this information as it becomes available. She asked us to tell her if we'd like the full PowerPoint discussion each month. This is a new process OPD is doing, Frank Castro saw it at the 17Y NCPC meeting and was impressed. She says that, compared to some NCPCs, this group is very good at staying on agenda and discussing crime. We might consider asking for the full PowerPoint presentation a couple of times per year.

Question: does that mean we won't get those PowerPoints you used to do?? Frank Castro: not if you want those, but they are more time-consuming to prepare than these handouts. We're trying to get the information out any way we can. The resident said he really likes the PowerPoints; the spreadsheets aren't as graphic. Seeing crime move around on the maps is more graphic.

Frank Castro reported briefly on the 17Y NCPC meeting he attended the previous night – in that meeting's PowerPoint presentation, the largest number of calls were NOT 911 hang-ups – they were robberies, drug dealing, and prostitution!

Priorities: The group discussed priorities. There are no priorities for beat 13X. In beat 12Y the group agreed to drop the graffiti and burglaries around Manila, Desmond and Glendale, and also to drop the reported burglary at 60th near Colby and Claremont, since both of those are from June and have had no recent reported activity. We've added the problem house on Canning near 62nd to the priority list for 12Y, along with the standing issue of the drug house on Manila.

NCPC Priorities for August:

12Y:

1. Drug house on Manila
2. Problem house on Canning near 62nd.

13X:

1. No priority for 13X.

All remaining 2011 meetings will be the SECOND Thursday of the month.

*Next meeting will be **Thursday, September 8, 2011** at 7:00 PM at Rockridge Library Community Room. See you there and stay safe!*

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