

Greater Rockridge NCPC (12Y/13X) – Agenda
Thursday, April 14, 2016
Seneca Center, multipurpose room, 6925 Chabot Road
General Public: 7:30-9:00PM

NCPC:

Michael Ubell – Chair
Barbara Minton – Vice Chair
<open> - Treasurer
Karen Ivy – Secretary & Information Officer

PM Mike Ubell opened the meeting at 7:35 PM. The NCPC officers introduced themselves. OPD was represented by Officers Hutzol, Jurgens, and Bui, and Neighborhood Services Coordinator Patricia Rose. Nineteen people attended the meeting.

Neighborhood Issues

Ken Berrick, CEO of the Seneca Center, had a neighborhood issue. He's trying to mitigate overflow parking on Chabot, and there have been discussions over the placement of the new spaces. Since no one from Chabot Canyon was at the meeting, he dropped the subject.

Priorities

Two new priorities for beat 12Y came up:

1. A couple of people mentioned the stop sign at the corner of Ayala & Martin - people going toward Claremont Ave. run the light regularly. Add this as a priority.
2. Watch for homeless encampments and parked RVs near the two schools (Anthony Chabot Elementary and Claremont Middle). Add this as a priority.

Officer Hutzol said he has been watching issue #2. The RVs move a mile, then move a mile back. They know that satisfies the law. He will address that.

A resident asked him to give it extra attention because they are near the schools. He responded that there's no particular legal penalty for extended parking near a school. He keeps an eye on the situation. They mark the RV tires with chalk (which the officers have to buy!).

On the subject of how many priorities the NCPCs can have: under a previous area captain, each beat was restricted to a single NCPC priority. This is no longer the case under Captain Allison.

OPD Reports – 13X (Officer Jurgens)

One person from beat 13X was present.

Beat 13X has had 7 **auto burglaries** since February 11. They happen between 11 AM and 2 PM near Lake Temescal. People continue to leave valuables in cars.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

RockridgeNCPC.com & OaklandPolice.com

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Residential burglaries – there have been 11 since February 11, last year there were 10. There was a home burglary crew of 3 people, casing areas waiting for homeowners to leave. They know it takes a long time for the police to get up there, even if someone does call 911 or an alarm goes off. Some witnesses had information for the police, one saw a license plate. One person is now in custody, who is part of crew, and is also wanted in San Jose.

Q: Do homes with alarms get burgled? A: Yes.

Q: How about homes with cameras? Do cameras help deter burglars? A: Sometimes. Not many houses in the area have cameras.

Stolen vehicles – there have been 5 since February 11.

Robbery – there was 1 robbery. A young man got threatening texts. A group then strong-armed him, and texted his mother from his (stolen) phone – apparently they wanted “their stuff back”. The victim didn't want to discuss the situation. OPD closed the issue.

In order to allow Ms. Ventura to get back to duty if necessary, Officer Hutzol offered to present his report after hers.

Calling 911 – Estella Ventura, Communications Dispatcher

Ms. Ventura introduced herself as dispatcher #72 with OPD. Ms. Ventura reminded everyone that when you call 911 from a cellphone, the call goes to the CHP dispatch center in Martinez (?). If that happens, callers may get questioned twice, before and after forwarding. The questions dispatchers ask are required and necessary, they help paint a picture for the officers who respond. You will be asked what happened, where, when, what did the suspects and their vehicles look like – all this helps Dispatch to determine the correct response. A violent crime that just happened is *always* the highest priority. A non-violent incident or a cold report is always lesser priorities. The priority for the police and the dispatchers is *always* Life over Property.

In response to a question, Ms. Ventura said staffing was a little better. They still have lots of mandatory overtime, which helps improve response times; but a big incident can flood the lines. Dispatch can get 15 calls on a big car accident, and they have to ask *all the questions* of every caller, in case someone saw something no one else saw. A number of dispatchers are retiring very soon. The background and training process is very lengthy but they have some who are coming out of training shortly. It takes 9 months to train a dispatcher.

Q: Does the system track hold duration?

A: Yes, but they have to drop everything else when a 911 call comes in.

Q: Can you explain incident numbers?

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A: Yes. If you want to call back to find out what happened, or to track a series of incidents, ask for an incident number the first time you call an incident in.

Q: How do we know how long we'll wait for an officer? I called today on a home robbery *in progress* and took 6 hours for them to get there. My neighbors are arming themselves.

A: Dispatchers don't know how long the wait will be, it depends on what else was going on at the time. We have to do Life over Property.

Q: Officer Hutzol, could you please explain how calls are stacked.

Officer Hutzol: On a home invasion, an “insecure premise” (“I think someone's in there, the door's open”) can take quite a while. It's a priority 2. If the dispatcher knows someone's waiting outside house, it can increase the priority, but not always. If you *see someone in the house*, it raises the priority. The situation changes second to second. We try to call back on long waits.

Q: The resident who complained that she called back today on a burglary in progress, to say someone was in house, and she still got a long delay. She feels very unsafe, and doesn't know if anyone will come when she calls.

A: We don't know what was happening in other parts of the city.

Officer Hutzol: “I see someone in my home” is a higher priority than “I think someone's in my home.” There are 7 police units in District 2 (North Oakland), and they can *all* be diverted by a big accident, or robbery, or some other threat to life.

Q: Can we hope that because the number of officers is going up, this will improve?

Officer Hutzol: We're staffing up the people who deal with murders, and other crimes against the person. OPD is working hard to take dangerous felons off the street.

Q: What is OPD doing to make people in the hills feel safer?

Officer Hutzol: The Department deems property crime is lower than threat to life. The mission of the Community Resources (CROs) is to shift the priority to put quality of life and security of property higher in the local district. He took the burglary report himself and did a CEPTED ([Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design](#)) walkthrough with the owner. The CROs augment patrol. A patrol officer has no freedom of choice, they go where dispatch sends them. CROs have more freedom to look at issues. He sometimes looks at credit card fraud.

Q: Would a second CRO on the beat from 7 AM to some intermediate time help? (Ed. Note: Officer Hutzol works late afternoon to evening.)

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Officer Hutzol: Of course, and the new walking unit will help, but only for the RDA (Ed. Note: along College Avenue.) A big multi-car accident can take several officers several hours, taking statements, taking photos, etc.

Q: When I took Citizen's Police Academy in the '90s, they said that if a dispatcher did something not according to procedure, the dispatcher could be *personally responsible* for the incident.

A: Ms. Ventura replied that yes, if they follow procedure, the dept. will have their backs. Calls are monitored randomly to make sure dispatchers are following procedure.

Chris Jackson (operations manager for Rockridge District Association) said he calls dispatch constantly for the RDA, and dispatch has improved tremendously in last few years, with a significant increase in call quality. He thanked them for that.

Coalition for Police Accountability - Susan Shawl

The Coalition for Police Accountability has a ballot measure in preparation for November 2016, to replace the Citizens Police Review Board (CPRB) and Community Policing Advisory Board (CPAB) with a Police Commission. She's collecting signatures on the petition, and will be in the back of the room after meeting.

OPD Reports – 12Y (Officer Hutzol)

Officer Hutzol offered a different presentation than usual, defining some misunderstood terms. You can see his entire PowerPoint presentation on the NCPC web site.

What is robbery? The terms get conflated a lot. **Robbery** is a *crime against the person*; the thief takes property *by force or fear*. “Residential robbery” is a home invasion. “Burglary” is a theft of property, when the owner is not there. If your house is burgled while you're at home, and you call the police while they're there, that's a home invasion, and Priority One. If you see someone in your house (on the cameras), that's a priority two *unless* you're standing outside the house looking at them. “My house got robbed” represents a property crime, not a threat to life.

What is aggravated assault? The intent in aggravated assault is grievous bodily harm or death. Simple assault is much less damaging. Neither is the same as mugging – mugging is a form of robbery. If they try to mug you and don't get anything, it's an attempted mugging. The data collection on forms of assault is still developing.

What was Proposition 47? Before proposition 47, **burglary** was a felony. It's now usually a misdemeanor. The same applies to **petty theft** and similar crimes. This reduces police ability to investigate – they can't get a search warrant.

What about people who sleep in cars? Sleeping in cars used to be forbidden by the Oakland Municipal Code. The law suit *Desertrain vs. City of Los Angeles (2012)* ruled this practice is *unconstitutional*. The police no longer

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have probable cause to cite someone sleeping in a car or RV. Officer Hutzol asks that people please alert him personally if they see one, as he may not know them. He checks regularly on their welfare. A couple of people died in their RVs during the El Nino storms.

Crimes are cyclical – he's comparing crimes YTD in 2016 with same period '15 and '14. Crime is trending down, *except* for robbery. A group of juveniles, who were competing to get into a larger gang, were committing carjackings and armed robberies in 12Y, early in 2016. The police have so far arrested 20 people from this group. Since the first week in February, when they arrested the first group, robberies in beat 12Y almost vanished. The Intelligence unit worked 20 hour shifts to investigate this situation, and to identify these youth. Robbery data will look much better in June. Post apprehension, robbery is down 60% year-on-year from 2014 to 2016.

Police staffing levels are at a near high in recent history. OPD Had some 500 officers when he was hired; we're now close to 800. Even at these levels, police need to work with citizens. Cameras are a huge tool: video surveillance is *critical*. The District Attorney doesn't want to discuss cases with no video. A case in point: the parking garage at Birch Court and College Avenue had a rash of auto burglaries. The police worked to get cameras all over College Avenue and they got them. There are 16 cameras in the garage, which produced detailed photos of the offender, and they connected the suspect to dozens of other burglaries. Officer Hutzol encourages everyone who can to get cameras.

With regard to property crime, alarms don't make the police come, and they don't deter burglars much, unless the alarm is *very* loud and *sounds* like an alarm – that is, a loudly ringing bell. A house with a visible security company sign, and a visible bell-type alarm outside is somewhat protected. If you can hear the alarm outside, the burglar knows everybody can hear it. And when neighbors hear that loud alarm, they should grab the phone and videotape whatever they can see.

A year or so ago there was a series of burglaries around Locksley. Officer Hutzol couldn't figure out why the same four houses were repeatedly hit. They had no alarm signs, and no exterior alarm bells. The houses that *weren't burglarized*, all had bell-type alarms visible. A loud alarm will often make the burglar take nothing – he hears the alarm and leaves, even though he knows the police probably won't get there very soon. Home security comes in layers like an onion.

Q: There used to be problems with false alarms, is that still an issue?

A: Yes, especially in windy or wet weather. Pets can trigger a motion sensor. You want a videocam that will trip and start recording when the alarm sounds. 75% of alarm calls are false alarms, which is a big load on the police to check them out.

Q: Do security vendors offer video systems?

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A: As far as he knows, some do. Some of them also offer a bright light that shines in the burglar's face.

Q: If you have to buy your own chalk to mark tires, what other support aren't you getting, and what can citizens do?

A: You can talk to the Area Captain, to Chief Whent, to your City Council person. Go to a City Council meeting, and say we'd love to have license plate readers on police cars.

A resident commented that the police are grossly understaffed for a city as violent as Oakland. A recent FBI report says that a city as violent as Oakland should have 1800 officers. For a city this large we need over 800 officers *apart* from the gangs.

Q: I see cars broken into when I walk home. Should I call them in?

A: Yes, call the non-emergency line, 510-777-3333. There may have been an auto burglary – or this may be a stolen car, which we can recover. Also, feel free to email Officer Hutzol directly at ahutzol@oaklandnet.com.

NCPC Priorities for April 2016

12Y:

1. *NCPC Priority:* Stop sign at Ayala & Martin corner – people going onto Claremont don't stop. Add this as a priority.
2. *NCPC Priority:* Watch for encampments and parked RVs near Anthony Chabot Elementary and Claremont Middle School, especially the area around Miles & Patton.

13X:

1. *NCPC Priority:* No current priority.

*NCPC meetings are normally the SECOND Thursday of even-numbered months.
Next NCPC meeting is a joint meeting with Rockridge Community Planning Council on*

Thursday, June 9, 2016 at 7:30 PM

Location to be announced

See you there and stay safe!

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