

**Joint Meeting –
Rockridge Community Planning Council - Greater Rockridge
Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (12Y/13X) – Minutes
Thursday, June 29, 2017
Rockridge Library, College and Manila
General Public: 7:00-9:00PM**

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC):

Michael Ubell – Chair

Barbara Minton – Vice Chair

Eric Neville - Treasurer

Karen Ivy – Secretary & Information Officer

Welcome and Introductions

Mike Ubell opened the meeting at approximately 7:05 PM. The NCPC and RCPC officers present introduced themselves as did the representatives of Oakland Police Department who were present: Deputy Chief Darren Allison, Captain Jake Bassett (new Area 2 Commander), Sergeant Nicholas Calonge (who supervises CROs for Area 2), and our new Community Resource Officer David Mac. Assistant Chief John Lois and Officer Kristine Jurgens-Duenas (CRO for beat 13) were unable to attend. Including the official personnel, 30 people were present.

FROG Park Plans, by Theresa Nelson

Frog Park was founded, and building started, in 2001. The park was built by 1,300 volunteers using borrowed tools, who built two wooden play structures in only 10 days. Phase 2 (basketball courts, swings, DMV path) was completed in 2006. Ms. Nelson introduced Eric Neville, the NCPC Treasurer, as the tool volunteer, who managed the borrowed tools.

In 2013, online and paper surveys showed that people wanted more swings than the current 2, and more public art. Building new swings is taking longer than expected. They've shrunk the play area to use less of the grassy area. The area also needs work to keep it ADA accessible, and to protect the roots of the nearby redwoods. They've had to replace the surfacing under swings; the current surface, installed in 2006, has a 10 year lifetime and is very expensive to replace. They hope to start building later in 2017 and be done in 2018. They plan to add a very small new area, with regular swings and one toddler swing, plus a bucket swing for a disabled child. They will finally add an Apollo spinner (which is 8' high; it spins around but is also somewhat climbable). The FROG Park team seeks to serve the entire community, all ages and abilities.

A separate group, the Hardy Dog Park Group, also plans to renovate the dog park, and replace asphalt with river rock; contact them via email: hardydogpark@yahoo.com or Facebook: *Hardy Dog Park - Oakland* if interested in working on this.

The park needs constant maintenance, especially since adding a bathroom.

Q: The bathroom is useful but it gets vandalized a lot, is there anything we can do?

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:

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A: Ms. Nelson agrees there's a problem, she's now in the park daily. The Frog Park volunteers keep a close eye on it. The city checks on it now and then, but mostly residents must report problems regularly. Call in all problems you see to Oakland Public Works (510-615-5566) or use *SeeClickFix* to report them.

Q: Why are there no picnic tables in the big grassy area?

A: We want to keep the grassy area open for kids and adults to play on; people were very clear on that.

A resident thanked Ms. Nelson and the FROG Park board for 26 years of support for park. Ms. Nelson says they'll be seeking to raise about \$10,000 to cover the swing and ADA surfacing upgrades. You can donate at <http://frogpark.org/swings/donate>.

The board has recruited students from The College Preparatory School, and now from Oakland Technical High School, to help with the annual park clean up. Contact the [Frog Park board](#) if you'd like to help.

Public Safety Issues

Deputy Chief Darren Allison introduced himself; he is the West Oakland area commander. Chief Kirkpatrick, who originally meant to attend, is out of state, and couldn't make it.

Venus Johnson introduced herself as Director of Public Safety for the city of Oakland. She is a policy director in the mayor's office; she works closely with the chief and other OPD leaders, reviewing policies and practices. She was born and raised in Oakland; her father was a correctional officer in the old Oakland jail. She became a prosecutor, and then served as Attorney General Kamala Harris' chief of staff. Her primary focus is on:

- Safe environments for families and children; she has plans for a park in East Oakland, which is in dire need of help
- Re-entry and hiring practice issues for released prisoners, returning home from county jail or state prison
- Trauma and mental health issues

Deputy Chief Allison said that OPD's goal is to hire the best, and be the best. He sees it as a self-assessing, growing organization. He mentioned 7 goals:

- Reduce homicide and shootings by more than 10% over last year, to save lives and protect residents. The department utilized intelligence-led, precision policing to focus on the individuals committing crimes. Using the Ceasefire model, we look to prevent criminal behavior through intervention (wrap around services) or enforcement.
- Reduce street robberies by more than 10% over last year. Rockridge has experienced a reduction in street robberies, but they do happen.

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- Address human trafficking, which happens in many places in Oakland.
- Intervene in sideshows – which occur in West and East Oakland. The last few years have seen increased rates of violence associated with sideshows.
- Address homelessness; OPD takes it very seriously. This isn't *only* a law enforcement issue; we won't criminalize homelessness. We must find a long term sustainable approach. Efforts include mental health experts and outreach officers.
- Decrease response time. Establishing trust with the community means we must be available to help. OPD must be there when 911 is called.
- Comply with the tasks on the Negotiated Settlement Agreement. Internal Affairs and the personal assessment database are the focus of attention right now.

We want to make Oakland a safe place, a model city. We currently have 762 officers, and are authorized for 794. There are 26 trainees in the current Academy; an Academy takes about 6 months. However, additional training happens after Academy. There will be a new academy in fall 2017.

The workload in Dispatch is tremendous: in 2016 dispatch received approximately 558,000 calls and dispatched approximately 254,000 calls. To date, Oakland is down 6% in shootings but only 1% down in shootings *and* homicides. The city is 11% down in robberies. Auto burglaries are one of highest crime drivers, we've had about 4,800 year to date, citywide.

Q: What is the Director of Public Safety position?

A: (Venus Johnson) The Public Safety Director works with the police, on Ceasefire, and with recruiting. The director may help raise money, and study intergenerational crime and poverty effects. The director is a liaison to state and federal officials. The position has a very broad mandate. She's been on the job for 6 months and is still learning, and still looking at other cities. It isn't a new position, but she's the first in the position for Mayor Schaaf.

Q: What is Ceasefire?

A: (Venus Johnson) Ceasefire is a widely used, very successful program It encourages focus on known, specific high risk individuals, working to get them jobs, give them life coaching, help build a positive relationships in their lives, with the goal to get them to quit committing crimes. If that fails, they may ultimately be arrested and prosecuted. Deputy Chief Allison added that Ceasefire provides a long term approach to crime. Simply arresting people will not solve crime. If we can get them out of the criminal life, we reduce crime long term and the effort is sustainable. He added that Ms. Johnson is the best public safety director OPD has ever worked with.

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Mike Ubell added that Ceasefire has a community portion – citizens from all over Oakland meet to walk around impacted neighborhoods on some Friday nights. This has a good impact, and gets people to talk about the issues.

Q: What about homeless tent camps? Isn't that against the law? Is it a crime? Would the campers get a citation or something stronger?

A: (Deputy Chief Allison) Camping by itself is not a serious offense. The issue we've experienced is when you move the homeless from encampments they end up in people's yards. Crimes associated with homelessness may include trespassing, or blocking the sidewalk.

Q: What about police training? A friend's husband went through an Academy about 2 years ago, with high marks. He said field training was a horrible experience, he was told he had to be a jerk, had to show his power and abuse people. He was in an area where he grew up, he knew all the people, and he simply couldn't do it. It wasn't humane policing. Two or three of his field training officers were later let go due to the sex scandal.

A: (Deputy Chief Allison) That type of behavior does not reflect our values. We have implanted procedural justice, incorporating into our actions and training. We're working hard to ensure our training is positive and we poll trainees for feedback (including anonymous feedback) on their experiences. He was very sorry to hear that happened; that is not what we stand for. We have an accountability system to address risk and deficient training. Ms. Johnson added that we don't know this goes on if no one tells us. The Training Division is doing much better on this in last 1.5-2 years. If the young man is still interested, please ask him if he'd like to try again. We want local people to train.

Q: I'd like to thank the police and the NCPC and RCPC for community collaboration. About not criminalizing homelessness: doesn't it become a magnet for other types of crime, like prostitution and illegal dumping. And I can't support not criminalizing those who prey on the homeless. The underpass at 55th Street is encroaching. What are the realistic expectations of mitigating this? It's getting worse.

A: (Venus Johnson): I just saw a presentation on this yesterday, it's never been this bad. Oakland now has over 2,000 people living visibly on street, which is not a total. Jobs are increasing, housing isn't: it's pushing out residents. Most people on the street are male and African American. Shelters are available, but 1/3 or even 2/3 of them are empty, because shelters restrict when you can be there. Oakland has one navigation center to transition people, which isn't enough. We're building another one, but it won't happen soon. We're building affording housing, but it's not immediate.

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Deputy Chief Allison noted that we won't ignore a serious crime just because the criminal is homeless; but being homeless is not a crime.

Q: What about people living in RVs? And how do we help those who refuse help?

A (Venus Johnson): We talk to people and try to reach solutions. These people are long term Alameda County residents, Oakland residents. Less than 2% of the people we've talked to said they didn't want help, most of them do want help. The refusers are a minority, but there's no one-size-fits-all solution.

Deputy Chief Allison emphasized that we have to prioritize, and identify who poses an actual threat. A single individual was a large part of Officer Hutzol's daily job.

Q: Does the police department use computer modeling to predict crimes?

A: (Deputy Chief Allison): Yes. We have systems that let us predict likely places for crimes, based on historical data and trends, but social media has complicated things. Social media can move faster than the police. Predictions are not foolproof. We have to find the active individuals and intervene.

Q: How can we prevent personal robberies? Why aren't the police also preventing shootings and murders?

A: (Deputy Chief Allison) Robberies often done by groups of people, if we arrest one or more of the group it may impact several robberies. Shootings are more individual, if we stop one guy, another may still shoot. There are fewer shootings than robberies.

Mike Ubell said that the NCPC has had regular complaints about bicycles on sidewalk; we were told the law against it isn't being enforced because it was being enforced in a discriminatory way. Our CRO told us he couldn't do anything about bikes on the sidewalk. We just want signs saying no riding on the sidewalk. Deputy Chief Allison and Captain Bassett both said that they had never heard anything about that, but enforcement is a matter of priorities.

Q: What do we do about re-entry people?

A: (Venus Johnson) The city has a local hire policy, to get people returning from jail working and not reoffending. We will keep working on this.

Q: What about those burglaries? What can we do?

A: (Officer Mac) Burglaries are down this year in 12Y, both residential and commercial. Sergeant Calonge advised that you know your neighbors, have a list of their phone numbers, *and* have video surveillance equipment. The police need video to show crimes to the courts. If something looks weird, call it in.

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Q: As a black man, I hear about public relations from the Police; it's not relevant to people of color. Most of the people speeding down Martin Luther King Way are police, I see them speeding. I'm worried that a black kid will be hit. To improve the crime situation in Rockridge you need to ban black people from living in Rockridge. I'm currently in a "Jim Crow" situation because someone died. A black man living in Rockridge gets disproportionate attention from OPD, and he won't report crimes because he might be blamed. The speaker named 2 women who are deliberately trying to blame him for a crime. The speaker said he has lived here 28 years and feels isolated.

Q: Many homeless people seem to have mental problems. Do you have mental health pros working on this? Not on people who are threats, but on people who have problems.

A: (Deputy Chief Allison) We train officers to identify mental health problems, and we do have a clinician who rides with an officer.

Venus Johnson noted that we have a mobile health clinic which travels around to homeless camps, doing basic testing and medical care.

Q: On numbers of officers – we now have 762 and want to go to 794, is that the ultimate goal?

A: (Deputy Chief Allison) Yes. Venus Johnson noted we want to reach and maintain the higher number because of turnover. We need 2 academies each year to maintain the numbers. We'd like to be at 800 officers, because we can't get support for more.

Chris Jackson (Rockridge District Association) asked, what about staffing in dispatch?

A: (Deputy Chief Allison) During the Warriors parade, we had recruiting booths and many people were interested in the Dispatch position. We need to keep dispatch staffed.

Q: What is the police department's monthly attrition rate?

A: (Deputy Chief Allison) Roughly 6-7 officers per month.

Q: Are there national best practices to deal with homelessness?

A: (Venus Johnson) Oakland has a homelessness task force, but it isn't in my department. Our example is San Francisco, which is both a city *and* a county and has much bigger budget. We are putting financing into the budget for homelessness.

Q: How practical would it be to declare a state of emergency on homelessness? What would warrant this? Should we do it? Would it help?

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A: (Venus Johnson) I don't know the answer to that but I can direct you to someone who would know. I don't want to mislead you. I'd rather you speak with the person who deals directly with this.

Deputy Chief Allison asked if the NCPC should have a meeting on homelessness with city experts. Chris Jackson pointed out that we did that 6 months ago and it did nothing to help. Oakland just doesn't have the needed resources. It's very expensive to treat and house people.

OPD Community Resource Officer Reports

Mike Ubell announced that the last part of meeting is for local issues and a report from new CRO, Officer Mac. Our beat 13 CRO, Kristine Jurgens-Duenas, is on assignment. Officer Mac will introduce himself and report on beat 12Y.

Officer Mac introduced himself as a local Oakland resident, who has been an officer for 2 years. He's trying to focus on the priorities people email to him, largely homeless issues at Frog Park. One guy just moves his stuff back after it's cleaned out, every 72 hours.

Chris Jackson noted that the shopping cart train under the freeway is growing, it has been tagged. People think homeless belongings are their own stuff; a lot of it is actually scavenged material.

Capt. Bassett said the city is trying to prioritize this, we have 900 camps we know about. The citywide committee is a work in progress, and needs community voices. Prioritization tends to be a squeaky wheel analysis, based on what site gets the most complaints. Our systematic approach to clean up camps and provide services means the more you call, and the more your neighbors call, the more priority your local camps will get. This is still in development; they're discussing it at the city council meeting tonight. We get these calls every day. We hope to have a prioritized list soon – our current list has many more camps in West Oakland than in North Oakland because we're getting more calls from West Oakland.

Q: Where specifically should one call to report homeless issues?

A: (Mike Ubell) Call public works, 510-615-5566. They'll assign a tracking number.

Q: What about the guy living in the library parking lot? Stuart Flashman commented that there've been a couple of guys living there, and asked which one.

Captain Bassett said he meets regularly with the library manager and will discuss this. We could get a stay-away order if needed.

Q: Do we still need the private security patrols?

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Sergeant Calonge replied that crime is down in beat 12. Whether you support the private patrols is up to you. Captain Bassett said he wants another walking officer for Rockridge, not specifically for College.

The meeting adjourned a little after 9 PM.

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council Priorities for June 2017

Beat 12Y:

1. *Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council Priority:* No current priority.

Beat 13X:

1. *Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council Priority:* No current priority.

*The Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council
normally meets on the SECOND Thursday of even-numbered months.
Next meeting **Thursday, August 10, 2017** at 7:30 PM
Rockridge Library, College and Manila
See you there and stay safe!*

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