

Stevens Square Community Organization

(612) 874-2840

<http://www.sscoweb.org>



Safety Committee minutes – March 24, 2011, 6:00 p.m. at 1925 Nicollet Ave

Present: Ken Strobel, co-chair; Robert Lilligen, Ward 6 City Council; Bobbi Harrington and Jean Schwalen, Hennepin County Community Probation; Matt Clark, Chelsea Adams, Brianna Garman, and Nick Hwang, Minneapolis Police 5th Precinct; Chris Dixon, City Attorney’s office; Shane Zahn, Downtown Improvement District; Mary Gunderson, CVS; Adrienne Lund, MyMinneapolisApartments.com; Lucy Minn, Lupe Development Partners; Charles Rosensteel, Ray Alex Perry, John Ryser, Aaron Szczech, Arlene Storandt, Randall Chevront, Jerry Paulson, Judy Austin, Rochelle Peyton, and SSCO safety coordinator Dave Delvoye (dave_ssc@yahoo.com or 874-2840)

| Agenda item | Notes/decisions | Follow up |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Announcements</p> <p>Contact SSCO to volunteer or for more info.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mutli-modal transportation presentation, 4/14, 6 to 7 p.m. social time, 7 to 9 p.m. panel discussion, at Plymouth Church, 1900 Nicollet Ave, sponsored by SSCO and Citizens for a Loring Park Community. ▪ Art Squared fundraiser, 4/23, 7 to 11 p.m. at Stevens Square Center for the Arts, 1905 3rd Ave, featuring: live music; beer, wine, and food available for a donation; high quality art (donated by local artists) for sale. Proceeds will be used for 2011 SSCO arts programing in Stevens Square Park, including Cinema & Civics and Red Hot Art. | <p>Next Safety committee meeting: Thursday, 4/28, at 6 p.m. at 1925 Nicollet Ave.</p> |
| <p>Community Probation report – Probation Officers Bobbi Harrington and Jean Schwalen</p> | <p>Jean Schwalen reported that most of her clients are in jail. Chronic offender Judy Peters violated her parole and is going back to prison.</p> | <p>Bobbi.Harrington@co.hennepin.mn.us 879-8075</p> <p>Jean.C.Schwalen@co.hennepin.mn.us 879-8212</p> |
| <p>Community Prosecutor report – Assistant City Attorney Chris Dixon</p> | <p>Dixon distributed copies of the 5th Precinct CLEAN sheet. 22 of the 30 CLEAN offenders are active in Stevens Square; 12 are currently in custody or in treatment, 4 were recently released from custody, and 5 are on probation. A number of the offenders will be released from custody soon, including Frank Keezer and Ronald King on 4/9/11, Robert Yellow Wolf on 4/23/11, Frederick Washington on 5/8/11, Curtis Batton and Joseph Conklin on 5/19/11, and William Ernst on 6/14/11. William Casarez has a warrant for burglary. Randy McNellis has three cases pending. Anthony Ford has been seen in the area recently. Zaki Sugule (not a CLEAN offender) has a new case from the neighborhood. Former 5th Precinct CLEAN offender James Solomon is now on the Downtown 100 list. The goal of the Downtown 100 project is to get certain chronic offenders to stop committing crimes downtown, sometimes by using court-ordered geographic restrictions. Unfortunately, a number of them have now come to the 5th Precinct instead. The plan is for the 5th Precinct to push back with its own requests for geographic restrictions.</p> <p>There was a suggestion that the committee explore the possibility of establishing sentencing guidelines for chronic misdemeanor offenders which would provide for mandatory minimum sentences. For example, when an offender exceeds a certain number of misdemeanor convictions, the length of the sentence for any additional convictions would be increased. This is in response to concerns that current misdemeanor sentences (90 days maximum) do not adequately take into account or address the behavior of chronic livability offenders and its impact on the community. In order to implement this suggestion, it would be crucial to obtain the support of SSCO, state legislators, and City Council members. This could be a controversial subject for a number of reasons including 1) its potential for increasing costs in the criminal justice and corrections systems and 2) opposition by those pushing instead to decriminalize livability offenses. A community member offered to research the idea further with help from Dixon, contact state legislators after the end of the current session, and report back to the committee.</p> <p>There was a suggestion that the city install public pay toilets at locations such as Franklin & Nicollet in order to reduce and</p> | <p>Christopher.Dixon@ci.minneapolis.mn.us 673-5402</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | <p>prevent public urination. Restorative Justice Community Action supported this idea at one time. Due to budget issues and other concerns, the city has not endorsed public pay toilets or included them in any plans. Some committee members expressed opposition to the idea. Call 911 if you witness any livability crimes such as public urination.</p> | |
| <p>Minneapolis Police report – Inspector Matt Clark, CPS Chelsea Adams, Officer Brianna Garman, Officer Nick Hwang</p> | <p>Chelsea Adams distributed a map and list of Part 1 crimes in the neighborhood during February, noting the exceptionally small number of incidents reported. There were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 robbery of person: 2/24, 4:15 p.m., 2000 Nicollet Ave, Starbucks Coffee, in which Zaki Sugule (1/7/76) was arrested for grabbing a victim’s lip and stealing money from the victim’s pocket – will be charged as 5th degree assault and disorderly conduct instead of robbery. ▪ 1 aggravated assault: 2/16, 2 a.m., 1816 Nicollet Ave, Gangchen Bar and Restaurant, 2nd degree assault with a dangerous weapon in which a victim was transported to a hospital. ▪ 1 business burglary: 2/22, 4:40 a.m., 1845 Nicollet Ave, Net Market, in which a window was removed and cartons of cigarettes stolen. ▪ 1 apartment burglary: 2/9, 1820 Stevens Ave. ▪ 1 house burglary: 2/17, 1927 3rd Ave, in which copper pipes were stolen from a house undergoing renovation. ▪ 1 theft: 2/15, 1816 Nicollet Ave, Family Dollar Store. ▪ 1 theft from motor vehicle: 2/23, 1912 3rd Ave. <p>Upcoming events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Block leader training, 4/20, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., 5th Precinct community room, 3101 Nicollet Ave. ▪ 5th Precinct open house, 5/19, 6 to 8 p.m., 3101 Nicollet Ave. <p>Matt Clark reported that officers are focused on breaking up crime patterns along Nicollet Ave from 18th St to Franklin Ave. For example, from 3/1 to 3/13, district squad 510 conducted 34 stops in that area; day beat patrol officers conducted 90 stops. Success is largely determined by whether residents and visitors feel safe in the area. Year to date, crime in the precinct is down 12% compared to last year.</p> <p>Chronic offender Elijah Regenauer, who is on the Downtown 100 list, was cited at 19th & Nicollet recently for aggressive panhandling. Career burglar Eric Colon was arrested recently for motor vehicle theft and fleeing police. Thanks to the beat and probation officers for locating, contacting, and trying to keep track of him. A community member shared information about a suspicious male recently seen downtown and at 19th & Stevens. Call 911 to report suspicious persons or vehicles.</p> <p>SSCO’s Google maps and lists of arrests in the area from Lyndale Ave to 4th Ave, I-94 to 24th St, from 2/22/11 to 3/20/11 showed 10 alcohol-related arrests (16 in 2010), 11 narcotics-related arrests (4 in 2010), and no prostitution-related arrests (3 in 2010). Year to date, there were 19 alcohol-related arrests (48 in 2010), 23 narcotics-related arrests (17 in 2010), and 2 prostitution-related arrests (12 in 2010). For the period from 2/22/11 to 3/20/11, SSCO’s Google maps showed 31 police reports for the Nicollet corridor (LaSalle Ave/Blaisdell Ave to 1st Ave, I-94 to 24th St), 2 for the Stevens Square Park area (Stevens Ave to 2nd Ave, 17th St to Franklin Ave), and 8 for the Clinton sector (3rd Ave to 4th Ave, I-94 to Franklin Ave).</p> | <p>Chelsea.Adams@ci.minneapolis.mn.us 673-2819</p> <p>CRT line (to report suspected drug and prostitution activity at specific addresses or locations): 673-5716 or contact Sara.Metcalf@ci.minneapolis.mn.us</p> <p>Crime Prevention Resources</p> <p>Contact SSCO to receive printed or e-mailed copies of the Google maps, which are updated weekly. The e-mailed versions include links to mugshots of chronic offenders.</p> |
| <p>Priority concerns / hot spots / chronic offenders</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 19th & 3rd – There are still reports of sporadic loitering outside the market at this corner. Police continue to watch the area and stop suspicious persons. The building is posted for No Trespassing; call 911 to report suspicious activity there. There was a discussion about whether moving the nearby bus stop would help to reduce the problems; Council Member Lilligren will check with Metro Transit. ▪ 1800 LaSalle Ave – The problem at a unit in this condo building appears to be resolved. ▪ 1817 2nd Ave – There had been reports of suspicious traffic to a unit in this apartment building. It is unclear whether the problem has been resolved. ▪ Village Center mall, 1804 to 1816 Nicollet Ave – There was a complaint about loitering and panhandling at this property and a report of thefts at a business there. | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Keeping downtown safe – Inspector Matt Clark and Downtown Improvement District Safety Director Shane Zahn</p> | <p>Matt Clark and Shane Zahn spoke about strategies used by the 1st Precinct and the Downtown Improvement District (DID) to keep downtown safe. Clark, formerly a sector lieutenant in the 1st Precinct, and Zahn, a former Target Corp executive on loan to the downtown SafeZone and now working for DID, worked together for several years to develop and implement tactics to reduce and prevent crime downtown with the goal of helping citizens feel safe there. DID was started in July, 2009, covers about 120 square blocks, and has a budget of over \$6 million per year which is funded by assessments on about 600 businesses in the district. DID Safety ambassadors on average assist over 6,800 pedestrians per month; Clean ambassadors on average remove over 80,000 pounds of trash per month. A greening initiative, started in 2010, handles decorative plantings and lighting. DID is separate from the Downtown Council, which is a private membership organization focused on improving the economic health of downtown.</p> <p>DID has built a public/private partnership which successfully leverages resources to focus on four areas of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Violent crime; ▪ Livability issues; ▪ Emergency preparedness; ▪ Chronic offenders via the Downtown 100 and Court Watch. <p>Key partners include business leaders, MPD, the City Attorney’s office, Hennepin County Probation, and St Stephen’s Human Services.</p> <p>Panhandling generates the largest number of complaints in the district. DID – in collaboration with MPD, Hennepin County, and social service agencies – responded with its “Give real change, don’t hand it out” public education campaign. Thanks to the Downtown 100 and Court Watch initiatives, 2010 arrest numbers for certain chronic offenders were down 74% in the district, 76% in the 1st Precinct, and 27% citywide compared to 2009. Addressing the issue of crime and youth – as both perpetrators and victims – is a priority for 2011. DID responded to a 65% increase in thefts from motor vehicles in the district this year with a public education campaign called “Put your junk in the trunk”. Altogether, DID has 25 strategies in place to address its four focus areas, a number of which cost little or no money and could be implemented by neighborhood groups elsewhere in the city. There may be an opportunity for the Nicollet Avenue Special Service District, which encompasses the area known as Eat Street, to become more involved in public safety initiatives since livability issues are a major concern here. Strategists need to look for creative and innovative long-term solutions and not just short-term fixes.</p> <p>SSCO already has the connections among law enforcement, business and property owners, and social service providers which are needed to successfully implement similar safety strategies. Since there is no business association in Stevens Square-Loring Heights, the first step is to establish an updated business contact list for the Franklin & Nicollet area. A community member volunteered to work on that project. Business owners should be encouraged to share information about offenders who have caused problems and been trespassed from their premises.</p> | |
| <p>Ward 6 report – City Council Member Robert Lilligren</p> | <p>Robert Lilligren thanked neighborhood residents for complying with the difficult winter parking restrictions; praised the Fire department for its fast response (four minutes) to the recent gas main fire near 60th & Nicollet; and reported on city preparations for possible spring flooding.</p> <p>Lilligren provided an update on the process of requesting a police safety/security system for Nicollet Ave. After a two-year delay during which the city resolved a number of issues relating to camera technology and communications protocol, Lilligren called a meeting of SSCO and Whittier Alliance staff, MPD personnel, and staff from Business Information Services to discuss whether and how to proceed with the project. Due in part to advances in technology and decreases in cost, police are looking at the feasibility of deploying portable camera(s) in the 5th Precinct instead of installing a fixed-location camera system on Nicollet Ave. The flexibility provided by this approach would allow for quick redeployment of camera(s) to hot spots as problems develop. Matt Clark, who has experience with the cameras downtown, joined Lilligren in presenting information about the portable or mobile cameras, also known as battery-powered trailer cameras. These units are highly visible on the street and are effective at deterring and preventing crime. For example, deploying a portable camera at 14th & Nicollet elicited a very positive</p> | <p>Robert.Lilligren@ci.minneapolis.mn.us 673-2206</p> <p>Ward 6 web site</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | <p>response from residents and businesses and contributed to a huge drop in crime in the area. Police incidents on Block E downtown dropped over the course of a month from 100 to 3 after a portable camera was placed in the area. Each unit runs on a solar panel with three-week battery back-up and can be plugged into an electrical outlet for direct power or charging. The cameras can be accessed, controlled, and viewed live remotely from any authorized PC.</p> <p>Lilligren asked if the committee was in favor of testing a portable camera in April for a week. The committee decided by consensus to approve a test of a portable police camera in April. Lilligren then asked the committee to designate a location for the test. There was disagreement: some committee members argued that the camera was needed at 19th & Stevens to deter drinking and other illegal and harassing behavior in Stevens Square Park and to monitor drug-related activity along 19th St; others argued that the camera was needed at Franklin & Nicollet due to the large number of incidents there. Some community members suggested that a test be performed at both locations. The coordinator pointed out that, not discounting concerns about crime at other locations, the level and nature of the traffic and loitering at Franklin & Nicollet and the number of police reports in the Nicollet corridor over the past month (31) versus the number in the Stevens Square Park area (2) should determine the location of the test. There were concerns that placing the camera at Franklin & Nicollet would drive the illegal activity into the residential parts of the neighborhood, including the park area. Clark stated that displacement of criminal activity may occur and that it's not necessarily a bad thing because it can change the behavior of offenders, keeping them off balance and on the move. If a portable camera or other tactic succeeds in driving criminals from a specific location, police have the ability to respond quickly and make sure that they don't gain a foothold elsewhere in the neighborhood. If this were not a test, the camera could be redeployed in 15 minutes to any new hot spot which might develop. The committee decided by consensus that the test should take place at Franklin & Nicollet.</p> <p>The process for making further decisions about implementing a camera system or portable camera for the area will occur after the test results are in. Police will ask Metro Transit to loan them a portable camera for a week for the test. As part of the test, police will install a surveillance camera to capture the reactions of passersby to the portable camera at Franklin & Nicollet. SSCO will publicize the test to the community once the dates are confirmed. Police will present the results of the test at the next committee meeting.</p> | |
| <p>Block Patrol report – Arlene Storandt</p> | <p>From 2/25 to 3/24, 7 Block Patrol volunteers participated in 19 shifts, contributing a total of 47 hours. Block Patrol continued its two-month door-knocking campaign to promote SSCO and recruit new volunteers. During this period, Block Patrol teams door-knocked 172 apartments in 6 buildings, spoke with 72 residents, signed up 30 to receive the SSCO e-mail newsletter, and gave Block Patrol applications to 20 residents who expressed interest. Arlene Storandt shared stories from the Block Patrol logbook.</p> | <p>Contact SSCO to join Block Patrol. Application and guidelines are at the SSCO web site.</p> |
| <p>Safety coordinator report – Dave Delvoye</p> | <p>SSCO's monthly chronic offender update included cases involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ahmed Hired – 5/6/10 possession of liquor in Fair Oaks Park, 2200 3rd Ave; 8/3/10 possession of liquor in Fair Oaks Park, 2200 3rd Ave; 11/3/10 possession of liquor in Fair Oaks Park, 2200 3rd Ave; 3/3/11 gross misdemeanor obstructing the legal process with force, consuming alcohol in public, and disorderly conduct at Franklin & Nicollet. ▪ Alpheaus Putmon – 11/16/10 consuming alcohol in public at Greenleaf Lofts, 9 West Franklin Ave. <p>Staff passed around copies of SSCO's community impact statement regarding Ahmed Hired's 3/3/11 case (above) in which the defendant resisted arrest and tried to assault the responding officer. There was a discussion about the disappointing outcome of the case: 91 days (instead of the maximum sentence of 365 days), 83 days stayed, with credit for 8 days served, conditionally released with no restriction from the neighborhood. It appears that the prosecutor did not see the impact statement in the case file.</p> <p>Information was distributed about Level 3 sex offender Joseph Carl Nelson (7/15/80). Staff from the middle school at 1925 Nicollet Ave saw Nelson get out of a vehicle in the school parking lot just after school hours one day and approach and talk with students. Thanks to Bobbi Harrington for identifying Nelson. The school liaison officer is trying to locate Nelson and trespass him from school property. Nelson is under no supervision and, since his most recent sentence has expired, has no conditions of release.</p> | <p>Contact SSCO to receive a printed or e-mailed copy of the monthly chronic offender update, which features the outcome of court cases resulting from arrests in the area along with the names of the sentencing judges and mugshots of the offenders.</p> |

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Meeting minutes prepared by Dave Delvoye.