

Safety Committee minutes – December 19, 2013, 6:00 p.m. at 1925 Nicollet Ave.



Present: Ken Strobel and Michele McGaughey, co-chairs; Jean Schwalen, Hennepin County Community Probation; Todd Loining and Chelsea Adams, Minneapolis Police department; Jennifer Saunders, City Attorney’s Office; Malcolm Williams, Plymouth Congregational Church; Rob Helmerich, Rand Management; Arlene Storandt, Hannah Spencer, Aaron Szczech, Dee Tvedt, and safety coordinator Dave Delvoye (dave_ssc@yahoo.com or 874-2840)

Agenda item	Notes/decisions	Follow up
Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A holiday greeting card to SSCO from 5th Precinct Crime Prevention Specialists Chelsea Adams and Amy Lavender (known collectively as “Chamy”) was passed around. ▪ The neighborhood beat officers and sergeant were unable to attend the meeting due to the annual Homeless Memorial March which passes through the neighborhood along Nicollet Ave. ▪ SSCO’s Community Engagement committee is organizing a public gathering to thank and celebrate the work of three public servants who are moving on or retiring and who have contributed a great deal of time and effort to making the neighborhood a better and safer place: City Council Member Robert Lilligren, Neighborhood Probation Officer Jean Schwalen, and 5th Precinct Inspector Tony Diaz. The event is set for Monday, 1/6/14, 5 to 8 p.m., at The Nicollet, 1931 Nicollet Ave. 	<p>Next Safety committee meeting: Thursday, 1/23, at 6 p.m. at 1925 Nicollet Ave.</p>
Minneapolis Police report – Lt Todd Loining, CPS Chelsea Adams	<p>Crime Prevention Specialist Chelsea Adams distributed copies of a map and list of Part 1 crimes reported in the neighborhood from 11/22 to 12/19. There were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No robberies. ▪ 1 aggravated domestic assault. ▪ 4 burglaries: 11/26, overnight, at 110 East 18th St, an apartment building under construction; 11/29 to 12/1 at 1800 LaSalle Ave; 12/4 on the 1800 block of Stevens, which may have been a domestic situation and not a burglary; 12/13, 1 p.m., at CVS, 2001 Nicollet Ave, in which chronic offender William Ernst was arrested. ▪ 5 motor vehicle thefts: 11/24 on the 1700 block of Stevens Ave; 11/26 on the 600 block of West Franklin Ave; 11/27 on the 1800 block of 1st Ave; 12/4 on the 200 block of East 19th St; 12/14 on the 1900 block of 4th Ave. ▪ 6 other incidents of theft. <p>Adams distributed copies of a spreadsheet showing the numbers of Part 1 crimes reported in the neighborhood annually from 2006 to 2012 and the number of these crimes reported year-to-date from 2009 to 2013. Comparing 2013 to 2012, criminal sexual assault was up 28.5% (from 7 to 9), robbery was up 15.3% (from 13 to 15), aggravated assault was up 100% (from 15 to 30), burglary was down 8.8% (from 34 to 31), and motor vehicle theft was down 64.6% (33 to 12). Another spreadsheet showed the percentage of violent crime compared to property crime in the neighborhood from 2006 to 2013. Violent crime annually accounted for between 21% and 25% of the total reported crimes, except for 2012 in which the number plummeted to 13%. Adams also distributed copies of pie charts comparing the percentage of various Part 1 crimes reported in the neighborhood in 2013 to the numbers for the entire 5th Precinct. Stevens Square – Loring Heights has experienced a lower level of burglary and theft and a higher level of robbery, sexual assault, and aggravated assault compared to the precinct as a whole.</p> <p>Adams distributed other information about the 5th Precinct’s e-alert system, e-newsletter, and crime alerts for block leaders; block leader responsibilities and training; ways to get involved at the individual, block, and neighborhood levels; the 5th Precinct resource list; when and how to use 911 and 311; preventing bike and motor vehicle theft; security measures for residents of apartment buildings; aggressive panhandling; securing one’s home and property; and other helpful online resources including making police reports via 311, trespass forms, crime maps and statistics, crime prevention resources, property information, locating offenders at the County jail or Adult Corrections Facility, Level 3 sex offenders, Department of Corrections offenders, and public access to court records.</p>	<p>Chelsea.Adams@Minneapolismn.gov 673-2819</p> <p>Crime Prevention Resources</p> <p>911 / 311 information</p> <p>CRT line (to report suspected drug and prostitution activity at specific addresses or locations): 673-5716</p>

	<p>Lt Todd Loining announced that he will be promoted to 5th Precinct Inspector in February. Tony Diaz, the current Inspector, is retiring from the Police department. Loining will try to attend the committee’s meetings more regularly. The group does fantastic work and the neighborhood has been cleaned up to a great extent. The 5th Precinct will continue to work with SSCO; the existing partnership between police and the neighborhood organization shows how crime can be reduced by working together on common goals. In response to a question, Loining stated that the organization provides great value and many benefits to both the neighborhood and law enforcement. He asked that additional keys to the building which houses the police substation be provided to the precinct so that officers working all shifts in the area might have access. Staff will follow up.</p> <p>Loining asked if the 5th Precinct should do anything different in regard to the neighborhood in 2014. Staff said that the strategies adopted for 2013 appear to have been successful and asked if they will continue to be pursued: strong and consistent enforcement in the Clinton sector (especially at 19th & 3rd), Stevens Square Park (as soon as the snow melts), and Nicollet Ave. Loining agreed to continue to focus on these locations and asked that SSCO notify him about any upcoming community events and of any way to include the 5th Precinct in those projects. In 2014, the day Community Response Team (CRT) will have a sergeant and two officers to focus on heavy enforcement zones throughout the precinct. Four day beat officers will continue to work in Stevens Square and Whittier; Officer Adam Chard will be leaving for other duties and Officer Scott Watry will join the team. Officers Patino and Novak will continue to work the area at night, along with Officers Kunze and Schoonover, all of whom are very motivated.</p> <p>A community member suggested that officers patrolling the park get out of their squads and walk through; driving through can have a negative effect. Loining said that when officers are dispatched to a report of a crime in progress in the park they will usually respond in their squads which gives them a better chance of apprehending suspects. Otherwise, and weather permitting, officers are encouraged to patrol on foot and on bike. This is the essence of community-based policing and gives residents and officers an opportunity to interact, get to know each other, and develop relationships. There was a suggestion that police offer free bikes, helmets, locks, or safety vests to bicyclists to make better connections with them. Loining will explore the options in the spring; school resource officers sometimes organize these kinds of projects for kids. Loining stated that he will continue to work hand-in-hand with SSCO and encouraged the committee and Block Patrol to continue to be the “eyes and ears” for the police and to call 911 when needed.</p> <p>SSCO made copies available of a list of 23 offenders who have been charged with felonies for selling drugs to night CRT undercover officers along Franklin Ave from August, 2011, to April, 2012. So far, 20 of the 23 cases have been resolved.</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 11/18 to 12/15 showed 4 alcohol-related arrests (8 in 2012), 1 narcotics-related arrest (3 in 2012), and no prostitution-related arrests (none in 2012). Year to date, there were 191 alcohol-related arrests (226 in 2012), 73 narcotics-related arrests (77 in 2012), and 2 prostitution-related arrests (2 in 2012). For the period from 11/18 to 12/15, SSCO's Google maps showed 20 police reports for the Nicollet corridor (LaSalle Ave/Blaisdell Ave to 1st Ave, I-94 to 24th St), 6 for the Stevens Square Park area (Stevens Ave to 2nd Ave, 17th St to Franklin Ave), 11 for the Clinton sector (3rd Ave to 4th Ave, I-94 to Franklin Ave), and 2 for Loring Heights (Lyndale Ave to Pillsbury Ave, I-94 to Franklin Ave).</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>Community Prosecutor report – Assistant City Attorney Jennifer Saunders</p>	<p>Jennifer Saunders distributed copies of the 5th Precinct CLEAN list and updated the committee on some of the offenders active in Stevens Square, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patrick Addy – in jail on \$300 bail, set for court on 12/20 for gross misdemeanor trespassing and on 1/15/14 for obstructing the legal process and open bottle. ▪ Amy Bengtson – released from the workhouse on 12/4. ▪ Maxim Chance – 4 cases (theft, gross misdemeanor trespassing, loitering, crimes against Metro Transit) set for court on 2/12/14. 	<p>Jennifer.Saunders@Minneapolismn.gov 673-5402</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ellery Charging Thunder – in the workhouse until 3/1/14 for gross misdemeanor trespassing. ▪ William Ernst – in jail on \$3,000 bail, set for court on 12/26 for 3rd degree felony burglary. ▪ Ahmed Hired – 5 cases (trespassing [2], open bottle [2], tampering with a motor vehicle) set for court on 2/20/14. ▪ Frank Killwright – failed to appear in court today, bench warrant issued. ▪ Ronald King – found mentally incompetent to stand trial on 12/4 and all 7 of his pending misdemeanor cases were automatically dismissed; 3 gross misdemeanor trespassing cases are set for court on 6/4/14; mental health evaluation and civil commitment hearing (on the basis of chemical dependency) set for court on 12/27. ▪ Harry Leftbear – in the workhouse until 2/6/14 for open bottle. ▪ Brandon Miller – 10 cases (driving with a revoked license [3], possession of drug paraphernalia, gross misdemeanor prostitution, trespassing, public urination, 5th degree felony drug possession, loitering, theft) set for court on 2/11/14. <p>Staff passed around copies of SSCO’s community impact statement in regard to William Ernst, who was arrested for 3rd degree felony burglary at CVS, 2001 Nicollet Ave, on 12/13.</p> <p>Saunders stated that she gets good information from the committee and that SSCO’s community impact statements help prosecutors get meaningful consequences for chronic offenders. She appreciates the community’s input and engagement – it gets results. Saunders will update the membership of the CLEAN list by the end of the year.</p>	
<p>Priority concerns / hot spots / chronic offenders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stevens Square Park, 1801 Stevens Ave – With the advent of cold weather and snow, illegal activity in the park has diminished. Of the 4 alcohol-related arrests in the area in the past month, 3 occurred at Fair Oaks Park and 1 at Franklin & Nicollet. Total alcohol arrests in the area year to date are down 15% compared to 2012. ▪ Narcotics-related loitering and traffic in the Clinton sector (3rd Ave to 4th Ave, I-94 to Franklin Ave), especially at 19th & 3rd – No narcotics-related incidents were reported in this area in the past month. <p>With the imminent change in City Council representation for the neighborhood, there was a question about whether Council Members Warsame and/or Goodman will attend the committee’s meetings. Staff will invite them once they begin their new terms in office in January.</p> <p>SSCO’s monthly chronic offender update included cases involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carl Lemans Williams (18 arrests in the area in the past eight years, 17 prior convictions in Hennepin County) – 11/10/13 scrapping – recycling theft and trespassing at 1912 3rd Ave. ▪ Maurice Patterson (32 arrests in the area in the past nine years, 39 prior convictions in Minnesota) – 9/4/13 consuming alcohol in public at Franklin & Nicollet; 10/8/13 consuming alcohol in public and possession of drug paraphernalia at 2200 Blaisdell Ave. ▪ Brandon Cloud (33 prior convictions in Minnesota, SSCO has a harassment restraining order prohibiting him from being in the Stevens Square – Loring Heights neighborhood) – 9/30/13 interfering with traffic and violating a harassment restraining order at Franklin & Nicollet; 10/9/13 open bottle and violating a harassment restraining order at Groveland & Nicollet. ▪ Andrew Hamelin (9 prior convictions in Minnesota) – 5/8/13 felony theft from person at Franklin & Nicollet. ▪ Howard Crenshaw (2 arrests in the area in the past two years, 2 prior convictions in Hennepin County) – 6/14/13 1st degree felony sale of drugs and 2nd degree felony possession of drugs at Franklin & 3rd. ▪ James Wilkins (16 arrests in the area in the past seven years, 19 prior convictions in Hennepin and Cass Counties) – 5/13/13 trespassing at 1801 LaSalle Ave; 9/10/13 consuming alcohol in public at Franklin & Nicollet. 	<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>
<p>Block Patrol report – Arlene Storandt</p>	<p>Arlene Storandt reported that, from 11/22 to 12/19, 7 Block Patrol volunteers participated in 14 regular shifts, contributing 24 hours. 7 Block Patrol volunteers staffed the Open House at the Stevens Square Police Substation on 11/23, contributing 29 hours. Altogether, 10 volunteers contributed 53 hours during the past month. One new volunteer joined Block Patrol.</p> <p>Block Patrol thanks the businesses that donated to the Open House: Skip Thaler, owner of 1905 1st Ave; The Nicollet coffee shop,</p>	<p>Application and guidelines are at the SSCO web site.</p>

	<p>1931 Nicollet Ave; SuperAmerica, 2200 Lyndale Ave; Mesa Pizza Uptown, 1440 West Lake St; Frattallone’s Ace Hardware, 1804 Nicollet Ave; New Money Express, 108 East Lake St; McCormick & Schmick’s, 800 Nicollet Mall; Pet Doctors, 25 East Franklin Ave; Pat’s Tap, 3510 Nicollet Ave; Wedge Community Co-op, 2105 Lyndale Ave. Despite the cold weather, the event was well-attended by both community members and staff from the 5th Precinct. Two new volunteers were recruited to join Block Patrol. Free refreshments and door prizes were provided to guests. A community member stated that this is an example of why Block Patrol and the Safety committee are needed in the neighborhood; response was uniformly positive and many visitors stayed to talk and get to know their neighbors and the officers who work in the area.</p>	
<p>Topics for discussion</p>	<p>The committee attempted to provide answers to a question which was raised at the 11/12 meeting of the SSCO Executive committee: How does the Safety committee – and Block Patrol – need to change or be enhanced to better cope with the needs of the community? A number of observations and suggestions emerged from that meeting, including the following.</p> <p>In regard to the Safety committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on presenting information in a positive way to improve the image of the neighborhood, such as by emphasizing improvements in crime statistics and not dwelling on chronic offenders. ▪ Publicizing crime statistics can have a negative effect on those who might consider living here and can make it more difficult to market the neighborhood as a good place to live. ▪ The committee places too much emphasis on crime and safety and not enough on community building. ▪ The committee needs to work together with SSCO’s other standing committees to achieve the organization’s overall goals, not just its own priorities. <p>In regard to Block Patrol:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus less on crime and more on becoming like the Downtown Improvement District “ambassadors” by providing assistance and information to residents on the street, picking up trash and litter, and reporting problem properties and street lights out. ▪ To attract new volunteers, Block Patrol needs to be more welcoming and open to new directions and activities that don’t involve crime prevention. <p>There was a question about who had determined what the needs of the community are and what evidence there is to show that the committee and Block Patrol are no longer coping with those needs. Staff distributed copies of a two-page, bullet point summary of SSCO’s strategic plan which was adopted in 2010 and most recently updated on 7/1/13. The plan identifies “community safety” as a key priority, includes a goal to “provide a vehicle for improving safety and a reduction of crime within the neighborhood”, and the vision that “in a safe neighborhood, residents, guests, and employers feel comfortable walking down the street by themselves, they don’t have to worry about whether their property is safe from harm, and violence is a thing of the past.” A number of the organizing strategies related to building volunteer capacity, providing people the opportunity to work on important issues affecting the neighborhood, building strategic partnerships, and sponsoring neighborhood activities and programs pertain to the committee and to Block Patrol; one strategy is devoted solely to safety, and instructs the committee to “create a National Night Out event, a walking tour, and an SSCO ambassadors type program.”</p> <p>Chelsea Adams stated that, in terms of helping current residents and attracting new residents, providing and discussing the full truth regarding crime in the neighborhood is way better than ignoring or pretending that there are no crime problems here. The first step in crime prevention and reduction is to be aware of what’s really going on. The Safety committee has used that information to build an outstanding partnership with law enforcement, which has been crucial in lowering the level of livability crime and making the neighborhood safer. Removing this focus and taking away this partnership would likely destroy much of what has already been accomplished. Why would SSCO do this? In regard to community building, why can’t the Safety committee just work with the Community Engagement committee on those issues instead of changing the way it operates?</p> <p>Jennifer Saunders stated that removing the focus on chronic offenders would be counterproductive. Stevens Square – Loring Heights is already the most engaged neighborhood in the 5th Precinct due in part to its commitment to gathering, analyzing, and sharing information about crime and offenders here. Combined with the discussion of problems and issues at the Safety committee and Law Enforcement Group meetings, this kind of communication is what gets things accomplished and produces</p>	

great results. It's unclear how the committee could publicize improvements in crime statistics without talking about what the problems are and what is being done to address them. It's important to acknowledge that the neighborhood has certain geographic disadvantages when it comes to crime, given the traffic that comes into the area along the major corridors from the 1st and 3rd Precincts, and it's naïve to think that the problems with crime here have been solved. Keep in mind that the neighborhoods with the most persistent crime are the ones least likely to do anything about it. Denying the problems only make them worse. SSCO is exceptional precisely because it recognizes its problems and is not afraid to deal with them actively. Suggesting that the Safety committee do otherwise is a disservice to the neighborhood. The committee does what needs to be done to make the neighborhood better.

Adams said that Block Patrol is very different from the DID ambassadors, who are paid an hourly wage and often don't live in the area where they work. Adding additional responsibilities could work against the goal of recruiting more volunteers. It might be better for Block Patrol to partner with the Community Engagement committee to organize walking tours and figure out how it might achieve the goals of the strategic plan without changing its primary focus on crime prevention.

The safety coordinator stated that part of the problem is that he has done nothing recently to explain to the SSCO Board or the community how and why the Safety committee operates as it does. The committee is a problem-solving group, but it might not be obvious what the problems are anymore or how they are resolved. He distributed copies of a document summarizing this information, which had also been shared with the Board.

Community members shared comments and suggestions.

In regard to the Safety committee:

- The committee should partner with the Community Engagement committee to organize a National Night Out party and other events.
- Promote the positive things the committee has done, show what has been accomplished by using a proactive approach to fighting crime.
- Publicize the unique programs, like Restorative Justice Community Action, which have come out of the Safety committee's work.
- Find a more visual way to present information, use graphics to present data in a positive way.
- Replace the SSCO logo, which portrays a neighborhood of burned-out buildings.
- Fix the SSCO web site, which has a lot of outdated information and lacks some information which would be useful.
- In the SSCO e-newsletter, include frequently asked questions, crime prevention tips, etc., to further engage residents.
- Compare the neighborhood crime statistics with those of the city as a whole.
- Track changes in crime levels over a five-year period of time or longer, to give the long-range perspective on what's happening here.
- Publicizing crime information is beneficial because it's better to know what to expect when you move into the neighborhood.
- Continue to make crime information widely available. Crime prevention is like pest control: you have to stay on top of the problem or you lose the battle.
- Community building comes out of the work of the committees and is not a separate activity.
- The CLEAN list of chronic offenders is public information and is posted on the MPD web site. The committee can't pretend that these offenders don't cause problems here.
- Are the concerns identified by the Executive committee valid? How do we know what neighborhood residents think about these issues?
- Safety committee and Block Patrol are not being given credit for what they do and what they have accomplished.
- Taking a marketing approach to safety does not solve any problems. The organization's leadership appears to be out of touch.
- Take all of the suggestions from the 11/12 meeting and do the opposite.

In regard to Block Patrol:

- Don't remove any of Block Patrol's current responsibilities, but figure out other duties which would be appropriate to add.
- Block Patrol should partner with the Community Engagement committee to organize special walks, such as a 311 walk to report various problems to the city, a trash pick-up walk, a walk for new residents, a walk to thank those who have helped the neighborhood, a walk featuring pets, etc., and have a party after each special walk.
- Improve and expand recruiting techniques.
- With the success of the recent police substation open house, organize the same kind of social event on a quarterly basis to recruit more volunteers and connect with more residents.
- Work with Stevens Community Apartments to better publicize their Block Patrol rental rebate program to residents.
- Recruit volunteers at the new Dunwoody Apartments.
- Block Patrol is already involved in other neighborhood activities and events.
- One of Block Patrol's biggest challenges is the continuous loss of volunteers who move out of the neighborhood and no longer participate.
- Reorganizing Block Patrol into an ambassador program would be a difficult, long-term project which could not be accomplished without the participation of current volunteers.
- The DID ambassadors have different sets of skills, job descriptions, and physical requirements compared to Block Patrol.
- It's not Block Patrol's job to become DID-style ambassadors; focus instead on the primary strategy of crime reduction.
- Picking up trash is too diverting and is not a good fit for Block Patrol.

Some Safety committee and Block Patrol members who were unable to attend the meeting shared their opinions via e-mail or conversations with staff. Below is a summary of those responses.

In regard to the Safety committee:

- The proposed changes for both the committee and Block Patrol are the best ideas I have heard in a long time! This is exactly what the neighborhood needs!
- The Safety committee might be renamed something like the "Neighborhood Improvement committee" and have safety as just one component, while adding issues like welcoming, livability, the environment, and neighborhood connections. The meeting format might be changed so that it is less rigid, maybe with reports on crime and from law enforcement done on a quarterly basis. The current format discourages discussion of anything but what is presented, and mostly no one from the neighborhood has much to say. If there is an issue in the neighborhood regarding crime, law enforcement resources would still be available. We don't want to "throw out the baby with the bath water."

In regard to Block Patrol:

- Block Patrol does not need to focus less on crime, but should also focus on being ambassadors. Members could pick up trash, but crime is still an issue in this area. Residents who participate build a positive community atmosphere. Block Patrol could welcome new directions, but crime prevention should still be the main focus.
- We should do a better job of publicizing and promoting Block Patrol, especially at the Safety committee meetings, by showing that participating in Block Patrol is a fun thing to do.
- Our service on Block Patrol already incorporates much of what the DID ambassadors do. We meet and greet, answer questions, take complaints from residents and direct them to appropriate channels. SSCO sponsors Clean Sweeps. Residents of our community want the presence of Block Patrol to remain the extra eyes and ears for law enforcement, to maintain stewardship with our beat cops, and to continue to patrol the neighborhood.
- I didn't know that there was a problem regarding Block Patrol. Participation fluctuates due to a number of factors, including the weather. Crime prevention is what attracts residents to Block Patrol. During door-knocking, we learn that residents feel safer knowing that there is a neighborhood organization looking out for them. How do we know that Block Patrol is not effective? On the streets and at events, it appears that residents appreciate what Block Patrol does. How do we know that the proposed changes are what the community wants to see? Block Patrol needs to evolve, but let's do some research before we make any decisions which could harm the group. Maybe we could create a short survey with questions that Block Patrol

members can ask residents during our shifts, such as “Does seeing volunteers patrolling the neighborhood make you feel safe?” and “What would make you want to join Block Patrol?” Maybe we could work with the Community Engagement committee on these issues.

- Why would Block Patrol change its focus if there is still a problem with crime on our streets? I might not participate anymore if we have to pick up trash and litter.

Adams said that the Safety committee and Block Patrol demonstrate a rare level of ongoing commitment to addressing problems in the community, especially when compared to other neighborhood organizations. The City of Minneapolis has recognized SSCO’s contributions to crime prevention a number of times, most recently in 2011 when the City declared an official “SSCO Block Patrol Day” in recognition of the group’s 20 years of service. It would be a mistake to throw all of this away. Saunders said that no law enforcement agency would participate in community meetings without discussing issues of crime and chronic offenders – it would be pointless and the equivalent of not doing their job. The only neighborhoods in the 5th Precinct which have regular attendance at meetings by law enforcement staff are the ones which have active safety and crime prevention groups, and SSCO is the best example. Saunders and Adams both offered to meet with SSCO Board members to discuss these issues.

The committee attempted to provide answers to another question which was raised at the 11/12 meeting of the SSCO Executive committee: **Should SSCO establish term limits for committee co-chairs to bring new ideas and leadership to the organization?** At the SSCO Board meeting on 12/3, a draft document regarding that issue was presented:

The purpose for the proposed change is to match the committee co-chair term limit requirements similar to Executive committee limits. Also, the structured change shall bring differing ideas and leadership to SSCO. Currently each committee co-chair is elected every year, after the Board authorizes the committee. This term is for one year and there are no limits to how long an individual may occupy the committee chair. The proposed change is to have each committee elect a member to a two-year term every year. One new co-chair will be elected each year, thus having a staggered term.

One Board member who was unable to attend the meeting shared some thoughts about the issue via e-mail:

- The idea behind having term limits would be to hopefully involve more people in the neighborhood group, especially the committees. By having the committee leadership positions fall under term limits, as the Board positions do now, we would simply hope to have opportunities for more individuals to get involved. Will it work? We don’t know. If not, it can be scrapped, but it seems like an idea that should be tried to hopefully garner more interest as individuals see the positions available that allow them to utilize their talents for the committees and organization.

Community members shared comments and suggestions.

- The co-chair arrangement is designed to develop leadership. The idea is that an experienced co-chair will help a novice co-chair learn the issues and how to lead the committee and conduct meetings effectively.
- What would happen if no candidate for co-chair came forward? In the past, another committee had to disband because no one stepped up to lead the group.
- There should be a policy that allows an outgoing co-chair to remain in place if no one else wants the position.
- Trying to recruit co-chair candidates is a good idea, but how does one go about doing that?
- SSCO’s strategic plan has a section on developing and implementing a systematic approach to developing neighborhood leaders. The committee could seek help from the Board if there’s a lack of co-chair candidates.
- Board members could make a commitment to attending some committee meetings.

Some committee members expressed interest in attending the 1/7/14 meeting of the SSCO Board in order to continue these discussions.