



**Stevens Square Community Organization**  
**(612) 874-2840**  
<http://www.sscoweb.org>

**Community Safety meeting minutes – March 22, 2018, 6:00 p.m. at 1925 Nicollet Ave.**

Present: Corwin Morton and John Littlejohn, co-chairs; Kathy Waite, Jesse Lopez, Scott Aikins, and Carl Valdez, Minneapolis Police department; P J Bensen and Maria Kamenska, Hennepin County Community Corrections; Jerry Paulson, Paul Soderquist, Ken Strobel, John Ryser, Ruth Martin, Jill Ferguson, Leann Prottengeier, Eli Prottengeier, Richard Evans, Michele McGaughey, Joe Whiteis, Neill Burnett, Abdul Kareem Abdo, one person who did not sign in, and SSCO safety coordinator Dave Delvoye ( dave\_ssco@yahoo.com )

**Note: A sheet with some of the printed information presented at this meeting is available at this [link](#) or upon request.**

Agenda item	Notes/decisions	Follow up
Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Next Community Safety meeting: 4/26 at 6 p.m. The meeting takes place on the fourth Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.</li> <li>▪ Clean Sweep: 4/21, 9:00 to 10:30 a.m., meet at Stevens Square Park. To celebrate Earth Day, we will clean up the community gardens and surrounding areas.</li> <li>▪ Stevens Square Police Substation Open House: 5/12, 1 to 5 p.m., at 1905 1<sup>st</sup> Ave (back door). Theme: "Police and Neighbors Together!" Planned and staffed by Block Patrol. Free food and beverages provided and served by Lunds &amp; Byerlys Uptown.</li> <li>▪ Red Hot Art festival: 7/21 and 7/22 in Stevens Square Park.</li> <li>▪ Public Safety Community Forum: 4/10, 5 to 7 p.m., at Sabathani Community Center, 310 East 38<sup>th</sup> St. Join Mayor Frey, Council President Bender and the Council Members of the Public Safety and Emergency Management Committee for a community forum on improving public safety in Minneapolis.</li> </ul>	Next Community Safety meeting: Thursday, 4/26, at 6 p.m. at 1925 Nicollet Ave
Updates from law enforcement partners – 5 <sup>th</sup> Precinct Inspector Kathy Waite, Officers Jesse Lopez, Scott Aikins, Chaplain Carl Valdez, Neighborhood Probation Supervisor P J Bensen, Probation Officer Maria Kamenska	<p><u>Presentation</u> by Inspector Kathy Waite: criminal activity in the area. For the past three or four weeks, officers have observed regular patterns of suspicious activity at and around 19<sup>th</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup>. Waite has received further information about the situation there from vigilant neighborhood residents and from Ward 6 City Council Member Warsame's office. Geographic factors can have a significant influence on crime patterns: for example, the construction of the new Franklin Ave bridge over 35W and upgrades to Peavey Park east of there are having an effect on what's happening in Stevens Square. The neighborhood as a whole – as well as the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct and most of the city – has been relatively quiet.</p> <p>Waite introduced the new Franklin Nicollet beat officers, Jesse Lopez and Scott Aikins. She said that they are seasoned veterans with years of experience working together in the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct, especially along Lake St and in Uptown. Aikins said that he and Lopez have been on the beat for about three weeks and are in the process of getting to know community members, business owners and staff, and the offenders who are active in the area. He shared information compiled by CPS Jennifer Neale about three felony incidents reported in Stevens Square – Loring Heights during March:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Apartment burglary (no forced entry) at 1801 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave on 3/18.</li> <li>▪ Business burglary at 1 East 19<sup>th</sup> St on 3/19.</li> <li>▪ Aggravated robbery of person on the 1900 block of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave on 3/19 in which a male suspect, standing in the</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Crime Prevention Resources</a></p> <p><a href="#">911 / 311 information</a></p> <p>Crime Prevention Specialist  Jennifer.Neale@Minneapolismn.gov  673-2819</p> <p>Matthew.Wilcox@Minneapolismn.gov  673-5402</p> <p><a href="#">CRT</a> line (to report</p>

middle of the street, approached the passenger side of a vehicle which stopped, and tried to get in. The suspect fired one shot. There may be surveillance cameras in the area of the incident.

Waite said that there has been a long-term trend of robberies in the neighborhood. Police need the help of community members who are invested in the neighborhood and willing to provide information. Call 911 to request that a squad respond to an incident, but be aware that the call load is heavy during certain times of day, especially from 3 to 7 p.m., which can affect response time.

Discussion about criminal activity at 19<sup>th</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>:

- Community members: There has been a noticeable uptick in crime at and around 19<sup>th</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> this winter. Maybe the closure of the Franklin Ave bridge over 35W and corresponding increase in traffic along 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave are factors. One of the problems is a proliferation of graffiti, especially the tag "WAGES" which is often put up during late afternoon / early evening by a male who appears to be passing through the area. There is surveillance video of the suspect tagging the wall of a commercial building, but his face is not visible. A condo building in the area is upgrading its surveillance camera system to increase coverage and improve image quality. The City requires property owners to remove graffiti within 7 days, but Xcel Energy does not remove graffiti from their utility boxes and prohibits others from doing that. Report the problem to 311; include photos if possible and use the reference number to check on the status of the complaint. The City will make sure that the graffiti is removed, although it may take longer than a week.
- Community members: Much of the drug traffic at 19<sup>th</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> involves people in vehicles using the area as a place to meet contacts and conduct business. It can be very blatant and easy to observe. Those involved show no concern about being seen or arrested by police. A lot of information about crime is exchanged on the Nextdoor web site.
- Kathy Waite: Police do not have access to Nextdoor, and reporting crimes there does not give police the information they need to respond. Call 911 if you want a squad to respond. If you receive bad service from a 911 operator, ask to speak with a supervisor and make a complaint. When people get frustrated with 911, they sometimes stop making calls, and that hurts the ability of police to respond to and prevent crimes. Jesse Lopez: Neighbors know what's going on and have good information. That's what police need to be effective.
- Community members: Some crimes occur very quickly and the suspect(s) leave the area. If you have a description of suspects, vehicles, etc., call 911 and provide it even if those involved have left the area. Several years ago after a shooting, MPD placed a mobile police camera at 19<sup>th</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> which was very effective in moving criminal activity out of that area.
- Kathy Waite: She agreed to request that a mobile police camera be placed at 19<sup>th</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> when warm weather arrives. It's difficult for City street crews and other traffic to maneuver when a camera is on the street in winter. The 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct would like to have a supply of mobile cameras, but that's not the case. Available cameras tend to be moved frequently from one hot spot to another. Mobile cameras tend to be effective in deterring certain criminal behavior; permanently installed police cameras tend not to change behavior – people just get used to them.

A number of other topics were discussed:

- Call 311 to report poor snow plowing and potholes. The Ward 6 City Council office is aware of the many complaints from the neighborhood about snow plowing this winter.
- There is a lot of trash and litter in the parking lot owned by Plymouth Church on the south side of the Village

suspected drug and prostitution activity at specific addresses or locations): 673-5716

Center Mall and no one seems to be dealing with the problem.

- There are several ways to deal with noise violations (10 p.m. to 6 a.m.) in apartment buildings. Inform the caretaker (if there is one) or building manager who can contact the resident(s) causing the problem, which might be a lease violation. Call 911 and ask that a squad respond. Lopez said that responding officers often need the caller to let them into the building. Officers can talk with the resident(s) of the apartment which triggered the complaint and, at their discretion, advise them to consider their neighbors and comply with the law (no loud noise audible from over 50 feet away) and / or cite them for violating the noise ordinance, especially if the problem continues.
- A key to keeping the neighborhood safe is to control what happens on Nicollet Ave. Picking up trash and litter sends a signal that the area is cared for and that disorderly behavior is out of place. Those discarding trash on the streets do not care about the wellbeing of the neighborhood, and the community should not allow them to prevail. Neighborhood residents often thank those who pick up trash and litter. Part of the problem with trash in the alleys is the result of squirrels who frequent dumpsters.
- There was a discussion about the level and quality of service and response provided to the neighborhood by the Ward 6 City Council office. Some community members have expectations which are frequently not met and are dissatisfied or frustrated with the service and / or communication provided, especially when compared to the practices of previous office holders. Others contend that some positive changes have been made to the way the office engages the community and that the office has been effective in resolving some problems such as the large number of streetlights out in the area.

Presentation by SSCO staff: Community Attorney Matt Wilcox was unable to attend the meeting but left copies of the [5<sup>th</sup> Precinct CLEAN list](#). Update on offenders active in Stevens Square:

- Sharee Barrett (7/10/81) is out of prison and on parole until 2/7/19 for 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burglary at CVS, 2001 Nicollet Ave. She is in a work release program and no one has reported seeing her in the neighborhood since she was released.
- Armondo Day (10/5/74) is being screened for participation in HOMES Court and has two trespassing cases from Starbucks, 2000 Nicollet Ave, pending. Many of the criminal cases SSCO is tracking involve defendants who are in HOMES Court, which is a specialty court designed to help homeless offenders by providing housing and other services needed to stabilize their lives. Cases are continued without being resolved and new misdemeanor offenses don't necessarily disqualify participants. Probation Supervisor P J Bensen said that the benefit of HOMES Court is that, through the help and services offered, it can be successful in reducing the number of offenses committed by participants and sometimes eliminating the criminal behavior altogether. It's more effective to help these defendants through a comprehensive program like HOMES Court than to just deal with each offense case by case through regular criminal court proceedings without addressing what causes their bad behavior.
- Ahmed Abdi Hired (1/1/86) is still in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody. Hired had been a top offender in the area, with over 25 arrests here, including numerous incidents of assault and disorderly conduct.
- Rachael O'Gorman (12/24/76) has an active bench warrant for failing to appear in court for a trespassing case from Starbucks Coffee, 2000 Nicollet Ave. Probation Officer Maria Kamenska, who supervises 18- to 24-year-old offenders on the Downtown 100 and Citywide 200 lists, said that she supervised O'Gorman on a previous trespassing case from the neighborhood. O'Gorman violated her conditions of release and served her 90-day sentence in the workhouse. Kamenska thanked SSCO for its help with that case.

	<p>Two cases of interest to the community were resolved recently, including the conviction of Melvin Dickerson (7/3/66) of 4<sup>th</sup> degree felony assault of a police officer causing demonstrable bodily harm. According to the police report, at about 9:05 a.m. on 5/29/17, officers responded to a report of a person with a gun at CVS, 2001 Nicollet Ave. Staff asked the suspect to leave, but he refused and threatened staff with a bottle of vodka. Officers arrived and cited the suspect for trespassing and open bottle. As the suspect was being released, he punched one of the officers in the head. The officer who was injured was Franklin Nicollet beat officer Brianna Garman. [Dickerson has 18 prior convictions in Hennepin County since 1985 for attempted 4<sup>th</sup> degree criminal sexual conduct, aggravated robbery using a dangerous weapon, 3<sup>rd</sup> degree assault causing substantial bodily harm, 2<sup>nd</sup> degree assault with a dangerous weapon, disorderly conduct (2), criminal damage to property, attempted theft from person, possession / sale of a small amount of marijuana, disorderly conduct, 5<sup>th</sup> degree felony possession of a controlled substance (2), domestic assault (2), possession of drug paraphernalia, aggressive panhandling, open bottle, and open bottle in a motor vehicle.] Despite his violent criminal history, Dickerson was sentenced by Judge Jamie Anderson to 366 days, stayed for one year, with credit for 33 days served. He is on unsupervised probation and is still seen hanging around the neighborhood. Meeting attendees agreed that this was a very bad outcome for the police officer and for the community.</p>	
<p>Block Patrol news – Ken Strobel</p>	<p>From 2/23 to 3/22, 14 Block Patrol volunteers participated in 20 shifts, contributing 66 hours. 1 new volunteer joined Block Patrol. On 3/18, a group of Block Patrol volunteers met to start planning the Stevens Square Police Substation Open House, which is set for Saturday, 5/12, from 1 to 5 p.m. at 1905 1<sup>st</sup> Ave (back door).</p> <p>During the past month, Block Patrol teams spoke with over 50 community members on the streets and at neighborhood businesses; checked on construction of the new Franklin Ave bridge; frequently contended with icy sidewalks and alleys and piles of snow at corners which made it very difficult to patrol the neighborhood; noted that, as the snow and ice began to melt, the huge amount of dog waste on the ground in the neighborhood started to become visible – some areas in the park and on boulevards are completely covered with it – watch your step; picked up empty liquor bottles strewn around the neighborhood; encountered a male on 19<sup>th</sup> St who saw the team, put up his hands, and shouted, "Police! Arrest me!"; saw a squad and the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's van at 17<sup>th</sup> &amp; Stevens – they took a body bag out of a nearby residential building; saw an unmarked squad with its lights flashing parked outside an apartment building on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave; received thanks from a person at 19<sup>th</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> who then asked to take a photo of the team; gave new volunteers a tour of the community gardens in the neighborhood, which were still covered with snow; went shopping at Ace Hardware (free treats for dogs!) and Family Dollar Store; received a tour of the new Steeple People space at 19<sup>th</sup> &amp; Nicollet which will probably open by the end of April – friendly staff there have been happy to see Block Patrol teams patrolling the streets; came upon a male at Franklin &amp; Nicollet who appeared to be under the influence – he offered a cigarette to a Block Patrol canine member and then got down on his hands and knees and offered to teach the dog how to smoke; twice encountered baby Louise – a cute, friendly five-month old who plans to join Block Patrol when she turns 18 in the year 2035; door-knocked 172 units in 9 apartment buildings to publicize SSCO and recruit new volunteers.</p> <p>During the 1 p.m. shift on 3/20, a team watched a male, who appeared to be under the influence, sitting on a bus bench at Franklin &amp; Nicollet. He had apparently been there for at least four hours. After a while, the male slid off the bench and onto the sidewalk. Two passersby attempted to put him back on the bench, but were unable to lift him. As the team prepared to call 911, squad 510 arrived at the scene and the officers assisted the male. A couple of minutes later, an ambulance arrived and the officers helped the paramedics place the male inside.</p>	<p>Join <a href="#">Block Patrol</a> – it's an easy and fun way to get to know people in your neighborhood and find out what's happening here. Contact: Dave at 874-2840 or <a href="mailto:dave_ssco@yahoo.com">dave_ssco@yahoo.com</a></p>

*Meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.*

*Meeting minutes prepared by Dave Delvoye.*