

Community Safety meeting minutes – May 22, 2014, 6:00 p.m. at 1925 Nicollet Ave.



Present: Ken Strobel and Michele McGaughey, co-chairs; Chelsea Adams, Kurt Schoonover, Scott Watry, Aimee Colegrove, Meghan Smelter, Rico Hernandez, Kou Moua, Chou Moua, and Sawyer Moen, Minneapolis Police department; Jennifer Saunders, City Attorney's office; Malcolm Williams, Plymouth Congregational Church; Amanda Hilligoss, Aaron Szczech, Steven Lindquist, Sean Viehl, Jessica Katz, Jerry Paulson, Laura Blue Bird, and SSCO safety coordinator Dave Delvoeye (dave_sscoweb@yahoo.com or 874-2840)

Note: A sheet with some of the information presented at this meeting is available from SSCO on request. Contact the safety coordinator at dave_sscoweb@yahoo.com or 874-2840.

Agenda item	Notes/decisions	Follow up
Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The results of the program evaluation of Block Patrol will be presented at the Community Safety meeting on 6/26. ▪ Park staff will present final design options for new playground equipment for Stevens Square Park at Cinema & Civics in the park on 6/4 and community members will have an opportunity to express their preferences. The designs are available for viewing at SSCO's office. If unable to attend on 6/4, please send comments to SSCO staff and they will be included in the public record. The project will also include an upgrade of the electrical system in the park. ▪ Cinema & Civics in Stevens Square Park is set for every Wednesday evening in June. ▪ The Red Hot Art festival in Stevens Square Park is set for 7/26 and 7/27. ▪ SSCO's annual neighborhood meeting is set for 6/14 at Abbott Apartments, 110 East 18th St. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. and the meeting starts at 10:00. The agenda includes election of candidates to various Board positions and updates from all committees. Public officials are often in attendance to present information and answer questions. ▪ The Whittier Walkers citizens patrol is back in operation. Block Patrol will partner with them on patrols as often as possible. 	Next Community Safety meeting: Thursday, 6/26, at 6 p.m. at 1925 Nicollet Ave
Updates from law enforcement partners – 5 th Precinct CPS Chelsea Adams and Officers Aimee Colegrove, Scott Watry, Kurt Schoonover; Community Attorney Jennifer Saunders	<p><u>Presentation</u> by Jennifer Saunders: 5th Precinct CLEAN list. The top two offenders in the neighborhood are in custody: one is in the workhouse until July after he was arrested by day beat officers for shoplifting at CVS and had his probation revoked for a previous case; the other is serving six months of a 19-month sentence after being arrested by 5th Precinct CRT for a felony narcotics violation at Franklin & 4th.</p> <p><u>Presentation</u> by staff: In the past month, SSCO submitted community impact statements to the court regarding two long-time offenders who were recently arrested here again. SSCO asked the court to sentence them to serve the maximum amount of time in custody if convicted and to restrict them from the area if they are conditionally released. Staff also made available the results of three criminal cases SSCO has been tracking.</p> <p><u>Presentation</u> by Chelsea Adams: A list and map of Part 1 crimes reported in the neighborhood during the past month showed one aggravated robbery/theft from person (involving a known suspect), one robbery/motor vehicle theft (under investigation, not a random event), one aggravated assault/damage to property (under investigation, a fight which resulted in shots being fired), two thefts from motor vehicles, and three thefts at CVS (two of which resulted in</p>	<p>Jennifer.Saunders@Minneapolismn.gov 673-5402</p> <p>Chelsea.Adams@Minneapolismn.gov 673-2819</p> <p>Crime Prevention Resources</p> <p>911 / 311 information</p>

	<p>arrests).</p> <p>To help prevent and reduce crime, police advise neighborhood residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not leave valuables visible in your vehicle. ▪ Call 911 when you see suspicious or criminal activity in progress. ▪ Know who you are inviting into your home or agreeing to meet in person. ▪ Lock your doors. ▪ Don't let strangers into your apartment building or prop doors open. ▪ Conduct a home inventory of your belongings – especially bikes – and record the make/model/serial number. ▪ Register your bike for free via 311. <p><u>Community concern</u> There was a question about why police officers drive their squad cars through Stevens Square Park, on and off the pathways – it could be dangerous to children playing there who may not be paying attention to their surroundings. There was a discussion about policing in the park. If officers see suspicious persons or are responding to a complaint about suspicious activity, they sometimes drive directly to the location within the park so that suspects do not have a chance to flee from the area or destroy evidence. Both Park police and 5th Precinct officers patrol the park; some officers are more likely to drive through or park their squads at the top of the park in order to establish a visible presence or conduct surveillance. Some of the neighborhood day beat officers also patrol the park on bikes during the warm months. SSCO has asked police to provide heavy enforcement at the park – starting as soon as the snow melts in the spring – in order to deter and reduce criminal activity there (especially consumption of alcohol and disorderly conduct) which can make the park unsafe or unappealing to residents. This strategy, which has been in place for several years, appears to be effective: so far this year, there have been two arrests for alcohol-related offenses in the park, the same number as at this time last year.</p> <p>SSCO staff reported that, from January through April, violent crime in the neighborhood is down 22.3% and property crime is down 4.2% compared to last year. Highlights include a 75% drop in criminal sexual conduct/rape, a 66.7% drop in burglary, and a 20% decline in aggravated assault.</p>	<p>CRT line (to report suspected drug and prostitution activity at specific addresses or locations): 673-5716</p>
<p>Neighborhood-related safety ideas and concerns</p>	<p><u>Community concern</u> Drug-related loitering and traffic in the Clinton sector (3rd Ave to 4th Ave, I-94 to Franklin Ave), especially at 19th & 3rd. There are ongoing reports of suspicious traffic at a townhouse on the 300 block of East 18th St. Police are working to resolve the problem. There was one felony drug arrest by 5th Precinct CRT officers in the area in the past month, at Franklin & 4th. There was one violent felony (an aggravated robbery and motor vehicle theft – not a random crime) at Franklin & Clinton. One burglary (storage room) was reported at an apartment building on the 1900 block of 3rd Ave. Arrests for drug offenses this year in the larger area from Lyndale Ave to 4th Ave, I-94 to 24th St, are down 8% compared to 2013.</p> <p><u>Community concern</u> Illegal consumption of alcohol in the neighborhood. Arrests for these offenses this year in the area from Lyndale Ave to 4th Ave, I-94 to 24th St, are up 5% compared to 2013.</p> <p>There have been 64 total arrests in this area this year for alcohol, narcotics, and prostitution offenses compared to 65 arrests in 2013. There have been no police reports in Loring Heights during the past three months.</p>	

	<p><u>Community concern</u> Street lights out on the 1900 block of 1st Ave. Lights at two locations on this block are out again; they were repaired as recently as last November. A neighbor on that block is working with Xcel Energy to try to get the problem resolved.</p> <p><u>Announcement</u> At the 6/26 meeting, a community member will present information about the Green Dot project to prevent and reduce violence, how it is being implemented in Minneapolis, and how individuals can participate.</p>	
<p>Block Patrol news – Ken Strobel</p>	<p><u>Presentation</u> by Ken Strobel: From 4/25 to 5/22, 10 Block Patrol volunteers participated in 21 shifts, contributing 45 hours. A Block Patrol team attended the 5th Precinct Open House on 5/13.</p> <p>During the past month, Block Patrol teams: conducted frequent surveillance at several addresses where there have been complaints about suspicious traffic and possible drug dealing; gave SSCO information to new and current residents and visitors; handed out two Block Patrol applications; received thanks and compliments from numerous people on the streets, such as "When people see Block Patrol, they straighten up and fly right!"; met and shared information with the manager of a new restaurant at Franklin & Clinton; reported overflowing commercial dumpsters, trash-strewn lots, holes in a sidewalk, street lights out, and graffiti to 311; spoke with neighborhood beat officers, probation officers, community response team officers, Park police officers, gardeners, apartment building caretakers, SSCO Board members and other volunteers, and staff at restaurants, coffee shops, a market, and a hardware store; watched a Level 3 sex offender, another offender pushing a baby stroller – with no baby on board – and rummaging through trash cans along Nicollet Ave, the neighborhood's top offender (who was wearing a hooded sweatshirt advertising "Hamline University School of Law"), and a person known to be involved in prostitution who appeared to be impaired; saw neighborhood beat officers take a male into custody at a bus stop; viewed an art show; checked out a suspicious business in Whittier; watched the Fire department respond to an incident at the Mall Center; spoke with two residents who had complaints about street-level drug dealing; conducted surveillance of a building at the request of police officers who were responding to a report of a suspicious vehicle; witnessed a parking dispute between two drivers in a residential parking lot; reported a pair of shoes hanging from a power line to Xcel Energy; called property management companies to report a smoke detector alarm going off inside an apartment building and a pile of broken glass in the alley behind a commercial building; gave directions to visitors who were lost in the neighborhood, including a group from Europe looking for the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and a male trying to get to Columbia Heights by bus; saw a high speed response from squads from three precincts to an incident in Whittier; and encountered a friendly person pushing a cat in a baby stroller.</p> <p><u>Discussion</u> There were suggestions that staff 1) present an abbreviated verbal summary of the Block Patrol report at each meeting featuring statistics and stories of interest, and 2) make the detailed version available to the public (on the SSCO web site), to new or potential volunteers, and to Board members in order to give people a better idea of what Block Patrol actually does and accomplishes. There were requests that the minutes of the SSCO Board meetings also be posted to the web site and that the Board membership list be made available at the Community Safety meetings.</p>	<p>Join Block Patrol – it's an easy and fun way to get to know people in your neighborhood and find out what's happening here. Contact: dave_ssco@yahoo.com or Dave at 874-2840</p> <p>Application and guidelines are at the SSCO web site.</p>
<p>Community Safety plan: progress report and ideas for next steps</p>	<p><u>Presentation</u> by staff: Progress report on the Community Safety plan (the strategies approved by the committee for the SSCO strategic plan). 1) The program evaluation of Block Patrol will be presented at the Community Safety meeting on 6/26. 2) Meeting notices are being posted online and in residential buildings and sent via e-mail and in mailings in an effort to reach more community members every month. 3) Block Patrol publicity has been posted in most of the apartment and condo buildings in the neighborhood to which SSCO has access. 4) The venue for a community-wide</p>	

	<p>presentation by 311 staff has not been decided. The Neighborhood Activities Group suggested inviting 311 staff to attend a Cinema & Civics event to provide information and answer questions. Another alternative is to schedule a presentation at the end of a regular monthly Community Safety meeting, perhaps after the summer events are over. Community members expressed support for both of these options.</p> <p><u>Discussion</u> There was a discussion about how to promote the Block Patrol rental rebate program – provided by Stevens Community Apartments to its residents – to other rental property owners. If a rebate program is unpopular, suggest other ways owners could reward renters who choose to participate – think about what people could use or what they might enjoy, such as gift cards to local businesses, quarters for laundry machines, Twins tickets, etc. Come up with creative ways to promote Block Patrol.</p> <p><u>Next steps</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Block Patrol will help recruit neighborhood block leaders while on patrol and at community events. This could include distributing information directly to the audience at Cinema & Civics, not waiting for audience members to approach Block Patrol. 2) Block Patrol will organize small walking tours for new residents of the neighborhood. 3) Staff will ask the Neighborhood Activities Group to take the lead on organizing neighborhood history walking tours. Block Patrol will help with that project. 4) Staff and volunteers will check with SSCO’s other committees about whether there is interest in producing a community directory – including information on neighborhood resources, services, businesses (especially restaurants and coffee shops), and other items of interest – for distribution to neighborhood residents via rental property companies and condo associations. 	
<p>Other business – 5th Precinct Community Service Officers Meghan Smelter, Rico Hernandez, Kou Moua, Chou Moua, Sawyer Moen</p>	<p>The five Community Service Officers (CSO) attending the meeting spoke about their role within the Police department and how it helps them achieve their goal of becoming sworn officers employed by the department. CSOs have to be students enrolled in a college Law Enforcement program and meet other requirements in order to qualify for program, which is a very competitive process because it is a feeder program for new recruits. The CSOs have a number of responsibilities, including participating in training, assisting patrol officers in non-enforcement activities, meeting and learning to work effectively with community members, responding to citizen requests for service, providing a variety of support services at the precinct, and working on crime prevention initiatives. For example, the CSOs have recently distributed flyers in hot spots about how to prevent thefts from motor vehicles and helped staff the 5th Precinct Open House. Each CSO is partnered with a sworn officer and spends time riding along and learning everything they can about working on the streets. The CSOs work under contract with the department and receive a salary plus tuition payments.</p>	

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Meeting minutes prepared by Dave Delvoye.