



## Stevens Square Community Organization

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<http://www.sscoweb.org>

### Community Safety Meet & Greet with 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct Inspector Kathy Waite – August 25, 2016, 6:00 p.m. at 1925 Nicollet Ave.

Present: Aaron Szczech, co-chair; Kathy Waite, Aimee Colegrove, Chelsea Adams, Carl Valdez, Minneapolis Police department; Corey Grandner and P J Bensen, Hennepin County Probation; Matt Wilcox, City Attorney's office; Tonya Lenox and Chris Knutson, St Stephen's Street Outreach; Rob Helmerichs, Rand Management; Mary Gunderson, CVS; Michael Graca, Boiler Room Coffee; John Ryser, Jerry Paulson, Ken Strobel, Howard Penas, Ruth Martin, Dave Copa, Deb Mendoza, Kandis Storm, Dee Tvedt, Trish Brock, Joyce Stone, Kemi Ojelade, Hombra, and SSCO safety coordinator Dave Delvoe

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

Next Community Safety meeting: Thursday, 9/22, at 6 p.m. at 1925 Nicollet Ave.

Inspector Kathy Waite, the new commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct, introduced herself and spoke about her 23-year career with the Minneapolis Police department. Highlights included her early work on undercover "john" details on West Broadway responding to community complaints about prostitution; leading the SAFE unit (crime prevention specialists teamed with officers in partnership with block clubs) on the north side; the opportunity to take some time off to have a family – her husband is a sergeant with MPD and is on the Safe Streets Task Force which targets violent offenders involved in drug dealing; her years as a lieutenant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Precinct, getting to know the Cedar / Riverside immigrant community and responding to the collapse of the I-35W bridge; her experience working with the canine unit and with the SWAT negotiator team; commanding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Precinct for three and a half years and being responsible for policing in northeast Minneapolis and the area surrounding the University of Minnesota. Waite is excited to come to the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct and looks forward to learning about community concerns and collaborating with neighborhood groups to address problems.

#### Comments and questions from community members

Alcohol-related problems: People are constantly loitering and drinking alcohol in bus stops at Franklin & Nicollet, harassing bus riders and passersby and causing problems for businesses in the area. If it's not a situation for police or medical response and those engaged in the behavior appear to be homeless, consider calling [St Stephen's Street Outreach](#) at 879-7624. There are no problems at the corner on Sundays, when liquor stores are closed. Put pressure on the nearby liquor store to stop selling cheap vodka and instead upgrade their business to serve a better clientele. Community Attorney Matt Wilcox said that in February, the chief judge of the 4<sup>th</sup> District Court (Hennepin County) issued a standing order that no one could be booked in the jail or held on bail for payable offenses (those with penalty of a fine, not jail time) including consuming alcohol in public and loitering with open bottle, thus limiting officers' discretion in regard to how to handle these kinds of offenses. A letter to the new chief judge, [Ivy Bernhardson](#), from community groups about the impact of this policy on neighborhood livability could help persuade her to rescind the order. Community input can have an impact. CPS Chelsea Adams reported that there is an initiative under way involving SSCO and the Whittier Alliance to convene a meeting of Franklin & Nicollet businesses to identify and address problems on the street which are affecting businesses at that corner. An initial meeting with Starbucks staff occurred earlier this month. Inspector Waite praised the work of the Franklin – Nicollet beat officers in dealing with these kinds of concerns.

We live on Sesame Street: In the past five years, the neighborhood has changed and has become significantly safer. Stevens Square has a real small-town feel to it. The question is, how do we maintain the social diversity of the community – which makes it so attractive – while making the neighborhood safer for all? We need to

look at what's happening and then set goals. Inspector Waite acknowledged that, ideally, the officers who work here should all be as friendly and outgoing as the beat officers. In reality, however, many officers spend their time responding to call after call from 911, encountering mainly perpetrators and victims. The Police department's daily call load typically peaks from 4 to 7 p.m. This kind of work presents few opportunities for officers to interact socially with community members. She encourages officers to attend neighborhood meetings and community events in order to help make connections and bridge that gap.

What we need: More public toilets. And cameras at hot spots like Franklin & Nicollet. Inspector Waite said that more and better cameras, publicly- and privately-owned, would help police do their jobs more effectively but are not always a solution to the problems. Chelsea Adams said that private companies can join Securonet as a way to share their live or recorded surveillance video and data with other companies and police. Two key factors for investigators are the quality of the video images and the ability of business staff to access and provide the video to police.

Concern about police behavior: A community member described an incident in the neighborhood from eight or nine years ago in which an officer appeared to use excessive force against a person who was handcuffed and on the ground, sitting on and punching the person repeatedly. The community member, who witnessed the incident but not any of the action which led up to it, afterward submitted a statement to police and asked for information about the incident and the welfare of the person who was allegedly assaulted by the officer. The response from MPD was that witnesses to the incident had no problems regarding the outcome. No further response or follow-up from police occurred. Kathy Waite said that the police reporting process has improved greatly during the intervening years and offered to try to find information about the incident if more details could be provided. The public can now make complaints regarding police conduct [online](#).

A chronic offender: There was a question about the status of offender Sharee Barrett, who is in jail on \$20,000 bail with 13 cases pending, including two felonies: Can she be restricted from this area as a condition of release? She has already failed numerous pre-trial conditional releases to treatment. Matt Wilcox said that submitting community impact statements can help make that happen at sentencing. A number of statements have already been submitted, including one from CVS and two from SSCO. Depending on the outcome of the cases, Corey Grandner said that he is willing to take Barrett as a probation client considering the impact her behavior has had on the community.

Street harassment: SSCO and Whittier Alliance are partnering with the [Sexual Violence Center](#) to sponsor a community discussion about ways to combat street harassment. The initial event will probably take place at MCAD, but no details or date are set. The idea is to form a task force to collect and distribute a list of potential tactics and strategies for individuals to use to counter harassment on the streets.

Bad driving: There was a discussion about the dangers of tailgating, and about why it's so prevalent in Minnesota. Educating drivers about safety is critical; sometimes one-on-one conversations about the problem is the best way to accomplish that.

Kathy Waite thanked the group for the opportunity to meet and talk, and community members welcomed her to the neighborhood.

*Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.*

*Meeting minutes prepared by Dave Delvoe.*