

Sunset Hills neighborhood meeting minutes

December 6, 2007

Our called neighborhood meeting began by Carl Phillips thanking those who attended. We estimated a little over 100 neighbors. It was standing room only.

The following points were covered prior to our guest being introduced:

Our board members were introduced. Those in attendance were Ellen Wells, Phyllis White, Emily Herman, Ron Small, Joe Kahn, Laurie Joslin

Changes were announced for next year's board when Carl Phillips and Spencer Warren will be stepping down.

Marlene Pratto was recognized for her wonderful work on the newsletter.

The following points were highlighted from the newsletter:

- Torch relay volunteers from Sunset Hills still needed
- A coordinator for Sunset Hills neighborhood involvement in the 200th anniversary celebration.
- Sunset Hills clothing and gifts available on the website and being used as an association fund raiser.
- Recognition of Mark Spangenberger for his logo design.
- Anne Smith's email was also read to the group about having extra chicken wire and lights if people want to make more Christmas Balls. It was also noted the great contribution of food and money that was donated to Urban Ministry through the ball making block party.

Honored guests were also recognized. In attendance were Maggie Jeffus and Pricey Harrison.

The following notes are key point from the balance of the meeting with Chief Tim Bellamy, Resource Officer Mike Francis and Sgt. Rogers, of the Central Division Community Resource team.

Sunset Hills is part of zone 140, tract 128.

These notes reflect the concerns that the GPD has about our ongoing problem of auto break-ins, how we as a neighborhood can help the police department as well as ourselves to reduce the number of incidents, what to do, what not to do and finally the problems that are not within the purview of the police department but that do affect their ability to

handle these types of escalating problems that are an issue for the City Council to address.

The number of incidents officially reported for our area was 2 for the month of October and approximately 13 for the month of November. This number is less than actual incidents in the neighborhood as witness by the number of emails on the listserv pertaining to break-ins and the conversations of neighbors at the meeting last night. This brings up one of the important issues that both Chief Bellamy and Officer Francis stressed most heavily. You must call either 911 or 373-2222 depending on whether the crime is in progress or you are reporting an incident that has already taken place and request that a CSI unit be dispatched to your location and you must be sure that a police report is filed.

No matter how small the incident demand a report be filed. Chief Bellamy stressed that all of the reports are used to generate a crime analysis report that gives the police department an overall view of the crime trends. This could result in a larger police presence in a particular area.

Officer Francis emphasized the need for us not to confront or challenge this person or persons if we see them. As it is now, we have only been dealing with property crimes and GPD does not want this to escalate beyond that. You can turn on your light if you see him but do not confront.

Officer Francis believes that originally we were dealing with a single perpetrator but because of his success others have started targeting our neighborhood. The growing number of descriptions of the suspects backs this up. The break-ins started because it was easy to gain access to unlocked vehicles and items such as laptops, phones etc were in plain view. The perpetrators are becoming bolder and are now breaking windows to get in locked cars and not just taking things in plain view but looking for things hidden under the seat or in the trunk. **PLEASE KEEP YOUR VEHICLE LOCKED AND REMOVE ALL ITEMS OF VALUE.** The most disturbing thing reported stolen from one of the vehicles is a gun and box of ammo.

What can we do as a neighborhood? Keep a watchful eye. Know the people that live around you so that if you see someone that does not belong here you can observe him or her and their behavior. Call 911 if a crime is in progress. Get as detailed a description as possible. The more information that you can give the better the likelihood the police can apprehend them. Is there something that sets this person apart? Do not confront them. Demand that a police report be filed. Look at the possibility of increasing streetlights on your street. ID your property so that if it is stolen it can be returned to you. Carry your cell phone if you are walking, running or biking for your safety and also to be able to report any suspicious activity as soon as possible. The most frequent time for these break-ins has been between 12 midnight and 6:00 am. Get on the neighborhood listserv and make sure your neighbors are as well. Install motion lights.

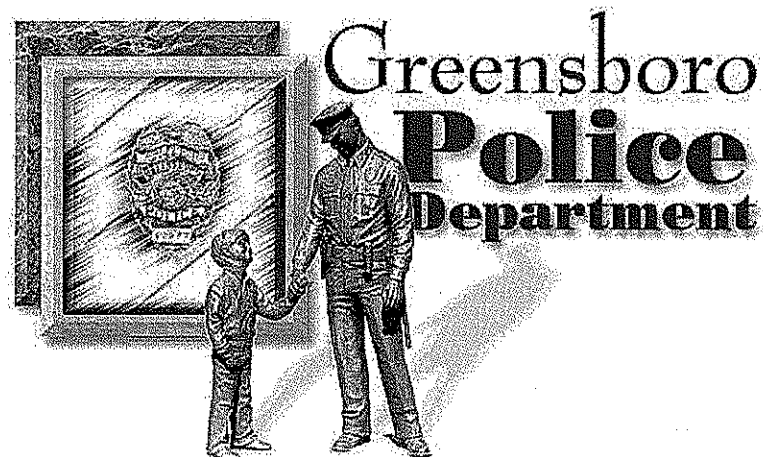
Chief Bellamy will notify 911 to immediately dispatch an officer to our neighborhood because of the severity of our problem. The GPD has been and will continue to stakeout undercover officers in our community. There is also a program in place, GEO Notify, which allows the GPD to call all listed phones in an area and leave a prerecorded message about events happening in the area. It has been used once and will probably be used again. The activity in the neighborhood has no apparent connection to the increasing gang activity in Greensboro nor is it thought to be a person living in the neighborhood.

You can access the police reports and statistics by calling and asking for a copy of the Crime Analysis Report or through our website, sunsethillsneighborhood.org and click on P2C. Trudy Wade has indicated the possibility of having cameras installed in the neighborhood to monitor activity.

Problems with communications have increased because of the merger of 911 calls through the Guilford Metro 911. This was initiated this spring. All 911 calls go through this number. The persons to contact if you have issues with your response from 911 are Wesley Reed and Donna Estes.

The most pressing need is for more manpower in the GPD. To fight the increasing gang related problems, officers have been pulled from other departments. At this time the GPD has 37 vacancies. Chief Bellamy stated that for a city population of 249,000 we should ideally have 1 officer for every 1000 citizens but at this time we have 1 officer for every 4500 citizens.

There have been 4 arrests and one has confessed to some of the break-ins on Madison. Because these are property crimes and overcrowding in the jail it is highly unlikely that these persons will be remanded to jail or serve any time.



Holiday Safety

Tips For Safe And Happy Holidays

This holiday season, don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars, muggers, and pickpockets a better chance to do their dirty work. Crooks love the holidays as much as everyone else, but chiefly because it's an opportune time for crime.

Homes jam-packed with glittering gifts. Stores, malls and downtown streets teeming with unsuspecting shoppers. People rushing around, stressed out and careless, looking for last-minute gifts, trying to get everything done. It's enough to make a crook giddy with holiday joy.

Here are some tips on how to celebrate safely this holiday season:

If You're Traveling

- Get an automatic timer for your lights
- Ask a neighbor to watch your home, shovel snow, and park in the driveway from time to time.
- Don't forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it's a sure sign you're gone.

If You're Out For The Evening

- Turn on lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone's home.

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it's just for a few minutes.
- Don't display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

If You're Shopping

- Stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you.
- Park in a well-lighted space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.
- Deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers. Don't overburden yourself with packages. Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- Shopping with kids? Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.

If A Stranger Comes To The Door, Beware

Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts. And it's not uncommon for people to try to take advantage of others' generosity during the holidays by going door-to-door for charitable donations when there's no charity involved. Ask for identification, and find out how the funds will be used. If you aren't satisfied, don't give. Help a charitable organization you know and like instead.

Last but not least, don't let holiday stress get the best of your holiday spirit. Make time to get together with family, friends, and neighbors. And think about reaching out in the spirit of the season and helping someone who's less fortunate or lonely.

Do your part to make the holidays a safe and happy time for everybody - except criminals.

Take A Holiday Inventory

The holidays are a good time to update - or create - your home inventory. Take photos or make videos of items, and list descriptions and serial numbers. If your home is burglarized, having a detailed inventory can help identify stolen items

and make insurance claims easier to file. Make sure things like TVs, VCRs, stereo equipment, cameras, camcorders, sports equipment, jewelry, silver, computers, home office equipment, and power tools are on the list. Remember to check it twice!