



Rancho Bernardo *Neighborhood Watch* **CRIME COMMITTEE Meeting**

Minutes for Thursday March 11, 2010

In Attendance: SD PD Officer Sue Steffen, Marla Cruz (DC, Oaks North), Robin Kaufman (DC, Westwood), Tim Dodge (Crime Committee, Westwood), Gary Carlson (President), Valerie Brown (BC, Westwood), Dee Wolfe, Hal St. Clair (Crime Committee Chair), Charlie Arnold, Galen Peterson (DC, High Country West), AC (AC, Swim & Tennis) & BC (BC, Greens East)

Guests: Sgt. Mark Sullivan, Lt. Carolyn Kendrick (NE Division for Sex Offenders)

Meeting called to order at 3:59 PM by RB NHW Director, Gary Carlson. He welcomed everyone, explained the objectives for the meeting and the crime committee, and provided guidelines for this meeting and discussion.

Crime Watch Report – Hal St Clair

Hal provided a review of the February report and the community-wide goals for the Crime Committee. Objective for the Crime Watch Report is to cover the common crimes (only 19 selected crime codes pulled from PD's database) that happen in RB that previous month. The intent is to give the details of things that made that crime possible or easy so people are able to know what puts them at risk and what behaviors to avoid.

The Crime Watch Report does not report on sex crimes, narcotics, and some other areas of crime. In February, there were 3 crimes reported by the PD that were not included in the February 2010 Crime Watch Report: installation of an inoperable fire system, a terrorist threat, and indecent exposure. The Crime Committee will be looking at separating or highlighting personal crimes from auto related crimes. 67% of crimes for February 2010 were un-garaged automobiles. However, in view of some of the assaults that occurred leading up to the Chelsea King murder, we need to do better at alerting residents to possible danger. The information contained in the Crime Watch Report is currently forwarded by email to the Crime Committee; in February also went to District Coordinators. It is also posted to the website and copies are left in the NHW literature displays in the RB Community Library.

Tim Dodge, Crime Committee rep from the Westwood Community, explained how the two-way flow of information (DC to BC and BC to DC) ideally would work at the community level. Several years ago, Westwood had a residential burglary cycle going on and the Westwood DC had created an email communication network and sent out a snapshot of a suspect to that email roster for distribution to the community, which reached a person who recognized and identified the individual responsible; an example of "Prevention through awareness" and two-way communication. Next step would be to move that information beyond the District and

throughout the Rancho Bernardo community. These are gaps we need to address, but we also need to make sure our procedures are 'legally' appropriate.

Sgt. Sullivan, with the Sexual Assault Division, opened by saying, "Being a registered sex offender (RSO) is not a crime - but a status. The crime would be to NOT be properly registered." The City currently has less than 2,000 registered sex offenders and the total for county is just over 4,000. Every PD is responsible for overseeing their registered sex offenders. There is a county-wide group that works collaboratively on behalf of the community. Law is specific; you can be informed of their status and not like it but you can't harass them, you can't drive them out of the community. Most RSOs are not on parole, so there are no terms with which to comply except the registration at their place of residence.

Lt. Kendrick welcomed questions from the group.

Q: What are the restrictions on registered sex offenders regarding their interactions with children. Sgt. Sullivan said most registered sex offenders are not pedophiles, but rapists. If RSO go to a school campus, they must notify the office before going on any campus and must inform the administration/campus security for any college they attend.

Q: What if a mail carrier is an RSO? This can be frustrating because the postal department is separate from the Police and an RSO might be employed legally there. The police can question the carrier if his activity is suspicious, but the postal employers must be approached by the community directly.

Q: Is it true that records are destroyed? No, the records of the most dangerous RSO are kept and disclosed at different levels: Full disclosure—picture, address, crimes, height, weight, and description of what the crime was about. Limited disclosure - No posting - state views them as no threat to the community.

Q: What can be done if an RSO lives in community where kids do trick-or-treating at Halloween? The information can be shared verbally with neighbors, but can't be distributed as flyers in the neighborhood. However, residents could personally email neighbors and include a link to the website. The website walks everyone who visits it through what they legally can and cannot do

Q: Is there a way to learn the risk these RSO pose? The state used to provide high, serious, low-risk. Under Megan's Law, that was removed and changed to the disclosure levels. SD PD monitors RSO as Violent, High Risk, Low Risk.

Q: Can you request a check of a RSO by an officer at any time? Yes, an officer can conduct an "audit" at any time to see if the RSO actually resides at this residence.

Q: Are there restrictions on where an RSO live? Cannot live within 2,000 ft of a school 'while on parole'. The City of SD has passed a law banning RSO (no parole conditions) from being within 2,000 ft of anywhere where children congregate, but this is also being contested along with Jessica's law.

Q: Is there a way to get automatic notifications of a RSO? City of SD provides door-to-door information for any High Risk RSO who locates to a neighborhood (guided by natural boundaries; part of the Safe Task Force—they provide manhours to distribute the information)

Q: How many sex crimes are reported every week? This group only handles stranger related felony crime cases, about a dozen a week. The majority are intoxication cases. DA's office has information on education and prevention for our high schoolers and college students in this area on their website.

Safe Task Force Website: safe.com (Sexual Assault Felony), sdsafe@doj.ca.gov

SOMC Task Force: sdsomc.com (Councilmember DeMaio served on this task force)

Q: What if dentist/health professional has touched you inappropriately, who do you contact? If you feel it is intentional, report it to law enforcement for investigation.

Q: Could NHW be notified if a new RSO moved in? Information is provided to law enforcement; the public is notified through Megan's Law website. Therefore, people need to check this website periodically if interested.

4:30 Crime Awareness Discussion Topics

Gary Carlson acknowledged that NHW had to do a better job of getting the word out in a timely manner and channeling information to the PD. Biggest responsibility will be on the District Coordinators and we have gaps in the community. We need the people to get this information out, recruit Block Captains and Area Coordinators (who can recruit BC themselves).

The Crime Committee will work on improving the information in the Crime Watch Report. Gary asked those in attendance what they would like to see, within the guidelines the PD provides. Galen suggested the information for incidents in one district be shared with each District Coordinator to notify their ACs at least, by email. Tim suggested we over-communicate rather than under-communicate - the more information, the better!

Gary suggested the AC be instructed to distribute information to the BC if it comes from the DC. Officer Steffen said the PD finds that in many cases, as the investigation continues and the crime is broken down, it is discovered to be something less or different than the original impression. And there could be legal ramifications to causing alarm when there shouldn't be. Details can't be released until crime has been investigated, so it begs the question of how are you going to do the follow-up. Be cautious that not everything you hear is real; sometimes you can inflict damage on an innocent person and face liability.

Charlie said the police dept is reactive in nature; he feels NHW can be proactive in its approach. Gary suggested that email be drafted and passed to Susan as a balance before it was disseminated. Charlie suggested this is where communications both up and down is going to be important.

Marla asked about SCAM information; Susan suggested you can share the knowledge but not identify a specific person in the scam. Goes to the financial crimes unit (5 detectives for the

entire city; only investigate crimes over \$25,000). Suggested it was more beneficial to throw the information out as preventative. Education and information is key.

Tim pointed out that every district is different, with different demographics. The DC must figure out the 'most effective' means of communicating within a district. Email is not going to work for everyone; it is the DC who needs to survey their community for effective means of disseminating information, to flow information up and down within the district.

New Business:

NHW Crime Comte meeting – 2nd Thursday of month at 4PM in storefront (Gary suggested a second member from each district on the Crime Committee)

Officer Steffen provided information that will impact the community regarding the Chelsea King services coming up: Friday will be a heavy traffic day due to the Chelsea King private funeral. Saturday is the Chelsea King Memorial Event at the Poway High School Stadium and all passes have been distributed so they are suggesting the public not try to attend.

Meeting adjourned at 5:09 PM.