



Montclair Safety and Improvement Council

Minutes of Thursday, April 4, 2013, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm, Montclair Presbyterian Church, Oakland California

www.montclairsic.org

The public MSIC meeting was conducted by MSIC board president Jill Broadhurst and was attended by approximately 20 people.

Board members attending:

Jill Broadhurst
Sandra Pohutsky
Michael Tigges

APRIL 2013 PRIORITIES FOR OAKLAND POLICE BEAT 13Z

Oakland PSO Police Officer Jason Trode reported that he must divide his attention between the three "Beat 13" districts. In March, he focused on the priority of Beat 13Y: speeding and unsafe driving on Broadway Terrace. He gave 30 speeding tickets on Broadway Terrace, noting some very high rates of speed. His priority for Beat 13Z in April is Montclair Village traffic.

Attendees brought up persistent problems of dangerous traffic around the schools, skateboarders on the hills, and reckless driving.

Dangerous Traffic At Montclair Schools

In response to a question about school crossing guards, we learned that they are not available because of the costs. There is a formal procedure to follow, including a survey of traffic and pedestrians, to know where to put a crossing guard. It was suggested that the parents of school children could begin a campaign to request crossing guards for their children's school.

Jill Broadhurst reported that she has met with a nonprofit group, Safe Routes to School, three weeks ago and walked around Montclair and Thornhill Elementary Schools with a representative. SRTS will provide their recommendations in a month or so for permanent improvements, which may also include crossing guards.

Attendees discussed the completion of Montclair Elementary School two-story class room building with multi-purpose room, expected in September 2013.

Skateboarding

In response to attendees' reports of skateboarders on Shepherd Canyon, Officer Trode stated that skateboarding on public streets is illegal in Oakland. He urges us to report skateboarders to OPD non emergency line 777-3333. If he is in Montclair, Officer Trode will respond if possible. Skateboarders are an extreme danger to drivers in event of collision or when drivers try to avoid the skateboarders and cause an accident - and extreme danger to the skateboarders themselves. Someone mentioned that there are skate parks available nearby: a small one in Montclair Park and others in Piedmont at Coaches Field, in Berkeley and in Alameda.

Reckless Driving and Narrowed Roads

Attendees discussed the unsafe speeds of some drivers in Montclair Hills, especially on curves. One mentioned a homeowner who is letting vegetation grow out into the road, probably in an effort to slow speeding traffic. However the result is that the road is narrowed to such a degree that it is not possible for two vehicles to pass without collision.

OAKLAND POLICE OFFICER JASON TRODE CRIME REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Crimes in Montclair (Beat 13Z) are mostly property crimes. The hills have a concentration of wealth which attracts burglars from many areas.

Home burglary declined last month, there were 4 auto burglaries, 1 robbery and 1 home invasion.

Home invasion occurred at 11 am. House had a large stack of mail and newspapers stacked up outside, even though there was a house sitter. House sitter was in the house, asleep at 11 am. 3 burglars tried to open the doors and broke a window to gain entry. They held the house sitter at gun point and took homeowners' property. Since a person was at home and the criminals broke in with guns, it was classified as a home invasion.

Officer Trode said that burglars are constantly driving around, looking for the easiest target. We should each protect our homes as much as possible so the burglars will move on to an easier target. Officer Trode encourages us to install home security cameras as well as all the other safety measures we have discussed before, including not letting newspapers, mail and garbage cans sit outside. Homes on side streets, surrounded by overgrown vegetation, are frequent targets. Cut back the vegetation and make your home visible from the street.

Robbery - Officer Trode said this was in a style of robberies from the 1990s. As reported on the MSIC yahoo group email, a driver rear-ended the vehicle of a female driver and then stole her purse when she opened her window to exchange "accident" information. This trick is also used to steal cars. If we ever feel uncomfortable, we do NOT have to get out of our car or talk to the other party. Just stay in your car, call the police, and wait.

Police chase - also as reported in MSIC yahoo group, there was a recent police chase of a stolen car, up Park Blvd, toward the village. The driver suddenly made a U turn, crashed and was caught by OPD officers. OPD was ready to cancel the 'hot pursuit' in interest of public safety.

Trode emphasized that we must report suspicious people. He sometimes reads the MSIC yahoo emails which mention a suspicious person but the writer is unsure of what to do. Don't be unsure - report it and let the police decide what to do. Since they have data on the whole city (and links to other cities) they can discern patterns and may know the suspicious people we report. Don't hesitate - report it.

Officer Trode also reported that he sees victims constantly fighting over property Don't do it. Criminals often take drugs before they commit their crimes and they will shoot you. Property can be replaced.

Stolen property is usually sold at flea markets at the Coliseum, Laney College, Ashby/BART, etc. Stolen gold is taken to "cash for gold" markets. In San Francisco, there is a vending machine which accepts cell phones and returns cash, like an ATM.

Stolen vehicles from all over are frequently dumped in the Oakland Hills. If you see a car you do not recognize left on the street for several days, report it to OPD non emergency line 777-3333.

Montclair Village Traffic and Pedestrians

Officer Trode remarked on people who walk out into the street without looking right or left ... or up from their cell phone. Crossing without heed is a danger to drivers as well as the crossers.

OPD will start ticketing drivers in Montclair Village, and other locations, who do not stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. An attendee requested that heedless pedestrians be ticketed as well.

A bulb out or curb extension is a sidewalk safety measure which extends the sidewalk to improve safety of pedestrians when they are crossing the street in a high-traffic area. Volunteers have been working on a bulb out in Montclair Village but the process has been stalled for several reasons.

DOORS, LOCKS AND ALARMS WORKSHOP WEDNESDAY APRIL 24

Neighborhood Watch Presentation of "Doors, Locks and Alarms" workshop on Wednesday April 24 6:30 pm at Oakland City Hall, Hearing Room #1. Learn from local experts on how to make your home more secure. Organized by Angela Haller.

6038 SNAKE ROAD near Balboa

Several attendees mentioned this house which was partially built, then left to rot, citing its negative effect on the neighborhood and unsafe condition. They asked that the structure be torn

down. Lisa Ruhland said that measures are being taken by the City of Oakland to resolve this long-standing problem. If you see squatters, any use of fire or gas at the site, or other unsafe conditions, call OPD immediately.

An attendee mentioned another problematic neglected house on Skyline Blvd.

LISA RUHLAND, MONTCLAIR AIDE TO OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL MEMBER LIBBY SCHAAF

1. Please see www.safeoakland.com regarding security cameras and other safety measures.

2. Details of Schaaf's "Safe Oakland Speaker Series" are listed under events at www.safeoakland.com.

Wednesday April 24, 7 - 9 pm, Holy Names University, 3500 Mountain, Oakland: "Economics of Safety and Police" U.C. Berkeley Law Professor Justin McCrary shares findings from his recent study "The Effect of Police on Crime: New Evidence from U.S. Cities, 1960-2010," including a cost-analysis of policing. Subsequent presentations by other speakers will be on May 1, 8, 22 and June 19 and 26.

3. AT&T has submitted several applications to the City of Oakland for installation of more cell phone poles in the hills. Although they are unpopular with nearby neighbors, better cell phone coverage in the hills is needed by Oakland Police Department as well as residents of Montclair.

4. Saturday April 14: EBMUD will discuss the Estates Reservoir construction project with neighbors and interested parties. Meet at the Bullard entrance to the reservoir. EBMUD is replacing the old Estates Reservoir Dam with two new concrete tanks, as part of its plan to improve water distribution in the hills, including improving the seismic standards for the inevitable earthquakes.

5. Councilmember Schaaf's newsletter includes an announcement of federal Small Business Administration panel for small business owners who may need help.

6. To subscribe to Schaaf's newsletter: sign up at www.libbyschaaf.com

7. Ms. Ruhland can award tickets to Oakland A's baseball games to Oakland civic groups with a special purpose. Contact her at LRuhland@oaklandnet.com with questions or requests.

PIEDMONT PINES UTILITY LINES UNDERGROUNDING PROJECT

Lisa Ruhland reported that Piedmont Pines Undergrounding Project is now in Phase 1 of three phases. Piedmont Pines is a homeowner's association covering a large amount of Montclair. They began their undergrounding project about 20 years ago, by voting to tax themselves to pay for burying lines underground for safety and aesthetic reasons. They have been working with the City of Oakland and Pacific Gas and Electric Company to accomplish this.

In response to attendees saying that they want to underground their utility lines in their neighborhood, they were told that it probably wouldn't happen in their lifetime since there is a very long waiting list, limited availability, a complicated process and very high costs to each homeowner.

An attendee mentioned that cable lines are still visual clutter after the electrical lines have been buried.

MONTCLAIR VILLAGE ASSOCIATION (MVA, merchants in Montclair Village)

www.montclairvillage.com

No report was presented by MVA.

Attendees expressed their dissatisfaction with the mix of businesses in the village.

Jill Broadhurst responded, saying that other commercial districts, such as Rockridge, Telegraph and Temescal, have commercial plans for their business mix. In those areas, the commercial district, in conjunction with the Oakland Planning Commission, shape its business mix. Jill Broadhurst and Carolyn Winters are working with the director of the MVA to determine what can be done to improve the shopping mix in the village for the benefit of residents, including establishing a formal business plan for the village.

It is felt that the village has been slow to adapt to changes in shopping patterns and restaurant tastes.

It was reported that only five owners own most of the commercial space in the village. They live elsewhere and are not engaged locally.

It is also reported that another nail salon is coming to the village and another retail store in the village may have to shut down in a year for lack of business.

Residents who wish to volunteer their experience in commercial real estate and business planning are encouraged to contact Jill Broadhurst at jill_94019@yahoo.com

INCREASING ORGANIZED NEIGHBORHOODS IN MONTCLAIR

With the city-wide emergency drill on Saturday, April 27, now is a good time for neighborhoods which have not organized themselves to take the first step of getting to know each other. Tips on organizing neighbors:

http://montclairsic.org/pdf/Organized_Neighborhoods_Leaders_Guide.pdf

BARBARA GOLDENBERG, MONTCLAIR REPRESENTATIVE ON CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE WILDFIRE PREVENTION DISTRICT Residents of the Oakland Hills

formed the Wildfire Prevention District and fund it by paying \$65 a year per home through their property tax bill. The money is used to clear vegetation from public land and other purposes as described on the website <http://www.oaklandnet.com/wildfireprevention/default.asp>

The last tax period that the current assessment will be collected is the second half of 2014. To continue the Wildfire Prevention District for fire safety, the measure needs to be renewed or replaced. Interested private citizens are funding an analysis of the best way to keep the Oakland Hills safe from wildfire. More news to follow.

PATRICIA ROSE, NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES COORDINATOR, CITY OF OAKLAND

Friday May 10:: The Oakland Police Department is hosting an Open House at the Police Administration Building 455 7th Street; May 10, 2013; 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. There will be live music, appetizers, refreshments, and a chance to meet new friends, mingle with Command staff and civilian staff.

The Oakland Police Department is seeking community members to serve as assessors on Oral Board Panels for Police Candidates. On Monday and Tuesday, May 6 and 7, OPD has scheduled oral boards to interview potential candidates for Police Officer positions. This would be a one-to-two day commitment. You do not have to serve both days, but community support is appreciated and necessary for the success of this recruitment. Arrival time is 8:00 a.m. with the first hour consisting of training and leave at 5:30 p.m. Each panel will consist of three members (a sworn member of the Oakland Police Department, a City of Oakland employee and a community member). For more information, please contact Officer Wendy Rae, 238-3339 or wrae@oaklandnet.com.

Earth Day is Saturday, April 20, 2013, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. For more information and a complete list of volunteer sites, please visit website at www.oaklandearthday.org or call (510) 238-7611.

Meeting adjourned. Residents are invited to attend the next MSIC meeting on Thursday May 2, 2013, at 7 pm, Montclair Presbyterian Church, 5701 Thornhill Drive, Oakland California.