



Montclair Safety and Improvement Council (MSIC) Public Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 4, 2016, Montclair Presbyterian Church, 5701 Thornhill Drive

Steering Committee Members Present: Carolyn Winters (Chairperson), Michael Tigges (Vice Chairperson), Jim Clardy (Treasurer), Nick Vigilante (Secretary), Nancy Havassy (Community Appointed Representative), Doug Mosher (Community Representative), Nicki Kaiser (Community Representative), Mimi Rohr (Community Representative), and Daniel Swafford (Community Representative).

Steering Committee Members Absent: Jeff Diamond (Community Appointed Representative), Barry Klezmer (Community Appointed Representative), Josh Shaw (Community Representative), and Stan Weisner (Community Appointed Representative).

Advisory Members Present: Patricia Rose, Oakland Police Department (OPD) Neighborhood Services Coordinator, Nayeli Maxson, Representative from the Office of Oakland Councilmember Annie Campbell-Washington, and Kristine Jurgens-Duenas, OPD Community Resources Officer (CRO).

Other Attendees Present: 34 (not including above officials and guest speakers).

The meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m. after a quorum of MSIC Steering Committee Members (SCMs) was achieved.

1. November 5, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Winters stated that copies of the minutes from the November 5, 2015 Public Meeting were posted for public review and comment several weeks ago via an e-mail notice to the MSIC Yahoo! Group. Copies were available for review at the sign-in table. No comments were received.

Chairperson Winters asked if anyone present at the meeting had comments regarding the minutes. No comments were offered.

Chairperson Winters submitted a motion to accept the minutes and the motion was seconded. The motion was then voted on by the Steering Committee and the vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

Chairperson Winters stated that although a Treasurer's Report was not on the agenda, a copy of the Treasurer's Report was available for review at the sign-in table if anyone was interested in it.

2. Crime Reports

CRO Jurgens-Duenas provided the following crime statistics for Beat 13Z (Montclair Area) for the month of January 2016:

- Auto Burglaries: Three versus 18 during the same period in 2015.
- Residential Burglaries: Two versus 9 during the same period in 2015
- Auto Thefts: Four versus seven during the same period in 2015
- Robberies: There were none versus one in the same period in 2015.

CRO Jurgens-Duenas provided the following overall crime statistics for Beat 13Z (Montclair Area) for calendar year 2015:

- Auto Burglaries: 171 in 2015 versus 99 in 2014.
- Residential Burglaries: 69 in 2015 versus 49 in 2014.
- Auto Thefts: 76 in 2015 versus 83 in 2014
- Felony Assaults: three in 2015 versus 3 in 2014
- Homicides: None in 2015 versus one in 2014.

CRO Jurgens-Duenas stated that Beat 13Z has less crime than neighboring Beat 13Y.

CRO Jurgens-Duenas stated that the recent apprehension of a group which was burglarizing homes in adjacent Oakland neighborhoods may have contributed to the recent reduction of residential burglaries in Beat 13Z. It is believed that these individuals are also responsible for burglaries in Beat 13Z.

Chairperson Winters reported that neighborhoods in Montclair which have contracted with private patrol services have had little to no crime in their neighborhoods.

A resident, who reported at a prior MSIC public meeting that she had encountered cars speeding through the crosswalks at the intersection of Mountain Boulevard and Thornhill Drive which she used to walk her grandchild to school, stated that this continues to be a problem. She recommended regular OPD enforcement traffic operations.

CRO Jurgens-Duenas stated that there are occasional traffic enforcement operations along Mountain Boulevard from the Thornhill intersection to the Colton intersection during commute hours because many complaints have been received over the years about traffic and pedestrian problems in that area.

Chairperson Winters stated that in January 2016, MSIC developed and submitted to CRO Jurgens-Duenas three priorities, one of which was traffic/speed enforcement at the following locations:

- a. Shepherd Canyon Road in the 25 mile per hour zone beginning at the dip.
- b. Mountain Gate and Ascot in the school zone area.
- c. Traffic signal “blow-off” at the Mountain Boulevard on-ramp to northbound State Road 13.

CRO Jurgens-Duenas stated that she would try her best to increase traffic enforcement activities in the areas around the schools with the use of Officers assigned to the Traffic Enforcement Unit. One of the priorities for this Unit is traffic enforcement in areas near schools. There is special funding for traffic enforcement near schools.

Chairperson Winters stated that “smash and grabs” (auto burglaries) in Montclair Village have gone down.

SCM Swafford, also Executive Director for the Montclair Village Association (MVA), confirmed that “smash and grabs” have gone down but they may go up again which sometimes happens. SCR Swafford encouraged residents not to leave anything in their cars. If you see suspicious people looking inside cars, call the OPD non-emergency number (777-3333) immediately and report it. You can also let adjacent businesses know, and they can call for the private security service for Montclair Village to respond.

SCM Swafford stated that the MVA has been working to reduce the number of solicitors in Montclair Village. Some solicitors have been asking for money for high school basketball teams. Some of these solicitors do not appear to be legitimate. There was a panhandler soliciting in Montclair Village, but after an intervention, the solicitor was referred to Alameda County for counseling and services for help and has not returned to Montclair Village.

Chairperson Winters stated that magazine solicitors have been a continuous problem in the residential areas of Beat 13Z. Currently, no one has a permit from the City of Oakland to sell magazine subscriptions in Beat 13Z. Therefore, should a magazine solicitor come to your home, please call the OPD non-emergency number (777-3333) for assistance.

SCM Swafford stated that the CVS Drug Store (Rite Aid), next to the Lucky Grocery Store, is undergoing renovation. The store will install cameras on corner points of the store to improve security, which will also benefit areas adjacent to the Lucky Grocery Store. SCR Swafford is continuing to work with both Montclair grocery stores (Safeway and Lucky) to improve perimeter security in the parking areas.

3. Community Projects

Antioch Court: Chairperson Winters, Treasurer Clardy, Mr. Wladimir Wasslowsky of the City of Oakland Transportation Office, and SCR Swafford reported on the progress of the Antioch Court improvement project. One aspect of the project is to make it possible to close off the street from vehicle traffic for special events. Other aspects of the project include sidewalk improvements, business access improvements, as well as traffic and pedestrian safety improvements. The idea to improve Antioch Court stemmed from the efforts of a community group formed in 2002 which has now evolved into a partnership between the City of Oakland and the MVA and the MSIC. The City of Oakland helped secure seed money of \$100,000 for the development of construction drawings. The architectural firm of Urban Design Associates (UDA) was contracted to develop the construction drawings. There was a recent meeting with the UDA where decisions were made regarding pedestrian light fixtures and graphics for the street crosswalk. The businesses have also been surveyed in an effort to make the areas more ADA compliant. The Oakland Fire Department is also providing feedback regarding emergency access and egress. The next step in the process is to secure more construction funding. Residents were encouraged to donate to the project by buying bricks with their names on them for the project which are available for purchase at the MVA website. About \$15,000 in brick sales has been raised so far. Chairperson Winters stated that the project was in need of volunteers with experience in fundraising and grants writing, and to contact the MSIC if they were interested in helping in these areas. The construction costs are expected to be about \$450,000. SCM Swafford thanked the Councilmember Annie Campbell Washington, Mr. Wasslowsky and his staff, and former Councilmember Libby Schaaf - now Oakland's Mayor, for their help in making it possible to proceed with this project.

Pocket Park: Treasurer Clardy provided an update regarding the Pocket Park. The MSIC helped transform this major entry point into Montclair from an overgrown and unappealing location to a nice looking Pocket Park in 2008. Funding was recently raised to rehabilitate the irrigation system. The rehabilitation work began in November 2015 and is almost complete. The Hillside Gardeners group has agreed to play a major role in maintaining the Pocket Park. There will be a volunteer event in the spring to add mulch and some new plants in the Pocket Park.

4. Open Forum

This agenda item was moved from the end of the meeting to item 4 because Councilmember Annie Campbell-Washington had not yet arrived at the meeting for the agenda segment about the Mountain Boulevard and Thornhill Intersection Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Improvements.

Ms. Lin Barron, District 4 Representative on the Oakland Wildfire Prevention and Assessment District (WPAD), stated that the City of Oakland through the WPAD had matching grant money up to \$5,000 available to neighborhoods for brush and tree

clearance projects. Applications must be submitted to the WPAD. For more information, please contact the City of Oakland Wildfire Prevention Bureau at www.wildfireprevention@oaklandnet.com or call (510) 238-7388.

Ms. Barron stated that money collected under the parcel tax for WPAD services will last through 2017.

Ms. Barron stated that the Diablo Firesafe Council also has matching grants available for similar neighborhood work. The Diablo Firesafe Council can be contacted at www.DFSCMiller@comcast.net or call (510) 238-1265.

Ms. Barron stated that she is also involved with the Montclair Railroad Trail group, and they have worked to get grant money to remove diseased or dangerous trees along the trail. The group does various support work along the Trail every third Saturday. Volunteers are always welcome. For more information, please see the Montclair Railroad Trail website at www.montclairrrtrail.org for more information, and to contact the group.

Ms. Helen Kozoriz Shoemaker, lead organizer for the Save Our Skies East Bay (SOSEB) group, provided a presentation about the group's efforts to reduce airplane noise over our area due to the recent implementation of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAAs) NextGen Program. The FAA's NextGen Program is transforming our air traffic control system from a radar-based system with radio communication to a satellite-based one. GPS technology is being used to shorten routes, save time and fuel, reduce traffic delays, increase capacity, and permit controllers to monitor and manage aircraft with greater safety margins. As a result of the changes, planes are able to fly closer together, take more direct routes, and fly at lower altitudes. Unfortunately, one of the side effects of the change is increased airplane noise.

Ms. Shoemaker stated that the FAA's NextGen Program has taken an already busy airspace in the East Bay and further concentrated arriving and departing San Francisco (SFO) and Oakland (OAK) flights over certain neighborhoods, instead of dispersing flights to distribute and minimize impacts over neighborhoods. Frequent low-altitude and high-decibel flight noise is disturbing our neighborhoods. Medical studies have documented the physical and mental health impacts of airplane noise.

Ms. Shoemaker stated that the SOSEB has written letters about the airplane noise problem to noise abatement officials at SFO and OAK, and SOSEB volunteers have attended noise forum meetings to discuss the issues and solutions to the noise problem. SOSEB has also contacted local Congressional Officials for assistance.

Ms. Shoemaker stated that SOSEB has requested that: (1) implementation of the FAA's NextGen flight paths over the East Bay be rescinded, and the prior SFO and OAK arrival and departure flight paths be restored; (2) the FAA acknowledge, monitor, and make a serious study of how to disperse and minimize flight noise over East Bay

neighborhoods, with full public participation; and (3) no further NextGen flight path determinations and discretionary airport projects be undertaken without the preparation of full Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) analyzing the actual impacts of any proposal, with full public participation.

Ms. Shoemaker stated that SOSEB has initiated a petition drive regarding the problem, and those who support SOSEB's efforts to reduce airplane noise can sign the petition. Ms. Shoemaker had a copy of the petition for those interested in reviewing and signing it.

Ms. Shoemaker stated that the SOSEB has set-up a website at www.soseastbay.org and has a Facebook page. Information is also routinely posted on NextDoor. Volunteers are always welcome. The SOSEB group can be contacted at SaveOurSkiesEastBay@gmail.com.

Ms. Shoemaker stated that residents have a right to file complaints about airplane noise, and she encouraged residents to file complaints if the airplane noise is bothering them. On the SOSEB website, under the section "related materials" there is a document titled "contact information" which contains both internet and physical locations to file such complaints. Without complaints, the FAA is unlikely to respond to airplane noise increases.

During Ms. Shoemaker's presentation, Councilmember Campbell-Washington arrived at the meeting. Councilmember Campbell-Washington stated that she was concerned about the increase in airplane noise. She recently attended a meeting with Oakland Port Officials and a decision has been made to place an airplane noise measurement monitor in our area to record and measure airplane noise and the frequency of flights over Montclair. Councilmember Campbell-Washington recommended that there be a future Town Hall meeting with local Port and FAA officials to discuss the airplane noise increase and possible solutions.

Carolyn Burgess, with the North Hills Community Council (the Community Council for Beat 13Y adjacent to 13Z) stated that Beat 13Y was holding a Camera Surveillance Workshop on Thursday, February 11, 2016, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Montclair Presbyterian Church. Notices about the Workshop have been posted on the MSIC Yahoo! Group and on NextDoor. Ms. Burgess welcomed residents from Beat 13Z to attend the Workshop.

Inasmuch as Councilmember Campbell-Washington was now present at the meeting (along with Mr. Wladimir Wasslowsky and Mr. Joseph Wang of the City of Oakland Transportation Office who were already present), the agenda item about the Mountain Boulevard and Thornhill Drive Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Improvements was moved to agenda item 5. Open Forum presentations were suspended temporarily and would resume after agenda item 5 concluded.

5. Mountain Boulevard and Thornhill Drive Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Improvements

Councilmember Campbell-Washington stated that safety around schools is a huge priority for her. There has been a ton of feedback from the community about traffic and pedestrian safety issues along Mountain Boulevard from Colton Drive to Thornhill Drive. Substantially more feedback has come as a result of the proposed Montessori School at the corner of Mountain Boulevard and Thornhill Drive. She and her staff have had meetings with OPD and Public Works Agency (PWA) officials to examine short-term and long-term improvements that could be brought to the area to reduce and/or solve problems.

Councilmember Campbell-Washington stated that she was successful in her efforts to obtain and place a full-time crossing guard at the Mountain Boulevard and Thornhill Drive intersection.

Councilmember Campbell-Washington stated that she and OPD and PWA officials, along with school officials and community members, including MSIC Chairperson Winters, recently observed the traffic and pedestrian safety patterns and behavior at the intersection during morning commute hours, and recorded their observations. They have come up with short-term solutions which can be done now, and long-term solutions which can occur in the future after additional traffic and pedestrian safety money becomes available.

Mr. Wasslowsky discussed how the City of Oakland prioritizes traffic and pedestrian safety improvements throughout the City of Oakland with the limited resources that it has to make such improvements. Traffic and pedestrian safety around schools is a high priority. In the recent past, the City of Oakland submitted two grant proposals to the State of California for various improvements throughout Oakland, including changes at the Mountain Boulevard and Thornhill Drive intersection, and both proposals were rejected. It is expected that more money will become available in the future due to the general improvement in the economy. The City of Oakland will continue to submit grant proposals to address traffic and pedestrian safety improvements throughout Oakland, including the Mountain Boulevard and Thornhill Drive area. His office has come up with some short-term solutions which can be completed soon, as well as some long-term solutions that can occur with community input in the future after additional traffic and pedestrian safety money becomes available. Mr. Wang of his office will discuss the short-term and long-term solutions.

Mr. Wang presented the short-term solutions, specifically better signage and striping of the intersection. Larger and ladder style crosswalks will be painted in the crosswalk areas, curb bulb-outs will be painted on the street next to curb corners so cars do not encroach in the areas adjacent to crosswalks where children might be standing, and stop lines will be painted above the crosswalks to prevent cars from encroaching into the crosswalks. Mr. Wang passed out color copies of what the proposed short-term changes would look like.

Treasurer Clardy, who has lived near the intersection for many years, stated that the short-term changes might help somewhat but that some drivers will still drive in the painted areas. He felt that more aggressive actions, involving elevating the sidewalks, concrete bulb-outs, traffic signal improvements, and other physical engineering improvements to the intersection were necessary to further promote safety.

A resident commented that if the proposed Montessori School opens, it will add to the problems currently at that location and make solutions even more difficult, expensive, and maybe not even possible at all, given the future impact caused by the school which cannot be accurately predicted at this time.

Mr. Wang and Mr. Wasslowsky agreed that more aggressive physical changes were ultimately necessary to further improve traffic and pedestrian safety, to include changes such as adding sidewalks where there are none, elevating the current sidewalks and entry/exit points, adding concrete bulb-outs, making traffic signal improvements, and making other physical engineering improvements to the intersection. A specific long-term proposal is currently being developed and later this year, PWA will solicit and obtain community feedback to perfect the proposal. One primary factor considered in approving such projects is a documented increase in pedestrian activity (walking), which has been declining generally in the Montclair area. Mr. Wasslowsky noted that his office is researching various funding sources to help make gradual improvements in a measured way as funding opportunities become available.

SCM Kaiser stated that she parked her car on the upper end of Thornhill Drive next to some apartments where parking is allowed on the street. The street pavement is broken and in poor condition and shrubbery is protruding into the parking spaces and as a result, egress from her car was difficult and unsafe because of approaching traffic.

Mr. Wang and Mr. Wasslowsky stated that they were not aware of this problem, and would look into it to see what could be done about it.

6. Open Forum

After completion of agenda item 5, the Open Forum segment of the meeting resumed.

A resident asked about the status of changes to be made to the Thornhill Drive on-ramp to northbound State Road 13. The resident felt that the on-ramp was dangerous in its current condition.

Chairperson Winters stated, and Treasurer Clardy added, that CalTrans work is currently underway to build a retaining wall with a guard rail to shore up the on-ramp and make it safer. Trees and underbrush below the on-ramp had to be removed first to make space for the retaining wall construction. The work is currently in progress.

Chairperson Winters adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m. because the agenda items above were completed.

Minutes Prepared By:

Nick Vigilante
MSIC Secretary