

Oakwatch: The Oakland Code Enforcement Project

Minutes

June 21, 2017

Present: Michael Medwed, David Manthei, Mark Oleniacz, Elena Zaitsoff, Lizabeth Gray, Officers Dave Shifren and Shannon Leshen, University of Pittsburgh Officer Heather Camp, Matt Landy, Barbara Ruprecht, Camille Burgess, Kevin Zedack, John Wilds, Barbara Arroyo, Kira Baierl, Wanda Wilson, Sophie Koss, Commander Daniel Herrmann, Ernest Rajakone, Jessica Gorgas, John Gurklis, Ken Eckenrode, Robert Harper, Brosha Tkacheva, Alicia Carberry

INTRODUCTIONS

Elena read the mission statement followed by a presentation to Commander Herrmann and the officers of Zone Four with the Ally of the Year Award. [A copy of Elena's remarks is at the end of the minutes.]

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH BARBARA RUPRECHT

Ms. Rubrecht reviewed several of the programs that the university offers regarding alcohol and drug awareness. That students must complete certain programs and others are optional. The officers work very closely with student relations. Use of social media and tradition methods to remind students when special events are coming up, that there are certain expectations for Pitt students.

She talked about Pitt Start, John Wilds's office is running these, and how they stress the importance of being a good community member. We also host various workshops to connect students with the community, in particular the neighborhood block parties. Students become aware of the neighbors and how their actions may impact them. Encourage students to develop relationships with their neighbors. Pitt Serves is another avenue for the students to connect with community.

When students don't follow the rules, code of contact is utilized to set expectations, make students familiar with rules. When there are violations we work with police and the community to enforce. Students violate the code there are sanctions.

In terms of general safety, we work with Pitt police on "See Something, Say Something" program. Also safe walk program, some already planned for this year. This year we will also have the "Reduce Your Risk" campaign. Introducing students to safety measures like locking your door, don't leave windows open and take care when you have a window AC unit that could be used for access.

We deal with sexual assault situations. Very active and strong response, very successful dealings. In terms of over occupancy, there is the "Three is Company, Four is a Crowd" campaign. Students are becoming more aware of the violations. Starting to create new culture, takes time.

We promote sustainable kind of use as far as transportation; don't bring your car to campus. Students have bus passes; they have alternative transportation.

Finally the dean wanted to send a direct message to the community. He is committed to working with the community. The dean will continue to set high standards for the students. The safety of students is his top priority; will continue to send out messaging on how you can be safe. He wanted you to know as community members, he is listening to your concerns.

EZ: Asked if anyone had any questions.

Sophie: Do you tell them not to bring all their cars and about the parties?

BR: Yes, we do.

Liz: Have you ever considered having residents talk with Pitt Starts?

John W: We may be able to do that.

Liz: It would help to speak directly to the students.

John W: Most of the students are freshman and not living off campus.

Liz: I know but they party off campus. It would strengthen the relationship between the students and neighbors.

JohnW: Effort at Pitt is a team effort; Pitt police, office of student services, City of Pittsburgh police, a lot of people working together. We think it's working. Most residents will tell you that the last year was better than it has been.

Walk and Talk and the Impact detail are having major impact; they shut down parties when they get out of hand

BR: We had comments from the community on noise violations. We have incorporated that into our code. That word is getting out; after they have a violation they won't do it again.

Liz: Can anyone file a referral or complaint with your office?

BR: Members of the Pitt community can. Residents should file a complaint with the Pitt Police which is then referred to our office.

Ken E: I had a problem at one of my apartments. Students in one apartment making too much noise. Students in other apartment called police to complain and called me. I called Zone Four and spoke with Officer Sullivan and he went over the top to make sure that I was kept apprised of the situation. He said we want landlords to react to these situations and we will do the same for you.

EZ: Timely professional cooperation.

CH: The landlords are great to work with. Had a similar situation with house near CMU carnival. Called rental agency and they dealt with it immediately. Told them their lease would not be renewed next year. Good landlord cooperation. It's good to know about Officer Sullivan. Will let him know you complimented him on his service.

CamilleB: When you do the Pitt Starts, are their parents there for the conversations?

JohnW: Yes, they're right there with us. They know what we expect for the student; aware of the process. So if something happens, student tells them they've been cited, they know what to expect and what the consequences are.

MattL: We have a panel of professionals relaying the information. Not just concerned with their safety but making them aware that when they are out in the community, there are neighbors. So that messaging comes through. We like having the parents onboard.

EZ: Like you said, these changes don't happen overnight, but we have seen a shift.

JohnW: Block party dates; we have some not all.

Intern: North Oakland date Tuesday, September 12th. We're looking at doing Tuesdays and Thursdays. No other dates at this point.

MarkO: Asked about South Oakland date.

JohnW: Point Park University has asked to participate in the Oakcliffe party and we've accepted. Pleased.

Intern: That party is Thursday Sept. 17th.

BR: And I want to encourage all of you, all the residents to attend. We send a vast mailing [covers all of Oakland residents].

JohnW: Doing five block parties this year.

EZ: Moving on to Zone 4

OFFICER SHANNON LESHEN, ZONE 4 POLICE REPORT

DS: Zone 4 for the month of May:

8 non-traffic violations
3 disorderly conduct
2 Public drunkenness
2 false ID
1 open container

5/3 Atwood Street, Garage Door Bar: tagging NSF; Not Strickly Freight

5/6 Bates Street: open container, disorderly conduct. Individual did clean up mess he created.

5/3 Atwood Street Garage Door Bar: False ID; CMU students

5/12 Atwood Street Garage Door Bar: Two disorderly conduct.

5/16 5th & DeSoto: Public drunkenness; transported by medics to hospital.

5/17 Atwood Street Garage Door Bar: False ID.

5/21 3801 Forbes Ave.: Males fighting inside business.

SL: On other news, there will be a PennDOT meeting regarding the Forbes Corridor on July 17, 5-7 p.m., at Rangos Hall on the CMU Campus.

I've brought pamphlets regarding the pet population for your information. Summertime it's important to take care with pets, don't leave in car, water.

And I have some news. I have applied for the horse patrol and made the cut for the next training session so this may be my last Oakwatch meeting. Your new community relations officer will be Victoria Butch .

Big round of applause for Shannon.

Q: Can we invite the horses to the block parties?

JohnW: On behalf of the community I would like to say thank you for your service to the community and you will be missed.

CH: Gave more background on change. New CRO coming to next meeting.

OFFICER HEATHER CAMP, PITT POLICE UPDATES

For the month of May:

52 total incidents; 29 arrests including citations:

1 defiant trespass

5 disorderly conduct

4 drug arrest

2 DUI

7 panhandling citations – 3 arrests; 4 verbal warnings

1 public drunkenness

2 indecent exposure

2 simple assaults

2 thefts

1 underage drinking

2 sent to judicial board.

1 Pitt affiliate; 30 non-affiliates.

Pitt added two new motorcycle officers; mostly traffic.

National Night Out – Pitt will host this year; more info next month. Flyers to be distributed; Wanda offered OPDC to help distribute. August 1st, Tuesday. Also on social media.

EZ: Are the motorcycle units set up at specific intersections?

HC: New, Bigelow and 5th biggest intersection. Can be changed up.

LG: Can we send some suggestions to you?

HC: Yes, please do.

OFFICER LEFF, POINT PARK UNIVERSITY

No updates at this time.

LIZABETH GRAY STANDING IN FOR JULIE REILAND, PERMITS LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS

LG: Julianne Reiland is out of state for training this week so I'm presenting the May report.

From the property progress report:

3224 Blvd. of the Allies – EZ: Attended Zoning Board last week with Walnut Capital in support of their plans. No one in opposition. Parking lot across street; no front door on Blvd. of the Allies were discussed. Community is hoping that goes through.

In addition there was a 911 report of people entering the building. Was there follow-up, Commander?

CH: We did but my sgt. Is on vacation right now. I will follow up on that for next meeting.

WW: Gave background on Walnut Capital's plan; keeping existing building.

CH: Hard to ID student from photograph.

EZ: At least you know they are actually getting in. Liz will present the remainder of the property report

Liz: 3101 Niagara Street – returns to housing court July 20th. New re-inspection regarding exterior wall this week.

3421, 3417, 3413, 3409, 3405 & 3401 Bates Street – Failed third inspection; sent to housing court July 20th. Spoke directly with new inspector; he's going down to have a look.

3421 Parkview – Violations abated but owner working on property.

3222 Niagara: Older item. In court; appeal has been filed against multi-family occupancy.

3221 Kennett Square – In appeals court at this time; judge called meeting and owner did not attend; rescheduled.

3216 & 2600 & 3206 & 3202 Fifth Avenue - Returns to housing court 7/20/17 regarding unpermitted parking lot.

3514, 3516 & 3518 Frazier Street – granted variance for rear parking; withdrawn multi-family variance and rear parking lot request. Waiting on decision.

333 Atwood Street – No change; Work started a year ago; permit is now out of date.

352 Atwood Street – Construction has started. Hope to have a coffee shop on first floor with apartments above.

306 Ophelia: Nothing to report. Students will be moving out end of July, beginning of August

We have an additional development update today regarding the Joncaire Street Development. The owner has decided not to sell so development is currently on hold.

CamilleB: Questions regarding a house on Frazier, siding is coming down after storm. Should I 311 that?

Liz: Yes, if you can do that and I will do that too. I can stop over this afternoon and take some pictures.

MM: What about lot on the corner of Frazier and Parkview? Tall grass?

Liz: Making progress on that. Hope to have news next month.

BROSHA TKACHERA – DISTRICT 3

Brosha: I will be attending Oakwatch meetings in future in place of Neil M. Will be updating re OGV; keep everyone concerned informed. Questions, please contact office

DaveM: Concerning the Joncaire Street paving project. Only a couple of folk showed up for last meeting; reschedule.

Brosha: DPW couldn't attend. Will schedule new meeting.

ALICIA CARBERRY - DISTRICT 8

Mitchells on Centre Ave. has been approved for redevelopment. We'll provide updates once things get moving. If you are interested in information on National Night Out, please call our office. The USSIE Games are this Saturday at Highmark Field on the South Side. Dan Gilman will be at the dunk tank at 12:52 p.m.

Liz: There is some concern for the one pillar at Mitchells; looks about to fall over. Alicia will get back to us on that.

ERNEST RAJAKONE, MAYOR'S OFFICE

Communiity Development Block Grant meetings: July 13th in Manchester and July 19 in the West End [see flyer].

ADDITIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

EZ: Any community questions or concerns?

Q: TV recycling program.

Liz: I'm working on that and hope to have updates next month.

Q: Euler Way and Boundary Street illegal parking?

CH: I'll call Amanda Purcell about these. Bike officer will hit Euler Way.

Barb Arroyo: We will be recruiting for the CERT's program on the university campuses this fall.

JohnW: Kannu Sahni will be leaving student services next week and moving to Highmark as the director of community affairs. I'll be solo for a while. Wish him the best.

MEETING ADJOURNED

EZ announced next meeting on July 19th, 6 p.m., at the Oakland Career Center. Meeting was adjourned.