

From: jgajemian@charter.net
Sent: Saturday, August 25, 2007 11:01 AM
Subject: HNP: Results from Aug 23rd Neighborhood Crime Watch Mtg!

Fellow HNP Block Captains (others blind copied);

The following are the minutes for our HNP neighborhood crime watch meeting that was held on August 23rd. Special thanks to the Mansfield Bible Church for making their facility available to us. Also, special thanks to Officer Curtis Phillip, Detective Mark Brown, and Bob Flatt (Tanglewood HOA) for their presentations and handling of the question/answer period. In addition, we had attendance and participation from the Auburn Park HOA and Kings Mill HOA.

The audience strongly supported the initiative of adding a citizen patrol to our HNP. We knew that one day --- we would be taking this next step. The day has arrived! At the conclusion of the meeting, I received three volunteers that will manage the citizen patrol, which will be broken down into districts. However, all three volunteers are located north of Country Club. We need at least two volunteers to help manage citizen patrol for areas south of Country Club. Please canvass your streets for two such volunteers ---- south of Country Club. Once we have our citizen patrol leaders onboard, I will set up an initial meeting for the leaders to discuss roles/responsibilities and process. Detective Mark Brown has volunteered to give expert advice to the leaders. Subsequently, we will send out a request for patrol volunteers.

Again for those Block Captains south of Country Club ----- please solicit for two volunteers to help manage our new citizen patrol.

Thanks!

Greg Ajemian
Heritage Neighborhood Partnership

**Minutes for the HNP Neighborhood Crime Watch Meeting
Held on August 23, 2007 at the Mansfield Bible Church**

Greg Ajemian opened the meeting at 7:30 pm. About sixty were in attendance. Mansfield Community Officer Curtis Phillip gave an overview of crime problems for the City, challenges that are faced by the limited resources of the Mansfield Police Department, how important crime watch organizations are, and specific things that we can do to help ourselves.

Detective Mark Brown (Dallas Police Department) added to Officer Curtis Brown's discussion as a resident of our HNP. Detective Brown added his own observations for our neighborhood.

Bob Flatt, one of the officers that run the Tanglewood HOA, discussed their neighborhood experiences before they initiated their citizen patrol, and the major improvement in crime levels with the citizen patrol in place. He also discussed the citizen patrol and it operates.

The above three presenters then handled an open question/answer segment with the audience. The audience also included two more officials from the Tanglewood HOA, Michael Barker of the Auburn Park HOA, and Larry Kinard of the Kings Mill HOA. In addition, Councilmember Darryl Haynes was in attendance.

After the question/answer segment, the audience was polled to gauge support for a citizens patrol. Overwhelming majority wanted a citizens patrol to be added to the HNP. Greg Ajemian requested sign-ups for those interested in being part of the leadership team that will manage the citizen patrol. Four such volunteers came forward at the conclusion of the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

The following are antidotes from the meeting:

Most crime within the HNP is garage theft. If someone enters your garage (attached), it's the same as breaking into your house and Texas law applies the same as to protecting your property. This is an avoidable crime that can be stopped by residents closing their garage doors. Open garage doors also invite the criminals to our streets and neighborhood, which leads to other types of crime or violent crime.

Write down serial numbers for mowers, bikes, etc that are in the garage in case of future theft. Theft items can be tracked down by the police and pawn shops with these serial numbers.

Replace the "inside" door (opens to the inside of the house) of the garage with a solid core door and door latch. Garage entry can easily become home entry, regarding our "easy to defeat" typical doors to the garage.

Don't keep your car keys hanging in sight by the door to the garage.

If you have to park your car outside of the garage, remove the garage door opener from sight (place it in the glove department, under the seat, etc). It is important for outside cars to have their valuables out of sight from the car windows. Smash and grab crimes on vehicles are the second most frequent crime within the HNP. Report all car break-ins to the Police due to the possibility of identify theft (insurance cards, etc give criminals important information from the car). Contact all three credit bureaus and freeze credit activity.

Besides closing garage doors, the second biggest improvement that our HNP residents can do is turning on their porch lights at night. A well lighted street significantly deters criminals. The increased visibility actually helps the Police when they investigate a call. Porch lights can also be motion sensors.

Shredders are very important for limiting exposure to criminal identification theft. When we put our garbage out for pick-up, people can legally go through those bags and containers looking for valuable information such as credit card receipts, bills, etc. Make sure the prescription labels are also shredded. Apparently, these labels can give enough info to allow for others to use you (your insurance) to cover the cost of their medical procedures. The following link allows you to check your medical records to make sure that someone has not used your insurance;
<http://hpi.georgetown.edu/privacy/stateguides/tx/txguide.html>

The Tanglewood and Auburn Park HOA's primarily use their cars for serving their citizen patrols. Tanglewood uses a magnetic sign on their cars. No formal training was used for the volunteers, just a map of the area and a basic knowledge of guidelines for patrol. The volunteers are careful to avoid any confrontation. The volunteers strictly are there for observation, taking notes, or even using phone cameras. Most of the shifts are midnight to 6am, but they also have some daytime volunteers (usually retirees). When they spot an open garage door, they call it in to an emergency number (for the neighborhood association) or they call the Police, who will check in on the house. The volunteers have noticed that their 911 calls during citizen patrol have about a two-minute response time from the Police.

Although HOA's have funding, any association can do fundraisers that can help with startup costs for a citizen patrol. Biggest expense is signs for the cars, and Tanglewood has an additional expense of gift card incentives. Tanglewood is also investing in security cameras.

There are about 15 Police cars dedicated to patrols at any given time for the City, which is about fifty square miles in size. Usually, the calls stack up on the patrol officers and they are usually in a reactive mode, instead of a patrol mode. Due to the limited number of Police officers on patrol, there is a very strong need for crime watch associations to be the eyes and ears. Information on suspicious cars and people help the Police in solving crimes or piecing together events.

Mansfield is a fast growing city that has outpaced the resources of city departments like the Police. City budget allows for 3-4 additional officers per year.

A high percentage of house break-ins occur during the daylight hours, when criminals suspect less chance of confrontation (someone being home). Get and use a home security system.

Door to door people who hang information on your doors or solicit from you must have a permit from the city. It is an offense if they do not have a permit. Ask them to see it, or report them to the Police.

Know your neighbors to the left and right, across and behind you. Know cars and faces on a basic level.

Avoid mailing bills/letters from your home mailboxes. If you use your mailbox to mail items, don't raise the mailbox flag.

From May 1 to present: the Mansfield Police received 156 criminal mischief reports (vandalism), 38 identity thefts, and 37 stolen vehicles. In addition, there were 140 suspicious persons reports and 164 suspicious vehicle reports.