

Heritage Neighborhood Partnership (HNP) Crime Watch Meeting Minutes for October 25, 2016

Greg Ajemian of the Heritage Neighborhood Partnership (HNP) opened up the meeting at 7:00 with introductions and the meeting agenda.

Jessica Graves of the Tri-County Auto Burglary & Theft Prevention Task Force talked about the task force, which covers Ellis, Johnson, and Tarrant counties. This task force is state grant funded and provides assistance to 24 law enforcement agencies within these three counties. An important function is to help coordinate these enforcement agencies to collectively address trends and issues related to auto theft, auto burglary, and awareness.

The attached pdf file contains a few important slides from Ms. Graves' presentation. The top three (of ten on her slide) stolen vehicles in Texas are pickup trucks; Ford, Chevy, Dodge. The Honda Accord is the top car that is stolen in Texas, due to its value for parts. The Task Force (817-728-3910) will do free VIN number window etching, which makes a vehicle less susceptible to theft. The procedure takes about five minutes.

For pickup trucks, tailgate thefts have gone ahead of wheel/tire thefts as the number one theft issue. There are special locks or hinges that can be used to deter this theft. Tailgates, which often contain cameras, can cost up to \$3,000 to replace.

One of the slides of the attached pdf file includes a list of common items that are stolen from vehicles. Guns are becoming a very attractive target for vehicle break-ins. Garage door openers are also a target. Paper work in the car glove department or plate numbers can disclose the owner's name, etc, that can lead to establishing the home address. It is good to hide the garage door opener, when the vehicle is parked.

During the past six months in Mansfield, 101 vehicles were broken into and 75% of these were UNLOCKED! For our HNP, the percentage of vandalized cars that were unlocked is historically about 99% unlocked. Of the 28 vehicles stolen in Mansfield during the past six months, one half of these were also unlocked.

Officer Brandon Blansit of the Mansfield Police gave the crime watch presentation. The last slide of the attached pdf file is a table that shows a list of crimes that have occurred within our HNP since the beginning of this year. Burglary and larceny-theft are two items in the table that are very similar crimes, whereby burglary involves entering a house or car for theft. The HNP has experienced 31 such thefts this year, which is about one-half the overall rate for the city. I used 2014 city-wide crime stats for comparison, which are the last stats verified nationally for cities. Officer Blansit stated that our crime numbers are well below average, which is really good for us. Also, 99% of home burglar alarms are false. Another good stat for our HNP crime stats table is that drugs-narcotics scored a zero.

Officer Blansit stated the Mansfield Police will do a home security review of a residence upon request for free. This will include the locks on doors, landscaping around the house, windows, security system, garage door, etc. In response to a question, he also stated that delivery trucks can sometimes be followed by thieves. Best thing is to arrange delivery to a neighbor that will be home, or have it remain at a UPS or Fed-Ex business for your pick-up. Regarding public parking lots, the safest place to park is nearby cart returns. These cart returns have a lot of activity that offers safety.

Councilmember Darryl Haynes - Mansfield City Council conducted a town hall session with the residents, and covered several topics. Debbie Lane at 287 is soon to be bid for construction, which will include a no-signal, Texas-U left turn lane to go under 287 and continue towards Home Depot. The City paid additional funds for wider crossover bridges on SH-360 for future widening and to make room for Texas-U crossovers at Broad, Heritage, and Lone Star to better serve future Mansfield traffic. Arlington currently has no near-term interest or funding to join Mansfield on a joint project to improve Debbie Lane from Matlock to SH-360. Greg Ajemian noted that the overall SH-360 Extension project is now expected to be completed by May 2018, instead of end of 2017. The crossover bridges at Broad will not be completed until Sep 2017, while the crossover lanes at Debbie Lane and Heritage will not open until September 2017.

City Council is trying to slow down traditional development to be patient for better quality value development that is on the horizon, thus doing what is best for Mansfield in the long run. There are no thoughts by Mansfield for extending their ETJ (jurisdiction outside of city boundaries) or city limits. Walmart was targeting an area south of the Newsome football stadium, but was turned down by City Council due to resident concerns. A new development near Ray's Pharmacy was also turned down near the school due to neighborhood concerns. A 184-acre housing development on the West side was tabled by city council asking the developer to go back and redesign the project to blend better with the character of the existing neighborhoods. Wendy's has interest in the area just south of the Newsome football field, and City Council is working with them to make that city gateway site look a little nicer.

Considerable time was centered on the 80-acre project called the Shops at Broad that is located at the NE corner of 287 and Broad intersection. The northern portion next to McKnight Park has ongoing construction of an athletic field house that will include eight basketball courts and 12 volleyball courts, which is planned to open by end of this year. Next to it will be upcoming construction of the Stars Center ice rink. The City will own the Stars Center building as it will be operated by the Dallas Stars Enterprises. The \$15,000,000 building will be constructed in a way that will allow it to be easily converted to other uses, if the need changes or if the venture proves not successful. Over the 30-year agreement the Stars will pay the city \$21,000,000 in rent.

Also located at this NE corner of 287 and Broad will be the Shops at Broad that gained final City Council approval two months ago. The Shops at Broad is expected to start construction next spring. The retail element includes new big name retail stores and nice sit-down restaurants that Mansfield has been waiting on for a very long time. The project overall project also includes about 330 high-end upscale loft apartments as you would see in downtown Addison or Fort Worth, that will work together with the retail, restaurants, etc. This project is not the traditional apartment product. The total impact on MISD is expected to be under 20 children. Transportation is being planned to accommodate the shops traffic by widening Broad, incorporating double left turn lanes, and directing traffic toward 287.

There was significant discussion about apartment projects in general for the city. Officer Blansit cited his experience for turning apartment crime issues around. One big help is Mansfield's "strong" encouragement to require a lease crime addendum that allows for immediate eviction of any tenant based on criminal record or activity. This tool is supported by Federal law and developers are willing to add it to their lease agreements. The City of Mansfield has been successful for getting this done.

The city still owns 10-acres of vacant land in the North-East corner of the Shops at Broad. There is a lot of talk about using that land as a park area with a new city library. This new library concept includes a family learning center with many meeting rooms, open gathering areas, many comfortable reading areas, room for more computers, quiet study areas, learning areas for children (and adults), maybe a small 200 seat community auditorium. A part of the building will be dedicated to books. The family community and learning center is going to be a very special place. The thought is, with a park and linear trail as a transition, it could be an ideal addition to Mansfield quality of life we have come to enjoy. It's time for a new library. The current library is 15,000 square feet and utilization is up over 40% every year for the past 6 years. The new concept idea would be about 45,000 to 60,000 square feet. As soon as we can financially justify the cost and can identify the funding; we may see something like that come to the citizens. Our hope is that the new Shops at Broad project will provide that funding with ease. We're still in the idea stage. If this is something you like, please let people know it.

At the SE corner of 287 and Broad will be the large HEB grocery store, restaurants, and a large retail anchor. HEB will include its own gas station.

Across from the Mansfield HS on the Kroger side of Broad, the Spring Hill Suites (Marriott) will soon break ground on an 88-room hotel suites, set back with new retail development in front.

So, while we have slowed down everyday development by regulating a somewhat higher standard; we have had a surge in nicer retail and sit-down restaurants wanting to serve our community. Darryl said... "The goal is not to "have" to go to Arlington to buy the good things we want. Every year, we are sending \$50,000,000 of our sales tax money to surrounding cities. Instead of helping other cities pay off their debts, we want our share of that money to stay in Mansfield to pay-off our debts, build our libraries and pay for new streets and parks in Mansfield... and yes, that helps take pressure off property taxes".

Greg Ajemian adjourned this HNP meeting at 9:20pm. Approximately 18 were in attendance. Meeting minutes provided by Greg Ajemian of the Heritage Neighborhood Partnership (HNP).

Special thanks to Pastor Steve Smith of the Mansfield Bible Church for hosting this meeting!!