

**HERITAGE NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP (HNP)
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 9, 2009**

Fellow HNP Block Captains (some others blind copied);

The following is a summary of our annual HNP crime watch meeting that was held on December 9th at the Mansfield Bible Church. Greg Ajemian started the meeting at 7:10pm and adjourned the meeting at 9:15pm.

Steve Smith of the Mansfield Bible Church (Outreach & Assimilation Pastor) opened with about five minutes to welcome about 18 residents and to take a couple of questions. He wants our community to be aware of their 7pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and really wants the church to be a strong asset to the HNP community.

Officer Carlos Below of the MISD (specializes in gang activity) was joined by Mansfield Police Officer Sells and Mansfield Police Officer Hamilton (both of the two-member Gang Unit) to address the audience. Officer Below showed a Powerpoint Presentation, while all three took on questions and added to the overall discussion for the audience. They did a super job! See below for some tidbits from this session that lasted about 90 minutes.

Mansfield Police Officer Brandi Howard followed this session by introducing herself as the new Community Officer. The patrol officers do three to four-year revolving stints in this position to round out their experience. She mentioned the Citizens Police Academy is starting a 12-week (3 hrs per class) program on Jan 21st and to call 817-276-4757 for those citizens interested in participating. She also mentioned a new program that allows residents to borrow a car to do citizen patrols in your neighborhood. (When I get more info on this new program — I'll get it out to everyone.)

Councilmember Daryl Haynes finished off our program by taking questions from the audience about our City. See below for a summary of a couple of topics that he covered.

Please pass along this message for everyone's update. Thanks!!

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The following are tidbits from the Dec 9th HNP crime watch program:

1. The Mansfield Police Department Gang Unit is comprised of two officers. Mansfield works with the police gang units from Fort Worth, Arlington, and Grand Prairie. These officers regularly attend the Texas Violent Gang Task Force (State initiative) to share information, strategy.
2. The MISD Police has one Gang Unit expert. The MISD Police has two officers assigned to each high school, about five assigned collectively to the other schools, and two more that hold specific titles ---- totaling about 15 officers.
3. There are 27 confirmed gangs within the City of Mansfield. It is anticipated that 20 more exist. There are 13 gangs identified at MISD schools.
4. Timberview used to be the worst high school for gang activity about two years ago. But now, all four high schools are about the same.
5. There are 94 gangs identified in Arlington. (70% of Arlington crime is connected with gang activity.)
6. Gangs no longer dress the same to establish identity. They don't like to give themselves away. They use much more subtle ways for identification such as hand signals, tattoos, dots on shoes, eye brow notching, skin piercing, etc.
7. Gang members sometimes will do bad deeds to gain "street credit" from their respective gang.
8. At schools, theft of phones and I-pods are popular and are sold for \$25-\$30. Gang members will often put letters, marks, designs on their tests to identify with their gangs.
9. Kids that are out of school during school hours and walking the streets can be picked up by the Police if residents call it in.
10. The #1 problem that contributes to kids becoming gang members is lack of supervision and attention by parents at home.
11. Once kids become gang members, it is difficult to extract them from the gangs. Relocation becomes the most effective solution. The gangs don't trust the kids that want to depart/quit, so there's pressure on kids to stay with the gangs to avoid being targets.
12. Gangs used to have strict internal rules that governed how kids operated, behaved, etc. Now, the gangs are very loose with no such rules. Thus, kid gang members are now more violent, inconsistent, "do their own thing".

13. Gangs have been on the increase during the past two years. Gang members are spread all over the city, including our area, Mansfield National, Lowes Farm.

14. As of September 2008, about 1 million gang members are estimated to reside in U.S.

15. Most of the criminal activity of gangs is burglaries and dope.

16. Crime stats have been on the rise this year for the City. However, our HNP vicinity has enjoyed much better than average crime stats.

17. Best way to protect a home with an alarm system is not the monitoring type, but to have an audible one that will loudly sound off when the home is entered. Large or loud dogs are very good too. Burglars will usually knock to see if anyone is home, before breaking in.

18. The Town Crossing Apartments behind Home Depot along HWY 287 had been the recipient of many "Section-8" residents from downtown Fort Worth when they were relocated a few years ago to make room for the new Tandy offices. The crime rates at these apartments have been greatly reduced recently due to strong effort by the owners that hired private security at the complex.

19. When it is time to elect judges, seek-out and vote for judges who have a tough stance on crime and a record of strong sentences. We can gain insight as to who is best by walking into the District Attorney's (DA) Office and talking to those employees. They know the Judges that provide the best support for their office in dealing with criminals.

20. Councilmember Darryl Haynes stated that the police, fire and rescue budget represents 80% of our city budget. The security of our city is first priority. We are trying to add 12 more police officers and police units to be part of next fiscal year's budget that starts Oct 2010. By next summer, there may be discussions about creating a fund to make sure the fire and police have all the manpower and equipment they need to stay ahead of crime and safety issues. One idea is to vote a 1-cent property tax increase for the police / fire that would expire after a set period of time --- say 3 to 5 years. This could produce a healthy fund that could serve public safety. Councilmember Haynes asked that we provide feedback to him if this idea has merit (or email the city council at vicki.collins@mansfield-tx.gov).

21. Councilmember Haynes mentioned that the city has an A+ rating which is the best rating any city (of our size) can obtain in Municipal bond ratings. That means the city can borrow money at lower interest rates for infrastructure improvements. City Council is going through a "no frills" period of time in our city, while the sales tax revenue is holding strong and Mansfield continues to attract new businesses.