

UNC Monthly meeting – 8/2/17

Start time: 7:07

End time: 8:30

Present: 12 UNC members, 14 non-members.

The UNC president convenes the meeting, which is a special meeting to discuss neighbors' stated concerns around public safety. Our goals are to learn from other communities that have organized around public safety issues, get some ideas of the various tools available to Park View to engage on public safety, and brainstorm how we'd like to move forward.

1. Ledroit Park - A representative from the Ledroit Park Civic Association discusses how they have engaged over the long term on public safety issues.

- First rule: engage residents, clergy, police, others – collaborate to solve issues
- Set up phone trees, listservs, use Twitter etc – many means of communication with neighbors or police to report suspicious activity.
- Identify someone who wants to serve as a public safety chair, block captains, start phone tree, organize neighborhood social media
- Engage with MPD – they come to the Ledroit Park Civic Association meetings and report first on stats, etc. so the community knows what is current and can ask questions.
- They identified a Lt. they normally work with – challenge has been that there has been lots of turnover so it's hard to keep up.
- They don't get a lot of community involvement in safety walks – but hold them once a month anyway to identify broken windows, other things that signify safety issues, including things that are needed to prevent crime (e.g. streetlights that don't work).
- They put fake tickets on cars where you can see valuables in their vehicle – the fake ticket tells the car owner that their property is visible and to put things away for safety
- Encourage people to use camera rebates from the city to get them
- Worked with Samantha Nolan – hosted a neighborhood watch training – nolantutors@yahoo.com - she does presentations on how to do neighborhood watches.
- Can use 311 for graffiti removal, potholes, anything that needs to be fixed – can also contact mayor's office community liaison

2. Petworth – A representative from a block in Petworth that has experienced an ongoing issue with specific violent criminals, known drug dealers/pimps presents on how a block works to track activity of specific criminals.

- It's up to the community to document the criminal activity that they observe and keep record of MPD and city engagement.

- Since mid-2014, have engaged regularly on issues – drugs and prostitution, guns
- Meet your neighbors – have social/recurring events where you can invite business owners, local stakeholders, etc.
- Organized phone tree and email chain where they talk about issues they observe – can also text
- Start a google doc where neighbors can contribute to compiling info on activity – this helps to track specific known criminals and keep a record for MPD
- Know whether business owners/property managers are aware of issues – promote the camera rebate program
- Take opportunity to engage with patrol officers – ask how things are going, whether they are familiar with your problem area
- MPD engagement: it is incumbent upon neighbors to keep track of interaction with MPD and the Office of Unified Communication – maintain a record of this interaction that you can share with neighbors
- When you call 911 - Get them as much info as possible – anything you can report on the individual's clothing/shoes, if you can tell if they are stashing things, etc – but assume that only about 20% of info will get to the police
- Ask on the call that responding units call you after they make contact with suspect – that way if they need more info, they can ask you questions – also gives you another touch point with MPD.
- If you witness a crime, ask for the CCN number for the case so you can follow up and understand how incident was reported – were they familiar with the suspect, is the MPD officer in your PSA, etc. This is an opportunity to educate them when you're dealing with a repeat offender who is known in the community
- Follow up with PSA Lt and Commander Manlapaz to document activity witnessed –
- Call 911 repeatedly if things are escalating and police haven't arrived
- Follow MPD listserv updates – when arrests are made, you can look into that individual's criminal history, active cases on dccourts.gov, records in neighboring jurisdictions, previous convictions... if it is a known criminal who repeatedly comes back to the block, put this in google doc so it is available to neighbors and can be communicated to MPD
- Engagement with city officials – Mayor's office is important ally. They work with the Mayor's office community liaison – this has been very helpful to link up with city government
- The court can issue stay-away orders from the block - this sometimes works and sometimes doesn't. If you see someone violating the order, police may come
- Can seek additional support from the 4th district Crime Suppression Team – they can conduct a block investigation through the narcotics and special investigation team
- Loop in council member on emails to MPD leadership on status of issues

- Office of Deputy Mayor for Public Safety – John Meine – should loop him in when there are issues on which his office has oversight
- Individuals who are arrested are often released the next day
- Be prepared for prosecutorial upsets – public interest is not always served. Three of their repeat offenders were placed in a drug diversion program – they re-offended several times after that.

3. Georgia Avenue Thrive – A representative from GA Ave. Thrive presents on the steps they are taking to set up a public safety committee.

- GA and Lamont Public Safety Task Force formed after a shooting – that group became GA Ave. Thrive
- Goal is to build an inclusive, vibrant community for lower GA Ave.
- First asked everyone what public safety meant to them – made that the mission. There were many different answers, from community-building to infrastructure such as lighting to dealing with specific problem individuals/properties.
- Items they're working on – camera reimbursement; decrease dark spots on GA Ave; work with businesses to add storefront lights; want to create a public safety guide for other communities to learn from
- Running a get to know your neighbor campaign
- Running a leave your porch light on campaign
- Block potluck – this is hard but gets people together
- Had a challenge within the group – if you do all three things, you get a prize – introduce yourself to your neighbors 3 doors up and down; leave your porch light on; neighborhood potluck with 5 attendees
- They are not that far along in public safety campaign – want to figure out how to progress.

4. Councilmember Brianne Nadeau reports on her public safety activities and the recent Newton Pl. safety walk

- When she was in ANC, used to walk beat on orange hat patrol with MPD, other residents – see the little things that have a big impact – vacant properties where people are stashing things, lights out, etc.
- Call things into 311, use the app
- Walk of Newton included Asst. Chief Greene and Commander Manlapaz
- Issues are known – how do we make a change? Basketball tournament at Park View Rec – give youth things to do that are positive
- Block parties for community engagement – her office has a one-page handout on how to do it
- DPR has “roving leaders” who engage youth – if people are getting into trouble, can send these staff to engage with them.
- Bring issues to council attention for wraparound services – addiction services, homelessness, etc – behavioral health assistance

- Clean Team for GA Ave. – keep neighborhood clean helps with broken window theory – will also have Main St. program on GA ave this fall.
- Occupy vacant lots with special events – create environment where people don't feel comfortable committing crimes
- 4D has a Yahoo group where you can get regular updates on arrests/weapons – MPD will respond if you email that list.
- Where there are people arrested and go back on the street – Council wants to engage with US Attorney – community can write a community impact statement, which is a letter that gets read in court that can have an impact on sentencing. Can only do this for violent crimes, not if the individuals are put into drug diversion.
- Would be good to bring 4D district Attorney's office community liaison to a future meeting.
- For the Newton Pl. walk – spent time on Newton, Otis and Quebec – for properties where there is a cooperative owner (including Senior Center and 646 Newton Pl), can do barring notices – owner of property has to do this, but can bar specific individuals from their property.
- Some of the persistent issues occur when owners are welcoming problem individuals – need neighbors to persuade neighbors that this is a problem
- Narcotics and Special Investigations Division – they are engaged, made 2 arrests on 3500 block of GA ave last week – things improved immediately following walk but have regressed since then
- When there are owners who are not responsive – Attorney General may be able to get involved.
- Sometimes elderly neighbors are being manipulated – can send adult protective services.

5. Community discussion – What ideas stood out? How should the Park View UNC move forward?

- Is there a new guide for renters – how to engage with community and also advice about renters' insurance?
- Need better ways to know about and connect to listservs in the neighborhood
- Ms. Matthews/Senior Center on Georgia and Newton – we have lighting, getting cameras, have done community impact statements – but it hasn't worked. There are still lighting issues on Princeton that have not been addressed
- There is a shortage of police officers and constant change of personnel – hard to get to know your officers and develop connection
- US Attorney's Office should be at every meeting
- Issue with vacant lot on Newton – this is an easy place for people to deal drugs – need to work on this
- Apartment building on Newton is the epicenter of many of the problems – this is nuisance property, public health and safety issue – door is open all the time. CM Nadeau responds – these are the properties where we're working

- Need to make information about drug treatment available
- We have had training on neighborhood watch – but we need help on long-time systemic problems, e.g. Newton issues – these are difficult to solve. How do we work with neighbors and get them to understand that when there are people who need help, need to engage with the city, get them the help they need?
- The police are not always the right people to start with, depending on the nature of the problem.
- Vacant properties on 700 block of Princeton are problems as well – are there concrete steps we can move forward with? What can we do about those properties?
- Are there rehab clinics nearby? Mobile clinics? Ways to direct people to centers, or mini clinic to deal with direct emergencies? There is a hotline – DCRA is the agency with oversight.
- Are there ways to change DC law so that people who have been arrested and convicted multiple times can be held rather than released the next day?
- Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement – this just got funded and will roll out in Oct. – criminal justice reform in DC includes infusion of resources to the community for wrap around.