

Neighborhood Crime Meeting Summary
(6/26/2013)

Attending Officers:

Captain George Stamatakos
Lieutenant John Ryan
Patrolman Eduardo Curi

Lt. Ryan confirmed that crime levels are definitely worse than in the past, and that there's a clear correlation between crime and a weak economy.

(I've attached safety information from a police handout.)

Staffing:

Current police staffing is:

District 8: 3 patrols in morning and 2 in evening

District 9: 2 patrols in morning and 3 in evening

Staffing levels are suboptimal at this time, but should improve in the near future. By November, 40 officers (positions that had been cut for budgetary issues a couple of years ago) will be returned to the department. PPD is also running an academy to train new officers, and they should be ready to serve in about 12-18 months. Meantime, Brown University Police has a strong presence on College Hill and they work closely with the PPD. Brown Police have recently added retired members of the PPD to their force, bolstering their numbers.

Although there is occasional violent crime on the East Side (i.e. the recent shots fired near the Marriott), the vast majority of incidents involve break-ins and theft.

Package theft:

Capt. Stamatakos urged residents to require a signature for delivery of all packages,.

A resident also suggested having them delivered to your office.

Larcenies from vehicles:

Do not leave ANYTHING of any value in your car. No wallets in glove compartments or computers under seat. Optimally, do not leave anything (of value or not) visible in your car.

A story was told about a resident in another part of the city who became so frustrated with his car being repeatedly broken into that he finally decided to leave it unlocked....only to find someone sleeping in it.

Another PPD patrolman (in the audience) mentioned an incident where the tires were stolen off a car while it was parked in the owner's well-lit, well-exposed driveway. In summer, with the hum of air conditioners going, residents can't always hear what's going on in the street.

Solicitors:

According to the police, solicitors go where they think they'll find people who will feel sorry for them and help them out.

There is a licensing loophole that exempts charities from needing a license to solicit.

A “No Trespassing” or “No Solicitors” sign carries little enforceability.

The police would like these solicitors to get out of the area (unless we really want to buy their products).

They ENCOURAGE us to call them with reports of any suspicious behavior. They will come out and question the solicitor(s) involved and see if they check out. Our calls will remain anonymous.

Please note that we are talking about reporting suspicious or invasive BEHAVIOR. Hopefully, focusing on behavior will avoid innocent people being stopped and will help apprehend those who are actually engaging in criminal activity.

Protocol:

--If we feel seriously threatened, call 911 immediately.

--If we feel unsafe, but it's not imminently threatening, call the non-emergency lines:

401-272-3121 or 401-272-1111. Both these lines feed into the same department.

--Capt. Stamatakos gave out his direct phone number (401-255-9946) and his email (gstamatakos@providenceri.com) and urges us to use it whenever needed.

River Road and Prospect Park problems:

There was discussion about ongoing illicit activities on these areas (especially after dark), and several suggestions came forth, including the use of surveillance cameras. The police noted that the use of these cameras bring up civil liberties issues, and that their use may not be viable in this state.

In closing:

Overall, it is clear that the PPD is very concerned about crime in our area and they encourage us to call them with concerns. They need us to work together with them. The department has shifted from focusing mainly on fast response time to preventive, proactive actions. They also urge neighborhood groups to establish good communication on crime related issues and to communicate any concerns freely with the PPD.