

*Southwest Seattle Crime Prevention Council - Southwest Weed & Seed
Meeting Notes from Wednesday, June 6, 2007*

Call to order: 7:07 pm by Mariana Quarnstrom, with **38** in attendance.

Dept. of Planning & Development/Code Compliance – Karen White & Paula Barrett

Documents were passed out regarding recent legislation changes:

- 1) Frequently Asked Questions
- 2) News Release
- 3) What to do when you get a complaint or violation. How fines changed made and how they've changed.

Karen White reported that with the new legislation code standards haven't changed. There are no new inspectors and no new funds. It is expected that 90-95% of those who receive violations will have the same experience as before. The rest (those who have to be sued to get a response) will receive higher fines.

Questions were taken about the new legislation and DPD standards:

DPD doesn't go looking for violations, they respond to complaints. Reports of violations come from other agencies, SPD, and citizens.

Action: Call in code violations, and help DPD to identify location (street address is best). After DPD receives a complaint, they verify the problem. Response time, depending on the problem, takes few days. Vegetation overgrowth takes less precedence than some life safety issue. If there is no history, DPD may give a warning to the property owner allowing a couple of weeks for compliance. Warnings are not required. Some violations receive an immediate citation (fine). After receiving a Notice of Violation reasonable time is given to comply, then fines accrue beyond time limits:

The first level is <\$50/day per, for a week. After nine days, the in can be upped to <\$150/day for 31 days. Then up to <\$500/day. \$500/day is the maximum fine. Fines are given at the discretion of the Magistrate, however DPD can give recommends based on time frame, the violators history and efforts to comply. DPD is working with companies, like Starbucks, to provide coupons as an incentive program for people. DPD is not revenue driven. Fee allocation is a small part of DPD. Money received from fines goes into general funds and not back into the program, because people don't want inspectors to have an incentive for doing code enforcement. A small percent goes to parks, and a little to abatement.

One expectation people might have is that if there is an increase in complaints, resources will increase. Code Enforcement is funded by general funds. When funds go down, resources go down. Funds are divided equally into two districts. Both teams get same amount of cases, just different types. Resources will adjust boundaries to adapt to changes in workload. Currently the southern team is shy one person.

If you look at a site close enough, then you can find something wrong, therefore Code Enforcement often becomes a conjugate for families or neighbors to settle their disputes. If DPD goes out and sees something, they handle it same way as any other complaint. If don't see anything, they do nothing. When inspectors are investigating a complaint, and they see a violation at a neighboring property, it is at the discretion of the inspector whether or not to open up the case. Community members should keep in mind that if they call in everything, then DPD will respond and may get choked up. Initial Response

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times vary depending on violation type: Housing 6 or 7 days; Building Without Permits 4 days; Land Use 8 or 9 days.

If you call and the situation would be better responded by another agency (Ex: Public Health), DPD will refer you to call, or reference the case to the other agency themselves. Sometimes it is necessary for the different agencies to work together.

A performance matrix is accessible on the DPD city website.

DPD does not generally have a process to let citizens know about hearings, but if let DPD know you're interested in a case, they will inform you.

Notices of Violation are sent to addresses found in public records, tax records, ownership transfers, and sometimes to property owners. There were complaints about certified letters no longer being use for notification. DPD requested the change, because it proved to be an inconvenient work expensive, and allowed people to dodge fines. In the legal process, certified letters have to be delivered in person. Other departments' notices do not require certified mail, just registered mail. A few SSCPC members shared there experiences, and made a case for the importance of certified mail. Some argued that lack of certified mail would allow those with greater financial means, the opportunity to bring in lawyers to appeal fines, on the basis of not receiving notification. Karen rebutted that most people won't find a difference. In the past, when a certified letter was mailed out, a registered letter was also sent. When the certified letters returned, the registered letters did not. DPD still had to start over and go through the \$400 public notification process. Disappointment in the new process was still expressed by various SSCPC members. There was also complaint that Public Utilities would send notification to a PO Box, but DPD would not. Karen stated that is because people hold accounts with Public Utilities and have updated notification records.

Another concern was businesses getting business licenses and moving to operate in a zone where that business is illegal. Karen explained that Business Licensing does not report to DPD.

Action: Tell DPD.

The Mayor requires businesses have a reasonable response time to comply. That amount of time is dependent on the type of business and the circumstances. If a business is showing its best efforts, more time may be given.

Mariana announced that Dan Fink is the Code Compliance Liaison and will be keeping tract of DPD complaints. Dan will email Paula to notify her of properties to report on when she comes quarterly.

Action1: If you have a property you would like Paula to report on at SSCPC meetings notify Dan danfink@hotmail.com.

Action2: Paula Barrett asks that if you have complaint or problem you need taken care of call right away. Call (206) 615-0808 or go online at <http://web1.seattle.gov/dpd/complaintform/>.

Online complaints are checked three times a day. It is preferred that complaints are made this way. Emailed complaints sent to Paula paula.barrett@seattle.gov are received, but meet delay.

Properties Paula was given to look into were the Laundromat at 2106 Rainier Ave S and a church on 44th Ave. Paula will have Seattle Public Utilities follow up on the church. Paula was made available to be pulled aside for follow up questions.

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Weed & Seed Hot Spot Areas – Ofc. Mike Alphin

Barb Biondo has taken a position with AF Evans as the Community Manager at the Lake Washington Apartments.

Officer Alphin gave a quick update on previously discussed areas. There have been no major complaints.

Other Weed & Seed updates were distributed on the back of the meeting agenda.

SPD Reports by Captain Byers

New member Tami acknowledged the success Capt. Black had with getting the Mayor and Chiefs' ears in regard to concerns of EPCPC members. She further encourage Capt. Byers to use more of his influence insofar as bring SE issues to the attention of the Mayor and Chief. Capt. Byers responded by referencing his record and the support of those who have been with SSCPC for over five years.

Tom Acker questioned the difference between Madison Park and Rainier Valley's resource? There was a collective response of , "Money." There was further discussion of the Mayor's position on social services in SE, the ability of the council/police to focus on more than one issue at a time, and the need for delegation amongst the Executive Committee. And the Captain was asked 'without criticism' to take SSCPC concerns back to Chief Kerlikowske and Mayor Nickels.

Capt. Byers questioned how many people had seen bike patrol in Rainier Beach? Most hadn't seen them. Those that had noticed bike patrol saw them when school let's out. The Captain noted that the most violent crime for last 3 years has happened in Rainier Beach, so he has put extra resources on the Rainier corridor and around Henderson. Concerns about the muggings in Safeway parking lots were acknowledged. Safeway hires its own off-duty officers. The South Precinct Captain has little say in what those off-duty officers do or how often.

There have been many citations handed out by traffic emphasis alone. Emphasis has been on the Rainier & MLK Corridor, 9800 Block, and three times in Columbia City. These numbers do not include Traffic Light Ticketing or regular traffic stops.

4/24 = 34 citations in Columbia City; 4/30-5/4 = 130 citations;

5/5 = 18 citations; 5/7-5/11= 105 citations; 5/14-5/18 = 191 citations; 5/21-5/25 = 118 at Beacon Elementary.

Yesterday a routine traffic ticket on 55th Avenue became an arrest, because the person had a warrant for a drive by shooting.

Nightshift officers have an emphasis of walking through parks after they are closed down. Most people who shouldn't be in parks after hours usually have felony records and warrants.

Busiest for criminal activity tends to be when shifts change, therefore response may be slowed down.

Tom Acker questioned the support the Captain has been receiving from the prosecutors office.

The effect of the new precinct map boundaries between SW & SE and its influence on the increase and decrease of officers were questioned.

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Community Concerns

Othello – A resident complained of prostitution, drug dealing, and high schoolers harassing patrons in front of check cashing places. This is happening around 6:30am. She acknowledges that it's the lightest shift, with only 6 officers for whole district. That is why she drives her teen two blocks to bus stop and waits with him in the car.

Additionally she reports drug dealers using pay phone on Rainier & Othello.

Rainier Beach – Ron Momoda reported the camera at Rainier Beach Library has been gone for a while. There are wires hanging from the ceiling where the security camera was. Mariana said it was inexcusable and she will call on that.

Ticket Camera – Grace Tsuchikawa reported that when you are heading northbound on Rainier at Orcas Street, you cannot see the flashing signal because it is behind a pole (northeast corner). You cannot tell if the walk or don't walk is up there.

She also questioned what is the appropriate U-turn or left hand turns to make. Do you stay close to the curb or do you swing wide into the right lanes to turn left? Do you make it like a U-turn or 2 large left turns when wanting to go in the opposite direction on MLK?.

Police Staffing - Susan Pichereau, a life long resident in Rainier Valley, has concerns there is no longer a Gang Unit. She's been talking to Mariana Quarnstrom, Mark Solomon, CPT Ofc. Jones, and Sgt. Daman about the need for more officers. She is looking for ways the community can help. Susan proposed a petition like the one that helped in the early 90's. She's willing to get ground roots petitions to take to City Council, Mayor Nickels, and anyone with deaf ears? Is it a good idea?

Grover Haynes thinks it's an excellent idea. He advised Susan go to the Rainier Chamber meeting (11:30am, tomorrow, at New Holly Gathering Hall), at which the Mayor will be.

Grover noted it's a tough crowd and a good place to address the Mayor in person.

Tom Acker stated he is planning meeting with a core group of people to address a tactical approach. Tom A. acknowledges there is a multi-cultural community that hasn't been reached out to. Further he believes there is no residual because there is no one to answer too.

Safeway Muggings – Dennis Johnson has been in the community since 1999 when he was the store manager at Othello Safeway. He recalls how people didn't want to shop there because of gang activity. He moved to White Center and came across the same thing. He states 'people have a tendency to think it is just happening only in SE, but it's not.' Dennis commended SPD for doing a good job. He further indicated that the recent incidents that happened at anywhere. Safeway operates out of a lot of places where they don't own the building. So another party needs to get involved. Some SSCPC members questioned the landlord's responsibility for security. Priscilla Call commented that people think similarly about SEED, but there is nothing wrong with bringing another voice to the table.

Other Business

New Executive Committee's were elected. Out of 47 eligible, 17 voted. Veronica Pugh and Mark Solomon counted by votes.

2007-2008 Executive Committee: Tom Acker, Dan Fink, Neale Frothingham, Grover Haynes, Ray Akers, Doug Cargill, Jon Flowers, Ken Hirshhorn, Mariana Quarnstrom, Marj Raunig, Anne Sheeran

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Adjournment: 8:40 pm

SSCPC Picnic – Wednesday, July 11, 2007 at Othello Park, 6-9 pm.

Next meeting September 5, 2007 at SE Senior Center, 7pm.