

MHTC Town Hall Meeting Thursday, October 6, 2009

President Kathy Jones opened the meeting at 6:15 pm with a general welcome.

Government Officials: Brian Pepin, our new representative from Councilman Kevin Faulconer's office, introduced himself (he can be reached at [bpepin@sandiego.gov](mailto:bpepin@sandiego.gov)). He mentioned that Councilman Faulconer had motioned for the land use committee to adopt recommendations put forth from local groups, including MH Heritage, regarding historic homes. Brian also presented special commendations to local neighborhood watch chairs Pam Amundson and Lisa Mortensen.

Police Presentation: Captain Walt Vasquez introduced himself and the Western Division Community Relations Officers/Neighborhood Watch Liaison Officers Elsa Kozacki and Dave Surwilo. Captain Vasquez recognized Linda Stouffer from the local Rotary Club for her contributions in helping to makeover the Western Division Headquarters. He then discussed the recent string of burglaries in Mission Hills over the last couple of months. These were classified as a "hot prowl" series because in some cases the homeowner was in the house when the burglary took place. In almost all cases, the burglar entered through an unlocked door or window. He reinforced the idea that most criminals are looking for an easy target—an open door or open window, keys in the ignition of the car, or valuables in plain sight in a car. A skilled thief can steal 8-10 cars in one night, so a single criminal can be responsible for a lot of disruption in a neighborhood. A couple of suspects have been taken into custody and the number of burglaries has dropped dramatically. One arrest was made after a resident called the police after seeing suspicious activity. There was another series of burglaries in Mission Hills earlier this year, and that suspect was apprehended by the Eastern Division police in North Park, but in general, criminal activity in Mission Hills is not high.

Captain Vasquez stated that the police really need communication from the neighborhood. The police can and have increased the number of patrols in the area, but they can't see everything. He also mentioned that officers Kozacki and Surwilo are experts at helping to make your home secure. You can contact Officer Kozacki ([ekozacki@pd.sandiego.gov](mailto:ekozacki@pd.sandiego.gov) or 619 531 1540) and make an appointment for her to look at security in your home.

Captain Vasquez answered questions from the audience. One question asked about narcotics arrests in the neighborhood, which had shown up on the e-watch. These were on streets and not associated with any houses. Another question was whether or not alarm service signage acted as a crime deterrent. The answer was probably not, if they weren't backed up by a real alarm, and the sign can give one a false sense of security. There was another question regarding activities of homeless people in canyons (either on private property or on city property) and potential fire liability. Officer Surwilo stressed that direct contact with the people in the canyons (or in the alleys searching for recyclables, which is illegal) should NOT be taken by residents. The Western Division should be called at 619 531 2000 to inform them of the situation. In the instance of the homeowner and clearing out the debris in canyon, Officer Surwilo said to make an appointment with him directly and he would be present himself.

Business Award: Barb Strona mentioned that Greg Nowell (Nowell and Associates) would be receiving the next business recognition award in honor of all his contributions to the community. He

unfortunately could not be present, so the award will be presented at the next meeting. She also asked for people to nominate businesses they would like to see recognized by the community.

Election of New Trustees: There are 5 openings for Trustee positions on the Town Council, and a slate of 5 candidates (Pat Ancowitz, Karen Foreman, Scott Sandel, Walter Shafer, and Karen Valentino). Each candidate spoke a few words of introduction, and President Jones asked for a voice vote for the slate of candidates. This was approved unanimously.

By-laws Amendments: Revisions to the by-laws of the Town Council were sent out to members by e-mail and provided before the meeting. President Jones asked for a voice vote to approve the amendments, and this passed unanimously.

President Jones adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm.