

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTRY SIDE HOMES ASSOCIATION WITH CAPTAIN MARCKX OF THE KCMO POLICE DEPARTMENT – METRO PATROL DIVISION, HELD ON AUGUST 16,2007 AT 7P.M AT MINSKY’S

Captain Marckx from Metro Patrol Division of the KCPD spoke to meeting of the Country Side Homes Association about the rise in criminal activity in the neighborhood. Captain Marckx has the “dog watch” or over night shift. As we requested, he provided the group with a map and a breakout of crime in the area bounded by 50<sup>th</sup> St. on the north, 61<sup>st</sup> St. on the south, Oak on the east and approximately Ward Parkway on the west. Copies of the map and the detail on the crime stats are attached with this email.

Captain Marckx began by saying that when there is an increase in criminal activity as we have been experiencing, the common approach in good policing is to look for patterns in the crimes. To do this, the Captain designated the area shown in the map as a Metro Patrol Division (MPD) CSTAR Area. CSTAR is an acronym for Comprehensive Strategic Team Accountability Review. This approach targets specific areas for high profile policing. In our case, the designation has been in effect about a month. Every 7 weeks, the Commanders from Metro Patrol must go before the Chief and present a detailed analysis of the types of crime in the CSTAR area, the patterns discovered, and the specific police actions undertaken to stop the criminals. In our case, five officers were assigned to look for any suspicious activities and commonalities in the crime data for the area. There was a concentrated police effort during the period August 2 through August 5. This has included officers going through the neighborhood, stopping suspicious persons/vehicles, in some cases it included calling out the helicopter. During that period, on one stop where they pulled over a suspicious car, the police arrested two guys on outstanding warrants; who also had a gun in the glove box and ammunition for the gun on their person.

In terms of the pattern, Captain Marckx said that one of the “robbery patterns” in the area was the following: two guys would approach victim(s) from the back; they would have a similar conversational opening but would then pull a gun and rob the person. This happened 6 times in 10 days. The police have a good idea who those suspects are, and they are in the process of picking them up for questioning.

As we had asked, Captain Marckx distinguished between four specific kinds of crime: stealing; robbery; burglary; and 1<sup>st</sup> degree burglary.

- Stealing - taking property from where it belongs
- Robbery – stealing with force (i.e. gun presented)
- Burglary – entering or remain in a structure to steal
- 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Burglary - burglary with people present/at home.

With all of these actions, “intent to commit a crime” has to be shown. **Both robbery and burglary are felonies in the State of Missouri.**

There was a question about the “3 Strikes and Your Out” law, and how it applies because several neighbors were told that some of the suspects picked up for questioning about the burglaries in the area were felons with long rap sheets. Captain Marckx stated

that he really didn't know anything about the 3 Strikes law, but that it is not uncommon for people with criminal histories to be picked up for other crimes. So it wouldn't be unusual to have previous felons as persons of interest in these kinds of crimes. (NB: in checking, it was found that Missouri does not have a 3 Strikes and Your Out law. Only 23 states and the federal government have these statutes.)

In looking at the breakdown of the crime statistics for our area that the CSTAR team gathered, the pattern shows that robberies happened between 9pm and 1am; burglaries happened later..in the early morning hours. In relation to the crime patterns during that time of intense policing, there were 3 calls for service (i.e. calls to the police); 7 pedestrian checks; and 10 car checks including the one cited above where the guys had the outstanding warrants and the gun in the glove box. There have been no more robberies since this effort has been in place.

There were several questions about whether alarm systems were a good deterrent (it varies – the noise definitely makes the bad guys run) but everyone should know that just because the alarm goes off, does NOT mean that the police are called automatically. **You calling 911 yourself, directly, would be faster – if you are in trouble and need the police.** Captain Marckx said that a very high percentage of the “alarm calls” are false alarms. He also said that Metro Patrols current response time to a Priority 1 call (HIGH) on average with Lights and Sirens is under 8 minutes.

There was some discussion about the statutory rape listed in the crime stats, but Captain Marckx said that this involves two people who are known to each other and known to the police. He said that it should be separated from the pattern of crime we were discussing and really didn't fall into the violent crime realm that the neighborhood was experiencing as a whole.

There was a question about why crimes in Loose Park wasn't reported in the Star, which led to a question about why the crime in our neighborhood hadn't been reported in the Star, and then why the crime states have stopped being printed in the Wednesday, City - Neighborhood News section of Star. (As of 8/22/07, the Police Report section of the “Safety Net” pages in the Star returned. The Star cited technical difficulties with the police department's reports-management system as the reason for the absence.) There was a longer discussion about why it appeared that neighbors were getting different information from different parts of the police department, specifically from the Day Shift Captain, or from our Community Police Officer, John Trainor. The short explanation was that there is a certain amount of communication breakdown between the various computer systems (the Department is almost totally paperless), as well as between the different police shifts. Except to say that this was the case at the moment, there was no real resolution of this issue. Captain Marckx did stress that the CSTAR designation would mean that every watch was contributing to the work of stopping the crime in our area. He also said that the CSTAR designation would continue until he (Captain Marckx) disbands it because the crime has stopped.

There was a brief discussion about two vehicles suspected of being used to approach or entice kids. Captain Marckx mentioned a white ice cream truck that had been seen during the day in the vicinity of Loose Park. There, a white male was suspected of making overtures to children, but no arrest was made and no child was ever caught in the truck etc. Several people at the meeting asked about a “red pickup truck” that supposedly was cruising the neighborhood enticing children, but Captain Marckx had no knowledge of that and it was chalked up by several in the audience as being “part of the rumor mill”.

In discussing what actions people can take to assist the police in stopping these crimes, Captain Marckx stressed:

- Lock all exterior doors and windows, including the basement
- Keep garage doors down and locked
- Lock cars, both in the garage and on the street
- Keep the exterior lights on – porch lights, back door lights, motion lights
- Keep purses and keys out of sight
- Keep blinds, shades, and drapes drawn at night

He suggested an easy exercise. Look at your windows from the inside of your house with the lights on, at night. What can you see? Then leaving everything the same, the lights on inside, GO OUTSIDE AND LOOK IN. What can you see? It is very obvious that it is a whole lot easier to look in to a lighted space, than to look out from one.

When calling the police, here are some tips.

- **Call 911** – when an event is happening and you need the police. Use this number for emergency/high priority, immediate matters
- **Call 234-5111** – when something is happening but there is NOT an imminent threat (i.e. a suspicious person). Use this for non-emergency matters
- **Call 234-5520** – for administrative matters (i.e. something was stolen a while ago and you didn't report it at the time because it didn't seem important; or you've noticed a car or a person going through the neighborhood several times over the last couple of days, and now it strikes you as suspicious). This is the main line for Metro Patrol.
- **Whenever you call, leave your name and telephone number or address.** This will help the police at any stage of an event – they can contact you to get direct information.
- **When you give a report to the police, be methodical in how you look at a situation and in how you describe the people, the cars, the event itself to the police.** For people, focus on their height, weight, hair color, distinguishing characteristics, what they were wearing etc. For cars, focus on the color, make, # of doors, license plate numbers (it important to be as exact as possible but if you couldn't be sure a car was black or dark blue, for instance, just say it was dark.)