

Minutes of the Marina Bay Neighborhood Council

The September 14, 2011 was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Stan Anderson, President of MBNC, who also passed around a variety of materials from the most recent meeting of the Richmond Coordinating Council.

Self-introductions were done in the usual round robin manner.

Beat Report:

Officer David Longacre provided the monthly Beat Report with neighborhood crime statistics. First Officer Longacre discussed the previously reported homeless "encampment" that residents had reported at Regatta & Marina Bay Parkway, concealed in the overgrown vegetation. He confirmed a male and a female were indeed found there and were asked to leave. RPD checked several days later and it appears they have left their encampment and the vegetation was also cut back. As far as crime stats: there was a residential burglary (laptop and jewelry) in the 0-100 block of Marina Lakes Drive at Marina Bay Community Assn. on August 26. There were two petty thefts: one occurred in the 1200 block of Melville Square in August and the other in the 1900 block of Esplanade Drive. Finally there was one vandalism incident report in the 0-100 block of Lakeshore Court at The Shores (a car was keyed).

Officer Felix Tan of the Marine Unit Patrol returned to address the issues the audience and he discussed last month at this same venue. He reported back on his successful discussions with City Engineers to remedy several items, such as yield signs, painting of hydrants, etc.

Also attending the meeting was Sgt. Tod Opdyke, our former "Beat Officer".

Speaker of the evening, Richmond Police Chief Chris Magnus:

The RPD is committed to a wide range of issues in all neighborhoods, from quality of life to safety issues. Each neighborhood has its own needs with some areas, such as ours having virtually negligible crime and needing more quality of life focus, and others more focused on street crime. Please also refer to: <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=963>.

Chief Magnus's major points concerned:

1. Auto theft: remains the number one crime in the entire city. People continue to leave valuables in cars and leave their car doors unlocked. Certain model cars are greater magnets to car thieves than others, and Chief Magnus suggested the deterrent of securing one's car with a "Club" device.

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2. Media coverage: the media usually focus on and gravitate towards only reporting the homicide problem in Richmond. This past July was particularly bad for Richmond and the month showed a big spike in murder. Generally the perpetrators are young men, committing retaliatory shootings, often random, often based on grudges, generally young men of color are involved, and poverty is a major component. He reminded us that when really great things happen the media tend to ignore them choosing to focus on more sensational things.
3. Technology: Chief Magnus cited several of the high-tech features RPD uses (which many of us saw during the 2010 visit to RPD headquarters when we were given a tour of the center) such as CCTV, Shot-Spotter, etc. See <http://www.shotspotter.com/>.
4. "Ceasefire" program: Overseen by Capt. Anthony Williams and modeled after the groundbreaking Boston "Ceasefire" program (for more background information please see http://www.sasnet.com/bostonstrategy/programs/11_OpCeaseFire.html), it focuses on small groups involved in the shooting patterns. Extensive background information is collected on each person; they are brought in for a "Call In" session which is a requirement of their probation. Attending these sessions are representatives of numerous law enforcement agencies who lay out what is known about these individuals and let them know that life will be made virtually impossible for them in terms of consequences if they continue on the same criminal path. OR, if they choose to part ways with that life, a huge host of influential people, from neighbors, to service providers, and other professionals who can make an impact and who will work with them to help them get what they need to separate themselves from that life, will be made available to these individuals. They will learn to start making better choices.

Chief Magnus indicated there has been a substantial reduction in the Boston crime rate thanks to this program and that is hoped for Richmond as well. The first "Call In" is planned for this October. He said that what "defines success in this program is 20% of these young men choosing Door Number Two."

5. "Daytime Curfew" program to reduce truancy has been put into place BUT it is based on Municipal Code NOT on the educational codes. Under-18 kids may not be out on the streets daytime, hanging out. This program involves families, etc. and is meant to address the kinds of crimes kids commit OR which they are on the receiving end of as a result of not being in school. They are picked up, brought to the Police Activity League, which serves as an Intake Center, and caseworkers do assessments, the kids get assigned to the program and the parents are involved as well. This program has shown great promise with a low 9% recidivism rate.
6. Perception issues about Richmond are slow to change and everyone is working on these.

Chief Magnus answered questions and was given a big round of applause for the work he and the Department are doing.

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Next speaker was Jordan Baucum of the Chevron Renewal Project:

It was late so he was very brief, providing a very short history of Chevron in Richmond. He addressed the new Revised EIR for the Hydrogen Plant which is now only 50% done due to a lawsuit. The two components of the plans are (1) replace the old hydrogen plant and (2) put in place hydrogen purity improvements (sulfur removal). Future City Council meetings will address all these issues.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. Next Meeting will be October 12, with Measure J (proposed Parcel Tax for Doctor's Hospital) to be discussed. <http://rcoc.com/richmond-chamber-supports-measure-j/>.

Please check home page of our website for additional agenda information.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ruth Zablotsky, Secretary
Marina Bay Neighborhood Council