

## **Notes from Property Crime Prevention meeting yesterday evening (3-11-2015).**

A big thank you to our special guests Ellen Troxclair and APD Officer Josh Visi for attending the meeting. Special thanks also goes out to Karen Hibpshman, Circle C HOA Manager for setting up the room and facilitating our group. From the inception of our group last summer Karen and the HOA Board have been very supportive of the group's initiative.

After introductions the meeting started with a review of crime data for the 78739 zip code. One trend in these numbers we should all be aware of is the upward trend of vehicle burglaries in our neighborhood. In 2012 there were 45 reported vehicle burglaries, 55 in 2013, 69 in 2014, and 31 for the first 2 months of 2015. If this trend continues we are looking at 100+ vehicle burglaries for 2015.

Auto thefts is another category where an increase in activity is evident. 0 reported in 2012, 3 in 2013, 9 in 2014, and for the first 2 months of 2015 we already have 4 auto thefts. The takeaway here is that our vehicles are being targeted. Circle C still has the lowest overall crime rate in the City of Austin.

After review and discussion of these numbers Ellen Troxclair expressed her commitment to working with residents and police to halt these upward trends. Officer Josh Visi informed our group that neighborhoods to the north of Circle C have organized neighborhood watch initiatives that could be pushing criminal activity into Circle C.

Officer Visi discussed the importance of residents reporting all crimes to the police. Reporting criminal activity helps the police establish patrol patterns. More reporting = more police patrols.

There was discussion about the relationship and jurisdictions of Constables, Sheriffs, and City Police. Another discussion point here was that sometimes when calling 911 from our area, especially from a cell phone that calls could be routed to Hays county Sheriffs because our neighborhood is located close to the County line. Officer Visi suggestion is to make it clear that when using 911 to make it clear to the dispatcher that you are calling from Travis County.

This led to discussing the difference between 311 and 911. If it is happening now, even non emergency, call 911. If a street light is out or your trash did not get picked up call 311. Suspicious vehicle, public disturbance, crime in progress, medical or fire call 911.

Officer Visi then discussed the recent incidents of indecent exposure that have occurred around Spruce Canyon. Officer Visi indicated patrols have been increased in the area and they are working leads. Several attendees of the meeting indicated they have noticed an increased police presence lately.

Discussion then focused on what a formal Neighborhood Watch program might look like in Circle C. The Village of Western Oaks, our neighbors to the north, has a successful program. Their next big meeting in Saturday April 11th 1-4 which I am planning to attend and meet their lead coordinator Nancy. Officer Visi suggests that our group divide up the different enclaves within Circle C and designate leads for each area.

Jason Bram, HOA Board member and past President attended the meeting and expressed his support for putting up Neighborhood Watch signs and the Board forming a committee to focus and formalize our group's efforts. There was brief discussion about license plate cameras and other deterrents the HOA Board can initiate. The next HOA Board meeting is in 2 weeks and this will be on the agenda.

The takeaway from this meeting is: 1. Report all crime and suspicious activity to the police. 2. Educate our teenagers that there are HD cameras everywhere in public spaces and residential homes to record burglaries and criminal mischief. 3. Secure your homes, never leave your garage door up, lock your back gates, leave you outside lights on at night, remove all items from your vehicles and lock 'em up.

A special thanks again to our guests Ellen Troxclair and Officer Josh Visi as well as our HOA Manager Karen Hibpshman, and the HOA Board for their support. If any resident would like to be on a formal committee to work further on this issue please contact Karen, any HOA Board member or me directly.