

McDuffie-Twin Parks Neighborhood Association
Minutes of Temporary Steering Committee Meeting, April 9, 2008, 6:30pm
Highland Senior Activities Center – 131 Monroe NE, Albuquerque

Temporary Steering Committee (“Board”) Members Present: Bill Hoch, Carla Kugler, Charlene Brown, Enid Howarth, Gary Harrison, John Scariano, Kathleen Kimler Altobelli, Mark Hyland. Absent: Laurie Moye.

Guests: about 25 neighborhood residents, Albuquerque Police Department (APD) Crime Prevention Specialist Sandy Pino, APD Sgt John Sullivan, APD Sgt Teere Molander

The meeting began at 6:35 pm with a welcome by Bill followed by self-introductions.

Minutes of the March 12th meeting were accepted on a motion by Gary, seconded by Enid.

An informative discussion of crime, crime prevention, and safety issues included the following points.

The APD members asked that everyone consider becoming part of a neighborhood watch program, as neighborhood eyes and ears are critical to give the Police the information that they need. APD will send someone out to the organizational meeting of a 1-block neighborhood watch and discuss current crime in the area, crime prevention tips, and how citizens can safely provide information on suspected criminal activity. Copies of organizing packets (including duties of a block captain, forms to use to report suspicious activity, and safety tips) and vehicle information cards were handed out. Neighborhood watch captains are responsible for maintaining the block list and communication, attending an annual meeting, calling in extended vacations of block residents (so that police can monitor the residence), and reporting information to APD about suspicious activity – so a commitment of 1 to 1¼ hours per month. Criminal activity as well as suspicious behavior should always be reported to APD because the level of activity in the area determines staffing levels. The criminal nuisance abatement law can be used to deal with problem residences that have had numerous calls for service. Most residential burglaries happen between 11 am and 4 pm, involve younger people on foot, and take less than 3 minutes – with computers, play stations and gaming devices the favorite targets. Ms. Pino stated that she likes the newer motion sensor lights that only come on when a more-than-67-pound weight is detected, as well as kill switches for automobiles. So many false alarms have been caused by car alarms that people ignore them, reducing their usefulness. Since APD instituted fines for false alarms from home security systems (which were a huge waste of police staffing), there are far fewer false alarms. A number of private firms provide home security systems and services, but none of them should be claiming that “we dispatch APD”. Other advice included don’t park cars in the street, don’t leave garage doors open, modern cars do not need extended “warming up” in cold weather and should never be left running and unattended, do park cars in garage, and don’t have a garage door opener. The Summit Park area has started up neighborhood watch programs which are being very active – and that may mean that burglars will be displaced to our neighborhood as they seek easier targets. The problem of broken car windows on vehicles parked in the street was felt to be most likely high school or middle school youth rather than gangs, as there is no benefit to the gang from such activity.

During the discussion, it was reported that there have been a couple car break-ins in the 900 block of Hermosa, a house break-in, and another stolen car left on La Hacienda. It was reported that the police were very responsive to a call about suspicious activity. However, as Sgt Molander stated, this is a superb neighborhood as far as having a very low crime rate. Those present seemed most interested in keeping it that way!

The best way to report a problem to any city department is to call 311, give the details, and ask for the tracking number – and then call back later to follow up on the response, using the tracking number. It is also advisable to call your City Councilor, as the Councilors have some funds that they can direct to getting things done. The possibility was raised of a stop sign on Washington between Constitution and Lomas during the reconstruction of San Mateo I-40 overpass: this is a traffic engineering issue, but calling 311 and City Councilor is the way to start. Enid asked about reporting graffiti in the park: call 311.

Announcements:

Flyers available for the April 19th city-wide annual meeting of block captains and for the NM Gang Task Force conference May 5-6. Copies of minutes available for our March meeting and for April District 7 Coalition of Neighborhoods meeting. Bill has created a map showing the current association membership – it was posted on the wall for viewing.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 on a motion by Kathleen, seconded by Carla.

Respectfully submitted by Kathleen Kimler Altobelli