



SPD North Precinct Advisory Council

Expanding Communication between the Police and Community

MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

October 3, 2018

Recorded by Nancy Rauhauser

Please share this information with your neighborhood and business organizations.

The monthly NPAC meeting began at 7:03 p.m. with Andrea Perr presiding.

Topics covered:

1. Special Presentation Speaker: Sgt. Richard O'Neill, Vice President of Seattle Police Officers' Guild (SPOG)
 - a. SPOG is the union that represents over 1300 police officers (but not lieutenants or captains). Rich noted that his comments are as a union representative, not as an SPD officer representing SPD. His opinions may differ from the Captain's.
 - b. For the last 3 years officers have worked without a contract. They and firefighters are not allowed to strike. Negotiations just finished a contract for 2015-2020 and now City Council will vote on it.
 - c. Just this year around 73 officers have resigned either by retirement or moving on. Rich believes that some left because there was no contract.
 - d. These days departments around the country are having a hard time recruiting officers. It's not a desired vocation, it's dangerous, and not that high paid for the dangers. It is therefore a competitive recruiting environment. Retention is also a problem. Police departments are resorting to recruiting officers from other municipalities. So the pay raises in this new contract could help attract more officers to Seattle.
 - e. The main recruitment & retention problem in Seattle is pay. Also, the OPA (Office of Police Accountability) disciplinary process is overly scrupulous. Lack of city council support is also a factor, as is frustration over lack of prosecution after SPD arrests people. SPD advertises positions all over the country. Anyone 21 or older may apply.
 - f. Only about 10% of officers live in Seattle - it's too expensive for their pay scale.
 - g. The union believes city leaders don't always support SPD. Rich is happy that Mayor Durkan made negotiating a contract a priority and he hopes she will continue to support SPD. He encourages us to vote for candidates who support law and order and public safety.
 - h. One thing officers have been unhappy about is the means of accountability.

During Mayor Murray's tenure a big stumbling block was the accountability legislation package process he initiated. It excluded SPOG input, so it was no wonder that SPOG declared it unacceptable once it finally was included. But in today's contract they did accept wearing body cameras.

- i. The union supports getting a new north precinct building. The current precinct is a health and safety hazard. He notes that dividing the north precinct into two or building a new precinct is in the hands of the elected officials. He thinks the first step is to get a new building and later think about splitting into two precincts.
 - j. Aside from negotiating the contract, SPOG works closely with the firefighters union. It also has a Political Action Committee (PAC) to raise and spend money to elect or defeat political candidates. On occasion it also takes on the city attorney for not prosecuting. In general, SPOG supports and protects officers.
 - k. The union declares support for diversity in the department (notetaker note - it wasn't clear, even after a follow-up question, whether SPOG is actually making it a priority to push for more diversity.)
 - l. Regarding 911 calls, during triage, in-progress and dangerous events are 1st priority, followed by non-emergent events. Now that there are more specialized units that need to be staffed, there are fewer patrols on the street for responding to 911 calls.
 - m. In recent years there has been a lot of officer training on biased policing. Some of the charges of bias are reported by officers about other officers, indicating it is being recognized and addressed. There are also resources in place to help officers who have been traumatized by their job. There are support groups and psychologists available. Officer shootings require a psychologist.
2. Crime Prevention Coordinator: Mary Amberg
- a. Mary has been busy with her regular duties - going out to homes, schools and businesses to do safety assessments and recommendations. At night she attends community meetings and helps set up block watches.
 - b. See attached flyer on Halloween Safety Tips. She reminds us that with all the extra foot traffic that night, be careful about drinking and driving. Designate a driver or take alternate transportation.
 - c. See attached flyer about upcoming Mental Health First AID class where you can learn how to offer initial help in a mental health crisis. Contact Mary.Amberg@Seattle.gov if you want to sign up, and see www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org for more info.
3. City Attorney's Office: Meagan Westphal
- a. Asked to comment on SPOG's complaint that the city attorney sometimes doesn't prosecute people SPD arrests, Meagan explained that the city attorney makes policy decision. One such is to generally not prosecute prostitutes, but instead to focus on prosecuting their customers and pimps. They don't always prosecute 3rd degree crimes like driving with a suspended license, or failing to pay child

support, realizing that sometimes poverty is a big factor. So the focus is more on prosecuting such crimes if they are committed in addition to a second offense like a car crash (in the case of being unlicensed.)

- b. The expanded LEAD program (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) now has office space in the North Precinct, on Aurora. Its focus in NP will be prostitution on Aurora and issues of living in RVs on the street. LEAD has two prongs: 1) social contact engagement to offer services; 2) crime diversion (redirect low-level offenders to community-based services, instead of jail and prosecution.)
4. King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office: no report
 5. Community Police Team:
 - a. Sgt Newsom is still out with a broken arm, but should be back soon.
 - b. Remember to collect socks for the SPD CPT sock drive. They are distributed to organizations to give to individuals in need. You can bring new socks to NPAC meetings or to the precinct - 10049 College Way N.
 6. Business
 - a. Membership: If you come regularly and would like to be on the member sign-in checklist instead of using the visitor's sign-in, please email spd.npac@gmail.com.
 - b. Asked for comments about the new meeting venue at Cascadia Elementary, people said it is more central, the room is nicer and parking is much better.
 7. Precinct Update: Captain Sean O'Donnell/Lt Abram Barker
 - a. The low-barrier tiny house village in Licton Springs is closing in March. Residents will be offered services. Meanwhile, SPD is working with City Light to improve safety on Nesbit Ave N, such as increasing lighting, cutting foliage and increased police patrols.
 - b. North Precinct priorities:
 - i. Person crimes
 - ii. Use data to reduce property crimes
 - iii. Homeless issues
 - c. Areas that are repeat call locations include:
 - i. Northgate Mall area
 - ii. Precinct (note-taker note - I didn't catch what this meant)
 - iii. 116th & Aurora
 - iv. Children's Hospital (domestic violence, kid issues)
 - d. 911 calls have been increasing. This September there were 35,000 in the NP. So a lot of officers' work is dispatching to them. Officer engagement on-view is down 5% (proactive policing). NP priority 1 call response time is on average 7.34 minutes. Crisis calls are up 6.62%, over 8500 year to date.
 - e. NP crime is down 2% year to date. Person crimes are up 5%. Property crimes are down 2%.

8. Open Forum/Questions

- a. Complaint about multiple attempted break-ins in a low-income housing apartment near I-5 where there is a homeless encampment. Is there selective prosecution? The Captain explained that MDAR rules must be followed. The Navigation team work schedule is based on priority locations; it meets every day to prioritize. It must offer services, and in many cases give 72 hour notice before cleaning up a site. Compounding the complexity is the jurisdiction issue - land near interstates is the responsibility of the state, not Seattle. However, SPD instructs officers to take action if they see illegal activity. It is not true, as some people say, that SPD looks away and doesn't do anything. SPD does have to tread lightly in order to preserve every person's civil rights. It's not illegal to be homeless. The Captain noted that once a homeless person is arrested, SPD becomes responsible for the tent and other belongings.
- b. The woman who was assaulted running near Green Lake this week came to NPAC today to thank the Captain for the excellent response and respectful support SPD gave her. She admitted she didn't have a great description of the attacker, but wondered if SPD has the ability to go through the nearby homeless encampment in its search. The Captain said yes, they can and they are currently looking for him.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.