

Garden District Civic Association Board Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2018

In attendance: John Williams, Eric Troutman, Liz Spaulding, Claire Pittman, Ari Kocen, Chris Suba, Greta Corona, Joy Couvillion, Heather Day, Justin Kozak, and Willie and Mary Fontenot.

Guest: Officer Haley Stafford from the BRPD gave the Board an overview of crime and crime prevention tips for our neighborhood. There are only seven to eight patrols in District 2 that cover the area that includes the levee to Independence Park, to Staring Lane, Florida to Airline, and Tigerland. Burglaries are the most common crimes in our neighborhood. Other neighborhoods have more serious crimes. We also call them for suspicious persons and alarms going off. Burglaries are when the intent is to commit a theft, such as shed burglaries (daytime) and car burglaries (nighttime). Robberies are when someone faces you in person. You feel endangered then.

Officer Stafford said that she reads information on Nextdoor.com that is not being told to the police, including photos of the perpetrators of the crimes. She asks that we always give all our information to the police. Sometimes people don't report crimes at all because they think nothing will be done. It can take two or three weeks before a detective will contact you because their docket is so full. She gave an example of how that can make a difference. If a criminal goes before a judge and five people have reported him, but he actually burglarized ten homes or cars, he will get a lighter sentence than if the judge knows that he burglarized ten homes or cars. Recently, an 11 year-old, thirteen year-old, fourteen year-old and an eighteen year old were caught with the merchandise that they had stolen in a nearby neighborhood. The eleven year old will be in a half-way house for four years. The thirteen year old will get three years. They had money, jewelry, guns and lawn equipment. They try to sell it immediately. Officer Stafford stays informed about habitual criminals. She helps follow-up in some of these cases.

Residents often ask for DNA to be taken, but each division can only submit ten per month. They will have to go toward much more serious crimes. She recommends more cameras. Most crimes in our neighborhood can be prevented and if not, they can be solved with cameras. Juveniles check cars every night. If they see something on the seat, they will break the window and take it. They check for unlocked car doors too. In both instances they check glove compartments. Too many people are leaving firearms, even loaded ones in vehicles. Please do not do this! Do not leave any valuables in your car.

Officer Stafford will be our new contact with the Garden District's Off-Duty Patrol. She pledged to keep us informed. The Board was impressed and appreciative.

A discussion followed about communicating with the neighborhood about cameras and possibly holding an informative meeting. It was recommended that we start with good practices.

Crawfish Boil: Great weather and great crawfish were enjoyed by about 250 people. Ari had gotten the Red River Bank's ice cream truck to come give free ice cream and frozen treats for the second year. The Board voted to look into moving their bank account from CHASE Bank to Red River Bank. Greta arranged for the tables and chairs from Doug Olinde. We had a credit from a previous event that was rained out, so they didn't cost us anything at this time. Non-members brought in \$250.

Easter Egg Hunt: There was beautiful weather for this year's hunt. It cost \$300 and was well-attended with probably 150 people in total.

Membership: We have about as many members as we usually have at this time of the year. We have 188 members right now and will probably end up with 250 this year. Another membership drive is planned for this July. We now have the program where members who signed on for this are notified a week before their membership is due. If we don't hear from them it will automatically be renewed and they don't need to do anything. Joy offered to deliver welcoming packets. Liz and Greta will work on the thank-you notes for members. Claire has a realtor friend who is sending her notifications when houses sell.

We had two corporate sponsors and have added two more. Corporate sponsors pay \$350 a year and have their logos placed on the bottom of all fliers and the website. When someone clicks on the logo they will be taken to the sponsor's website. The newsletter is planning to do a sponsor "Spotlight" article.

Newsletter: Joy is planning to put out quarterly newsletters.

More doggie bags are needed for the dispensers.

Mid City Redevelopment Alliance offered John Williams an opportunity to attend a NeighborWorks Conference.

Chris Suba is trying to get in touch with the fiscal agent for the city-parish to discuss maintenance of the trees on public property.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Fontenot