Mary Solis called the VNA’s March meeting to order and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mary then introduced herself, Lisa Blacksher, newest VNA board member, as well as Chas Kelley, Ward 5 council representative, and Lt. Madden from the San Bernardino Police Department. Mary also advised the attendees of the March 19th public hearing on the proposed rate increase for the refuse department before the city council. Mary also let the group know that the Community Cleanup Day is April 14th from 08:00 -12:00. Mary is asking all people to sign up in advance to ensure she has a t-shirt for them. Cleanup day volunteers should arrive at Western Regional Little League’s south parking lot at 07:45 to set up and plan on being available until 12:30 that day. Bring gloves, rakes, and shovels as well. Mary also announced that there will be Bingo at the Verdemont Community Center and Library tomorrow evening at 7:00 pm.

Mary introduced Chas Kelley, our member of the city council. (I didn’t record his remarks since I was up next on the Agenda and needed to locate the copy of the letter about the gas station.) Mary then introduced a letter to Margo Wheeler and the city of San Bernardino regarding the abandoned gas station on Palm. Mary asked Michael Craft to read the letter to the attendees. Michael read the letter and let those in attendance know that the letter is available for area residents’ signatures at the back table for the rest of the evening. Michael gave the floor back to Mary who announced the next VNA Members Meeting will be Thursday, May 11, 2012 at 7 pm.

Mary introduced the guest speaker for the evening, Lieutenant Mike Madden of the San Bernardino Police Department who is the new Northwest Area Commander. Lt. Madden began by giving his background as being born and raised in San Bernardino, attending local schools, including Call State San Bernardino. In 1990, Lt. Madden changed his career path to Law Enforcement and eventually promoted to detective for crimes against children, then promoted to Sergeant in patrol and as a Field Training Officer. He indicated that the northwest area of San Bernardino is the area north of Baseline and west of Sierra Way. He continued by saying the he currently resides in Yucaipa and is active in the Little League programs. He has become a Certified Lieutenant and is awaiting retirements to become a full-fledged lieutenant He became the northwest area commander about a month ago.

Lt. Madden indicated he will be accessible to the citizens of the northwest area and will give an honest answer to questions as well. He also indicated that San Bernardino has 52 less officers than it did just 2 years ago. Despite the lower number of officers at this time, murder, rape, assaults and burglaries are at their lowest point in 15 years. Madden also says that citizens tell him what their concerns are and he will direct action as best he can. There are now two Homeless Coordinator Officers. A VNA member asked Lt. Madden about the homeless parking their R V next to Albertacos and another member asked about the homeless teens near Ralph’s. Madden stated he is aware of each of those problems.

Madden continued his comments by pointing out that methamphetamine is the largest problem in our city. Norm then asked about stopping two burglaries, one a neighbor called the police and the second was an attempted “knock-knock” burglary.

Madden indicated that the SBPD receives about 1,000 calls each day for service. VNA member question indicated that an attempted “knock-knock” burglary and found the person with their face pressed against the window next to their door. Most “knock-knock” burglaries are attempted in the morning. Lt. Madden also stated that SBPD has changed from one software platform to another to update crime wave blogs. A VNA member pointed out that the Community Police Academy provides good advice and tips for burglary prevention.

Lt. Madden pointed out that the southwest and northeast areas generally have the highest burglary rates and presented the group with the CrimeStats handout. Lt. Madden then advised the group that when we spot graffiti to leave it in place and report it. Then the police can come and take pictures and document the graffiti prior to its removal. He also indicated that the tagger who puts up one item will not be prosecuted, however the one who tags multiple places will be prosecuted. A VNA member asked the lieutenant about all the releasees in our community being sent to Sacramento? So far, that can not be done, legally. Another member asked if Lt. Madden recommended security systems in their homes? He indicated that if you choose a security system, make certain it has a loud alarm and that it is on.

Another question about the streetlight/copper theft problem. Lt. Madden says the police department is aware of the problem and trying to stop the thieves. When street lights are repaired, additional hardware is used to make it more difficult for thieves to steal the copper the next attempt. Lt Madden then gave his information to the membership. His desk phone number is: 909 -388-4997. His e-mail address is Madden\_Mi@sbcity.org.

He also apologized for past concerns over finger printing and illegal dumping calls. He indicated he will ease the finger printing process and make the officers more responsive to illegal dumping calls. Kevin Mitchell asked about the police department’s ability to monitor for arsonists during the windy season. Lt. Madden said that officers try to watch for arsonists during windy season and will discourage them from staying in the area.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm by Mary Solis.