July 18th VNA Members Meeting Minutes

57 attendees.

Mary Solis called the meeting to order at 19:05 and introduced Nick Gonzalez, president of the Neighborhood Cluster Assoc., Debbie Alvillar the San Bernardino Police Department’s Community Service Representative, and the speaker for the meeting, Lt. Mike Madden.

The Pledge of Allegiance was lead by Mary Solis. After the pledge, Mary introduced Lt. Madden.

Lt. Mike Madden began by introducing himself as the commander of the Northwest quadrant of San Bernardino. He indicated he will discuss the budget/bankruptcy concern as well. He advised us that the N/W district as the area of city with least amount of violent crimes. Last year was unusual since we had 4 homicides since May 2012. Three of the four of them were at the Delman Heights center. The Delman heights gang (bloods) and the (Crip set) gave each other hard looks and starting shooting at each other in that incident. People began to run, one person from Chino went to check on his wife who was relaxing in their car, whom he discovered she had been shot in the head. Most homicides are ‘lifestyle related’ and ‘people’s choices’ according to Lt. Madden. Two gang members were killed as well in that incident. There was another homicide in the Sierra Way and Baseline area.

Most crime in this area is theft, specifically, residential burglaries. Most people in our area have jobs, therefore the thieves know this and know the best time to victimize our residents. There has been a significant increase in burglaries. It probably won’t get better since AB109 regarding prison overcrowding issues was passed in Sacramento. There are 7,200 jail beds in the city. Therefore those that are arrested are taken to jail, but kicked loose due to overcrowding. There is a high recidivism rate. In the first six months of 2012, burglaries went up by 49.65%. Vehicle theft went up by 104.69 percent. Violent crimes had no significant changes, nor did robberies.

What can be done? Community meetings mean more people watching out for each other. Lt. Madden has been interacting with the detectives to encourage them for results. He also noted the 25% decrease in burglaries in the last month.

How we harden the target, (make ourselves less of a target:

Know your neighbors.

Don’t put yourself at risk, or in danger if you see a situation.

Mere loss of property does not give you the right to take someone’s life in the state of Ca.

Be a good observer, know who is around/in the area.

Know that burglars work in crews (kids, older person, white, latino, black, etc. there is no pattern to how they organize their crews.)

Habits/characteristics:

 Knock on door, wait for a response.

Keep door locked and advise you’re home, by saying, “Who is it?”, or “I’m not interested, or, if they’re persistent. “I’m calling the police.”

Check to see where they go. If they go to neighbors, call the police, then call the neighbors and let them know. Also, they may be calling each other on their cell phones to let them know who’s home, etc.

 Member question: What are the response times of the police? Why should I send them (criminals) to the neighbors?

Lt: Dispatch handle 114,000 calls for service per year. 282 police on duty now, and possibly 20 more to leave the p d by the end of year. Ten city employees let go just this week. Now officers will need to do the work that the city employees did.

Member announced at this point in the meeting, “The city council just decided 5 to 2 for bankruptcy.

Lt. Madden indicated it will take 30 days to get into court. In that 30 days, the court will conduct an audit. The court then makes recommendations to the city. Under chapter 9 bankruptcy, the court can not tell the city what cuts to make, it can only make recommendations.

Back to your question. “How long will it take to have a cop at my house? “The straight answer is, “I don’t know.”

We need to understand “How do we (SBPD) prioritize calls? “If it bleeds, it leads”. If you’re shot/stabbed, you’re the priority. Burglary in Progress, robbery in progress are next priority, and so on.”

There are 117 officers on the street total, early shift 15 officers. 4p – 2a.

17 officers. 10p – 8 a has 15 officers.

We have 3 shifts each day. There are no mandated numbers of officers. The rest of the officers are working in background, motor patrol, etc.

Member question: Which area of San Bernardino is the biggest drain (on police resources)? Lt. Madden, “Typically, more violent crime in N/E and S/W district. However it is a moving target.”

 Be a good witness. Get good descriptions of vehicles and people.

MemberQuestion: “Can citizens volunteer due to the layoffs?” Lt. Madden, “Yes, I have applications for Citizen Patrol/ Station Volunteer/ Goodwill Ambassador.” (began circulating applications)

Lt Madden: “When the baseball games are on, we put a lot of police at the WRLL park, and it was an expensive proposition. This year, there is zero dollars, the reserves, chief police, captains, assistant chief, citizens patrol will all be here to provide security. We want high visibility for all the games at the Western Regional Little League.”

Those who volunteer for Citizen Patrol/ Station Volunteer/ Goodwill Ambassador will need a background check before being accepted as a volunteer. The background check can take two weeks. Phone number- 347 8752 (ask for extra patrol board).

Member Question: Is there a priority on home alarm systems’ alarming, if so, what’s the priority?

Lt. Madden: “We want to go now, but if it’s the 53rd alarm this month, then it may have lower priority. Recommends an audible alarm, over a silent alarm.”

Member Question: Is there a fee to gain ‘priority’ for a home alarm. Members and Debbie ALvillar stated there is a $30 per year fee for alarm systems in San Bernardino.

Nick Gonzalez commented: “You already have a great group of neighbors, and neighbors watching out for neighbors.”

Lt Madden: I was a cop in Claremont for two years, and it is a quiet city but their police do not get the experience that San Bernardino officers get. Officers from other cities are envious of the experience and the range of experience that San Bernardino officers receive.

“I need all of you involved to help us to maintain our community and make it great.”

Lt. Madden returned the floor to Mary, who deferred to Chas Kelley who had arrived after the council vote.

Chas Kelley:

Handout: spreadsheet regarding the city’s funds/budget.

The LMD monies have been borrowed and likely will not be paid back. Also, there are approximately $26 million in impact fees since 2003 that are unaccounted for.

In 2005, Chas had an agenda item to account for the impact fees. It was not voted into place. Mccamack (sp?) asked for 50% of the money to be accounted for, and that also was voted down.

“I did not want to vote for Chapter 9 until we had a plan in place. We had time to consider a plan and make decisions. Whomever makes these decisions to borrow, must come before the council to justify.”

Member Question: “Why didn’t the auditors catch the financial problem? A new auditor needs to be found.” Member Question: “It’s the same auditor as the airport mess.”

Member Question: “Did you vote for this auditor?” Chas: “If it’s under $25k in cost, then they do not have to come to council.”

Member Question: “Why is Chas only one to know about audit process?”

Member Question: “What about trash being picked up?”

Chas: “With bankruptcy, everything is on the table. It may be that we may outsource the trash services. Trash department was borrowing from Revenue Fund and tried to increase rates.”

Member Question: “A study for $90K, that proved that if the trash department were correctly managed they would make money?”

The refuse department is valued at $45million 5 years ago. If we go to a private contractor, our liabilities will be less. Using a contractor will make us more like the neighboring cities.”

Mary: Neighborhood Watch member question “Program is still active and is encouraged.”

Lt. Madden reiterated that his email address is: madden\_mi@sbcity.org.

Member Question: “What’s the usual size of the Neighborhood Watch area? …” usually it is one block size with as many people from that block/neighborhood.”

Mary Alvillar announced that “National Night Out” will be on August 7th at Perris Hill Park.

Mary Solis invited Jim G. of WRLL to speak. Jim introduced Brian Pickering, who will be carrying the WRLL from now forward.

Jim also pointed out that Ladies softball activity starts tomorrow with tournament on July 21st, and the championship game on July 27th. The WRLL crew will then get the baseball field in shape for the WRLL baseball tournament. Jim said that Highland’s team is one the best he’s seen.

Jim also said, “If you see something unusual, please call Jim so he can take care of concerns. Jim also invited everyone to come by for the games, they’re all free.”

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Craft