

## NOTES FROM THE PRA MEETING ON NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAMS

We had an informative presentation and an interesting discussion at our PRA meeting on Neighborhood Watch Programs [NWP] last Wednesday, March 29. The Zoom link to the recording of the meeting is at the end of this message along with a link to websites with more information regarding NWPs.

Some key points from the meeting:

- Our PRA Safety Committee [Gabrielle Prandoni and Jill Lipton] are doing an excellent job of keeping our community informed about best practices through their regular messages on the listserv. This assessment is based on the recommendations we heard from our speaker, Officer Demond Johnson, Community Services Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District, Montgomery County Police Department. These included:

- Locking doors (home and car)
- Keeping valuables out of sight
- Notifying neighbors when we will be out of town so that they can remove packages and newspapers.

He also stated that we are partners with the police and if we “see something, say something”. In that way, the police can do their job and follow up on criminal activity. He further stressed that most crimes are crimes of opportunity, (unlocked doors, valuables left outside) and we can reduce these crimes by taking the above simple measures.

- Despite a recent spate of more aggressive incidents, crime still remains comparatively low in Parkwood. However, this is of little comfort to those who have been victimized, and we need to continue to be vigilant and to improve our efforts.
- Some of the suggestions made by residents at the meeting or shared in writing before the session included:
  - Urging households to “light up the neighborhood” by keeping more outside lights on at night.
  - Installing cameras (maybe on telephone poles?) near certain intersections that will capture license plate numbers and times so that vehicles potentially involved in an incident can be identified. Cameras on doorbells aren't at a proper angle/distance to identify vehicles.
  - Assisting people who need help getting technology like RING doorbells installed and learning how to use them. [The writer noted that this is what has kept them from installing a camera.]
  - Exploring the process for Neighborhood Watch certification from the national NWP organization. Some residents noted that we might have done this in the past; there were NWP signs reported to be on some homes. A suggestion was made that we simply create and post our own signs to imply that we have an NWP in operation, but Officer Johnson noted that this could not be done using the national NWP logo.
  - Testing the utility of establishing nighttime watches from inside the house to look for suspicious activity. Could be done for smaller geographic areas within

Parkwood on a shared basis by neighbors. Would not have to be done every night nor for all hours; a random schedule can be effective because would-be criminals would not know when they might be observed.

Based on the interest expressed, we will schedule a follow up meeting in May.

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**Zoom link to recording of meeting:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/L6UhU0tQJaMNGsdk2hmo-8VfSKi0gIKGkt1WnQpQVObRbkkicrU0m4u5TQ-NmwR.Dc316akRUpr\\_vI7S](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/L6UhU0tQJaMNGsdk2hmo-8VfSKi0gIKGkt1WnQpQVObRbkkicrU0m4u5TQ-NmwR.Dc316akRUpr_vI7S)

Passcode: gy\$9#BxO [note that the last character is a capital "O". Easier to cut and paste.]

**Links to websites with more information regarding Neighbor Watch Programs**

<https://pra727684468.files.wordpress.com/2023/03/neighborhood-watch-programs-references.pdf>