

HM Public Safety & Youth Outreach meeting
May 24, 2017

Introductions

Background from CM Stark:

- Hosted similar meeting in early November to talk about similar topics -- how last summer went in terms of crimes and disturbances near Hamline Park and along Snelling Avenue, and how we could improve things for this summer.
- The purpose of tonight's meeting is to continue conversation about how we as a neighborhood can help each other feel safe, and how to engage youth and make our neighborhood a safe and inviting place for young people.
- Summer of 2016 was very different than any other summer in CM Stark's 18 years in the neighborhood -- a change in the volume and consistency of drug activity and violence (assaults, shots fired).
- Shared goals are a reduction in violence and organized criminal activity.
- Thinks things have calmed down since last summer -- though there are still incidents of concern -- but has seen a "drinking club" at CVS.

Information from Western Police District Leadership team Senior Commander Steve Anderson, Commander Don Benner, and Commander Sheila Lambie. Crime Prevention Specialist Pam McCreary and officers from the newly expanded bike unit also present:

- **S/C Anderson:**
 - Lifelong resident of St Paul who grew up in Hamline Midway.
 - In the fall of 2016, he was working in the FORCE unit, where he worked on some of the police plans for Hamline Midway in the area of Snelling/Asbury
 - Neighbors are the best eyes and ears.
 - Need neighbors to be willing to engage people on the sidewalk, get to know each other.
 - In low crime neighborhoods, neighbors know each other.
 - Bike unit
 - New this summer is the dedication of resources to a bike unit in west district -- four officers during the day and four at night (rain or shine!)
 - Officers on bikes can get places cars can't
 - Two weeks ago, there was a bike cop training taking place in the neighborhood and around the City, including 15-18 SPPD officers, plus officers from other communities.
 - Bike unit will be engaging everyone in and around Hamline Park as well as participating in bike repair, bike rodeos/events, and bike/helmet giveaways.
 - Are bike cops getting more community engagement training? Answer: all officers are getting more engagement and de-escalation training.
 - Neighbors need to pay attention to suspicious behavior versus appearance, but when reporting issues to police, the more detailed information about appearance the better. I.e: "White shirt and jeans" describes fifty people -- did the white shirt have a logo on it, for example.
 - From this time last year, with the exception of theft (up 4%), vandalism (up 1%), and weapons discharge (up 26%*), all crimes are down in Ward 4.
 - *weapons discharge includes reported gunfire AND recovered weapons.
 - Citywide, weapons discharge numbers are up dramatically.
 - Hard to know when shots fired go up whether it's because more people are calling.

- Traffic stops for traffic violations are up in areas where there have been shots fired, as a way to be paying further attention to these areas.
 - Even though crime trends are down for right now, that does not change SPPD's plans for SCMA (Snelling Corridor Midway Area) this summer:
 - Drug arrests and undercover activity
 - Increased outreach
 - Keep resources deployed in SCMA, along the Green Line, and will keep them here unless crime trends spike elsewhere.
 - Pedestrian enforcement details (<https://www.facebook.com/StopForMeStPaul/>)
 - Social media
 - Call SPPD first! (then post to social media, noting that you've already called SPPD)
 - Be descriptive. Is there a vehicle description? Did you hear breaking glass or tires squealing?
 - Social media tends to skew the actual story. Call police, Pam McCreary for actual details of an incident 651-266-5455.

Neighbor comments/questions:

- What is SPPD doing to support officers? People (police) don't want to act badly but I have witnessed 3-4 negative incidents that have left me not wanting to call the police. Officers seem stressed.
 - SPPD has one of the most renowned Employee Assistance Programs in the country to deal with officer stress/
 - Peer counseling training program has actually been going on the past two days so officers know how to identify signs of trouble and support each other.
 - If you see officer behavior that concerns you, call 651-291-1111 and ask the supervisor to talk with you about the incident.
- Business owner at Snelling/University has people peeing in his doorways, harassing customers.
 - Call in these incidents when they occur. It's hard to punish a crime that hasn't yet occurred (to the question of keeping people away from the area).
- There's a concern among some residents about calling police and having the call leading to someone being killed or having cops show up at your house with guns.
- I want cops to know kids when they're NOT in trouble.
- When people fear the police, they don't call the police.
- What's the plan for drug dealing going on?
 - Can't pull the FORCE unit to Midway unless the problems are worse than elsewhere in the City.
 - Gang unit doubled.
- Green Line -- how do SPPD and Metro Transit police interact?
 - Separate departments. Metro Transit police enforces the train, platforms, and bus stops, including smoking at bus stops/platforms. The two departments do work closely together to respond to incidents.
 - For NON-emergency issues happening at Metro Transit stops/platforms, report activity that's occurring (like loitering, panhandling) to 612-373-3333 and press 3 to speak with Customer Relations. This will get the location on Metro Transit' radar for attention. In an emergency, always call 911.
- Noise/car stereo and traffic issues at Snelling/Van Buren related to the vape shop and above the chiropractic clinic.
 - SPPD will follow up with neighbor after the meeting.

- It seems like men are cruising for prostitutes, and people in cars doing suspicious things between Fairview and Snelling behind CVS/Checkerboard.
 - Call it in -- car make, model
- 80% of cars on Snelling are speeding, especially cars coming south off bridges, which don't slow down until Minnehaha
 - Snelling bridges plan (unfunded for now, but the plan will help seek funding): <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/snellingstudy/>
 - *As it happens, there was traffic enforcement on Snelling done in conjunction with Soundset on May 28. TZD officers focused extra (organized) attention with "spotters" on pedestrian crosswalk enforcement, seatbelt compliance and excessive speed. 32 seatbelt tickets, 39 speeding tickets and 48 other moving violation (Fail to Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalk) citations issued.*
- Seems like there are a lot of accidents at Snelling/Thomas. Are U-turns allowed there?
 - U turns are allowed.
 - Public works, if they haven't already, will be adding lines to the east-west leg of the intersection to clarify where vehicle lanes are through the intersection since it jogs a bit.
- Hamline Park -- are there environmental things that could be done to improve things? Lighting, locations of bushes and picnic tables could change? The wall at CVS where people loiter is another environmental design issue.
 - Ward 4 office will follow up with SPPD who has Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design experts, to see if there are changes in order at Hamline Park, and perhaps at businesses on Snelling south of Park.
- What are the curfew laws?
 - <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/safety-inspections/city-information-complaints/resident-handbook/curfew-minors>
 - On Thursday through Saturday nights, curfew violators are taken to 180 degrees curfew center. Good article on this work here: <http://www.twincities.com/2016/07/02/for-teens-caught-breaking-curfew-in-st-paul-it-means-a-visit-to-this-center/>
 - Last year, only three kids out of hundreds of kids were repeat curfew violators who went through the 180 degrees center.

Positive upcoming events/opportunities:

- National Night Out is August 1! Organize a party using this resource or join the NNO party at Hancock Rec! <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/police/national-night-out>
- Lynx ticket giveaways for all home games. Free ticket, meal voucher, and transportation provided! One of the pickup sites is Hancock Rec. Call Hancock at 651-298-4393 or more info here: <https://www.stpaul.gov/news/free-lynx-tickets-saint-paul-youth-families>
- Hamline Midway Community Events Summer 2017 schedule here. Insert link
- Summer Neighborhood Walks hosted by Karyssa Jackson. Call her with questions, 612-267-5087. Meet at Hamline Park on these dates:
 - Saturday, June 10, 4pm
 - Wednesday, June 14, 4pm
 - Saturday, June 18, 6:30pm
- Monthly Western District Police Community meetings: third Tuesday of every month at 9:30am and 6:30pm at the Western District Police Station (389 Hamline Ave N). This is the place to go on a regular basis with questions about incidents, crime trends, or police service.