

District 4 Neighborhood Safety Forum

Berryessa Branch Library
3355 Noble Avenue, San José, CA 95132
Monday, March 29, 2010
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

MEETING SYNOPSIS

1. Introduction

- Kansen Chu, District 4 Councilmember
- Captain Alcantar – SJP, Foothill Division
- Esther Mota – City of San José, Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force
- Kevin Hirabayashi – City of San José, Safe School Campus Initiative
- Servando Perez – City of San José, Anti Graffiti and Litter Program
- Officer Katherine Unger – SJP, Crime Prevention Unit
- Eusebio Espitia – City of San José, Code Enforcement
- Sheriff Laurie Smith – Santa Clara County
- District Attorney Dolores Carr – Santa Clara County
- *Attendees:*
 - *70-80 community members*
 - *Shivaun Nurre, Acting Independent Police Auditor*
 - *Marc Liebman, Berryessa Union School District Superintendent*
 - *Khoa Nguyen, Berryessa Union School District Trustee*
 - *David Biagini, District 4 Neighborhood Commissioner*
 - *Rafael Sabic, District 4 Neighborhood Commissioner*
 - *Christopher Zhou, District 4 Neighborhood Commissioner*

2. Remarks by Councilmember Kansen Chu

- The safety of all San José residents remains a top priority.
- The City of San José continues to face significant fiscal challenges. While the City Council continues to look for ways to preserve essential services in our neighborhoods, they are limited in their resources.
- Despite the City’s current budget outlook, the Berryessa neighborhood is generally a safe community. This can be attributed to the ongoing efforts in the community.
- Community members are part of the solution and need to take on more leadership in their neighborhoods. Ex: reach out/get to know your neighbors, contact the Crime Prevention Department to arrange and presentation/organize neighborhood watch groups, establish neighborhood email groups to help neighbors communicate issues/updates.
- While we are lucky to have a low crime rate and gang involvement in our community, we still need to understand what is happening and how we can, together, keep our community safe.

3. **General Climate Report (Captain Alcantar – Foothill Division)**

- District 4 falls under two police divisions: Foothill and Central.
- The Foothill Division is made up of four police districts: Charles, Mary, Paul, and William. Berryessa is located in District William. *(For more information about the Foothill Division, please visit: <http://www.sjpd.org/BFO/foothill.html>).*
- The Central Division is divided into four districts: King, Edward, Robert, and Victor. The North Valley Neighborhood, North San José, and Alviso are located in District Robert. *(For more information about the Central Division, please visit: <http://www.sjpd.org/BFO/central.html>).*
- Regarding the incident that took place at Sao Dem (next to Safeway):
 - The suspect has been identified and arrested. The homicide investigator did a good job of taking care of this isolated incident. While the Foothill Division has the highest rate of gang violence, there are very few incidents that occur in Berryessa that are gang related and are generally isolated incidents.
- Find out what is going on in your neighborhood and look up calls for services in your neighborhood by using **CrimeReports.com** or visit www.sjpd.org.
- If you are reporting a **crime in progress** or other **emergency** in San José, please call emergency dispatch at 911 or 408-277-8911 (for cell phone users).
- For non-emergency, call 311 or 408-277-8900 (for cell phone users).

- **QUESTIONS:**
 - **Was the incident at Sao Dem (next to Safeway) a result of the business itself or clientele?** This was an isolated incident and was not a result of the clientele.

 - **Have you noticed an increase in the crime in the area?** Generally, crime has gone down and the incidents in Berryessa have relatively stayed the same.

 - **How does SJPD address parities that get out of hand?** SJPD usually comes out to the house to give a warning. If they need to come back again, it is a possibility that the homeowner may receive a citation.

 - **How can we request more traffic enforcement in our neighborhoods?** Please call 408-277-4341 or visit this link (https://www.sjpd.org/forms/TEU_Request_Form.asp) to fill out a request form. For parking complaints, issues, or abandoned vehicles, please contact the City of Transportation via the following links:
 - Parking Enforcement: 534-2900 or visit http://www.sanjoseca.gov/transportation/parking_enforcement.htm
 - Vehicle Abatement : 277-3505 or visit http://www.sanjoseca.gov/transportation/vehicle_abatement.htm

- *Captain Alcantar can be reached via email at 2104@sanjoseca.gov.*

4. Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (Esther Mota and Kevin Hirabayashi)

- The Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force was established to stop the increasing trend of youth violence in the City of San José.
- 3 pronged approach – intervention, prevention, and suppression.
- The Task Force has been comprised of a broad coalition of youth; residents; city, county, and state government; schools; parents; and local law enforcement. The Task Force brings together each of these groups' expertise into a coordinated, interagency effort to curb gang-related activity.
- The Safe School Campus Initiative is a partnership between the City, School Districts, Police Department, and County Probation and works collaboratively with the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force to create safer schools and communities by ensuring that youth related violence are addressed in a proactive and timely manner. They also provide prevention and intervention presentations to youth, families, community members, and schools. For more information, please visit: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/prns/mgptf/ssci.asp>.
- For more information about the Mayor's Gang prevention Task Force, please visit: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/mayor/goals/pubsafety/MGPTF/policyteam.asp>.
- *If you have any questions, please contact Esther Mota at 408-277-2710 or via email esther.mota@sanjoseca.gov.*

5. Anti-Graffiti and Litter Program (Servando Perez)

- It is very important to report graffiti as soon as you see it. Do not be afraid to report incidents. The police and anti-graffiti program staff really need the community to get involved.
- When graffiti appears and is left up indefinitely, it sends a signal that people just don't care, which in turn attracts other forms of crime and delinquency to the neighborhood.
- Residents are encouraged to report graffiti by calling the 24 Hour Hotline at 408-277-2758.
- The San José Police Department is also very interested in documenting graffiti as a means to track criminal activity, including gangs. Your report may help prevent more serious crimes. Call 911 to report vandalism in progress. When graffiti appears in your neighborhood, report it to the police department, by calling the non-emergency number at 311 or by uploading photos of graffiti to SJPD here: <http://www.sjpd.org/forms/GraffitiFAQ.asp>. Vandals cannot be prosecuted without photo evidence.
- The Anti-Graffiti Program staff are working seven days a week to keep your neighborhoods clean.
- *To pick up your free Anti-Graffiti Took Kit or to volunteer to clean up graffiti, please call 408-277-3208 or email antigrffiti@sanjoseca.gov.*

6. Crime Prevention (Office Katherine Unger)

- Crime Prevention Specialists provide safety information, referrals, and training on various safety topics for individuals, community groups, and businesses. Topics include: Neighborhood Watch, Identify Theft, Personal Safety, Workplace Safety, and Senior Security.
- To start a Neighborhood Watch Program in your neighborhood or to schedule a follow-up meeting, please call 408-277-4133 or visit:
<http://www.sjpd.org/BFO/Community/Crimeprev/crimeprevention%20forms/neighorhoodwatch.pdf>.
- To request a neighborhood watch presentation for your neighborhood, please call Crime Prevention at 408-277-4133. The Crime Prevention Specialist who represents your neighborhood will work with you to schedule the meeting. Usually at least 2-3 weeks notice is required. 10 households or businesses are needed in order to set up a Neighborhood Watch Program.
- *To view a Neighborhood Watch Brochure, please visit:*
<http://www.sjpd.org/BFO/Community/Crimeprev/crimeprevention%20forms/neighorhoodwatch.pdf>.

7. Code Enforcement (Eusebio Espitia)

- Code Enforcement is a division within the Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement and works in partnership with the people of San José to promote and maintain a safe and desirable living and work environment.
- Code Enforcement Officers deal with the regulations and make sure that the municipal codes are being followed.
- Some of the regulations that the Code Enforcement Division enforces include: conditions of an existing structure that constitutes a clear and present danger to the public, building code violations, land use; building codes, hour of operation codes, entertainment codes, hazardous weeds on private/developed property, graffiti, signs, blight, lawn parking, illegal dumping, and smoking in enclosed public spaces.
- There is an inspector who focuses solely on foreclosures in the City relating to issues concerning blight, overgrown weeds, and physically damaged structures.
- It is important to be patient when working with inspectors because they are responsive and really try to develop a personal relationship with residents to resolve issues in the neighborhood.
- For more information, please call 408-277-4528 or visit:
<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/codeEnforcement>.
- *To view Code Enforcement brochures on a number of topics, please visit:*
http://www.sanjoseca.gov/codeEnforcement/CE_BROCHURES.asp.

8. Remarks from Sheriff Laurie Smith

- Responsible for the unincorporated areas in the City of San José.
- Appreciates and values the input of our community.
- Neighborhoods are even more valuable, especially during difficult budget times and the amount of budget cuts throughout the County and City.
- The best number to call to get a hold of the County's dispatch is 408-299-2311. A 24 hour hotline is also available at 408-808-4410 or 277-8911 (for cell phone users).
- *For more information about the Sheriff's Office, please visit:*
<http://www.sccsheriff.org>.
- **QUESTION:**
 - **Does the Sheriff's Office and San José Police Department work together?** Yes. If there's a hot call, other agencies are oftentimes mobilized. There is a good working relationship between the Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement agencies.

9. Remarks from District Attorney Dolores Carr

- Residents need to be the eyes and ears for the community.
- Call the police when you notice any suspicious activity and write down as much information about the incident as you can.
- Street gang incidents are paid very close attention to. The District Attorney's Office pays attention to protecting witnesses from any retaliation.
- There was a spike in 2007 in gang violence but the numbers have gone down significantly in 2010. The collaboration between SJPD and the District Attorney's Office contributed to this decline. The District Attorney's Office has been aggressively prosecuting street gangs.
- Street gangs are getting a lot of their strength from illegal drug trafficking and the District Attorney's Office has been focused on trying to get rid of this source of power from gangs.
- The District Attorney's Office has a parent project program in Santa Clara County. This is a 13 week parenting program that targets families with teens who are starting to go down the wrong path. Their office works with law enforcement agencies, community volunteers, and other community partners. 550 parents have graduated from the program. Research has shown that if parents can handle the issues in the family, law enforcement will not have to attend to family issues that may arise. In addition, fewer kids will end up going to juvenile hall.
- *For more information about the District Attorney's Office, please visit:*
<http://www.santaclara-da.org>.

10. Public Comment and Questions:

- **How does the Santa Clara District Attorney's Office handle cases involving mentally ill persons?**
 - The Adult Mental Health Court and the Juvenile Mental Health Court has firmly established itself in the City of San José with the goal to treat mentally ill adults and youth alike and eliminate unnecessary placement of mentally ill persons into jails and prisons where they don't belong. Currently, Judge Stephen Manley is a mental ill advocate judge that has supported both the Adult Mental Health Court and the Juvenile Mental Health Court.
 - *For more information, please call 408-808-4900.*

- **When encountering improper behavior from police officers, who or where should you turn to?**
 - The **Independent Police Auditors (IPA)** wants people to feel safe when they are interacting with police officers. According to the IPA, it is important that residents that feel hostility from police officers issue a complaint.
 - *For more information about the IPA, please visit: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/ipa> or call 794-6226.*

- **What is the definition for "café shop?" Has there been many complaints concerning café shops? Who handles café shop businesses?**
 - A "café shop," also known as a coffee shop, is a business that serves coffee beverages at the discretion of the business owner. There have been 301 complaints about café shops in the City of San José. A café shop can serve alcohol as long as they have a license. Code Enforcement handles the policies and conduct of businesses. Code Enforcement considers the property owner responsible for any situation pertaining to businesses on the property, including café shops.

11. Adjourn