

MARINA BAY NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 14, 2007 MEETING

The November 14th meeting of the MBNC was called to order at 7:30 PM by President Virginia Finlay. Other officers present were: Barbara Norrish, Vice President; Pat Kiely, Secretary and Gregg Lustig, Treasurer. As usual, there was a round of self-introductions of all present.

1. Meet the Police Chief: Richmond Police Department Chief Chris Magnus said the department is “happy and real pleased” to be in Marina Bay (in the eastern half of the Dicon Building) even if it is temporary (5 – 7 years). It is a “huge improvement” for the department. There will probably be an Open House in January.

The Chief hopes that we are aware that community members can track crime online with “CrimeView.” The statistics go back 90 days. There is a slight lag in the mapping information because the details need to be entered in the police log first. He stated that the few crimes that happen in Marina Bay are “preventable crimes.” Thus he is hoping for the creation of more Neighborhood Watch groups within the Marina Bay subdivisions. The coordinator for same, Michelle Milan (510-620-6538), is always available to discuss how to form such groups.

The contract with ADT has been finalized for surveillance cameras for the Port and throughout the City with installation to be completed in February of 2008. The program for surveillance of the Port is being paid partially with funds from Homeland Security which has meant big delays in its implementation!

The Chief and the whole department are very concerned about gang violence. He is asking the captains to come up with additional plans to identify key persons and properties of interest. Chief Magnus is also looking forward to working with GSET, the Gang Suppression Enforcement Team, a group comprised of State law enforcement specialists in gang violence. “We have a really serious problem in North and Central Richmond” in which a core group of 35-40 individuals are responsible for 75% of the crime. The issue is further complicated because North Richmond is not within the City of Richmond, as it is in an unincorporated area, and is policed by the Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Office.

Chief Magnus said our officers are “reactive” because we don’t have as many officers on the nine citywide beats as our population requires. Fourteen would be the optimal amount of officers per beat. As for recruitment, currently there are 13 cadets in the academy and recently there were 5 lateral transfers into the department. The RPD will be bringing in more recruits in January, but the community will probably not notice the difference in staffing until the summer of 2008. At this time, 179 officers are included in this fiscal year’s budget and the Chief has authorization from the City Council to bring that number up to 200 officers. We should have 215 officers to be fully staffed considering the size of the city. He further stated that Richmond has some unique

problems and young people in the job market now have a different view of police work. The Department wants candidates who want the dynamic challenge of Richmond and who really want to make a difference here.” He also stated that there are two programs underway in Richmond that builds a relationship with young people who are interested in the criminal justice system. The Explorers Program works with youth that are 14 and older and the Cadet Program works with youth that have finished high school until they are 21 years old.

Regarding the theft of wire, it is reaching epidemic proportions in Richmond (Shimada Park was stripped and went dark, and the memorial plaque was stolen from Shimada as well). One business has been hit so hard that they are considering leaving Richmond. Unfortunately, this is a crime that is being perpetrated throughout the country. The replacement of stolen wiring is costing the City enormous amounts of money and manpower, so please, if you see anything remotely suspicious on the Bay Trail or anywhere else in Richmond, please call the RPD.

2. Richmond Police Activities League: Cpl. Larry Lewis, 28 year veteran of the Richmond Police Department, talked about all the activities that are available through RPAL: Activities such as basketball, biking, camping, computer education and training (for adults as well!), fishing, golf, soccer, etc (an impressive partial listing) are available on an ongoing basis in an effort in crime prevention by keeping the kids off the streets. RPAL serves boys and girls between 5 and 18 years of age. Outreach began in 1982 with cops playing soccer with local kids. Mechanics Bank donated a building at 22nd & Macdonald Avenue which is the home base of RPAL and which is undergoing a dramatic expansion. Currently, the Computer Center holds 30-40 kids plus there is an Explorer Program and an Adopt-A-School program. The after school programs start at 2PM, and there is a recording studio, a game room, a homework club with tutors, year-round sports and snacks from the food bank. RPAL members are attempting to bring Little League Baseball back to Richmond. Cpl. Lewis said “our kids need to be socialized, to see that there is life beyond the streets of Richmond, and they need to have their characters built.” This is achieved by all kinds of trips with police officers and volunteers and by teaching children responsibility through educational, social and sports programs. He noted that the computers are open to the public, and that RPAL is looking for volunteers for one to two hours weekly. Outcomes: 98% of RPAL kids do not get involved criminal activities, 97% of RPAL kids have a B average or better in school and mostly all attend college after high school graduation. There is going to be a grand gala dinner or lunch on January 24 to serve as a sneak peek of their new expanded facility. Please note that donations to RPAL are fully tax deductible. More information about RPAL is available on their web site at www.RPAL.org or contact Corporal Larry Lewis, Executive Director at (510) 621-1221.

3. Old and New Business: The MBNC is still in need of nominees for the office of Secretary for 2008. Please call Virginia Finlay at 908-5313 for further information.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9 PM. The next meeting will be the Annual Holiday Potluck on December 12th, 2007. The agenda for the January

9th, 2008 meeting will include the Beat Officer's Report, the Election of Officers for 2008 and Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia as the featured speaker.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Kiely
Secretary, MBNC.