

MARINA BAY NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
Minutes for Meeting of March 11th, 2010

Meeting called to order by President of MBNC, Virginia Finlay, at 7:35 p.m.
Officers present: Virginia Finlay, President and Ruth Zablotsky, Secretary.
Officers absent: Barbara Norrish, VP, and Niccore Tyler, Treasurer

BEAT OFFICER'S REPORT: Beat 1 Cop, Officer Rick Krug reported that there have been NO residential burglaries since the last report. RPD ran an "undercover operation" in Marina Bay Community Association in an attempt to catch the thief who had been breaking and entering homes in that particular subdivision. There have been no additional crimes but the RPD did receive several calls from residents there about suspicious looking males on the property (dressed just like the description RPD had received after the last break-in) but of course they were the undercover cops. The police feel that the community being on high alert has been very helpful in terms of thwarting crime; the mere fact that people are watching, noticing the "undercover" disguised cops and then making the calls to RPD thinking the people they were watching were perps is a good sign. BUT Officer Krug said, " Please tell people to stop apologizing and saying 'I'm sorry to bother you....' when they call us" as they WANT citizens to call no matter what it turns out to be. On Tuesday night, before tonight's meeting, at The Shores a vigilant resident called the cops because three males were seen trying to scale the fence carrying crowbars! The cops came right away, and the crime that was about to take place was stopped [the perps fled immediately]. They were three young Asian males. Officer Krug stated more than likely they were planning to break into automobiles.

In previous Beat Cop reports we were told that there were no plans to stop hiring in the police department, BUT, things have changed. The RPD has just initiated a hiring freeze but the eleven police cadets-in-training will be kept in the program. When they complete their training and join the force their numbers will put the police force at 200. RPD feels this is a pretty healthy number, considering the economy.

The underpass is definitely being named after Officer Bradley Moody as previously reported.

Officer Krug said we MUST stay vigilant at all times. With longer daylight hours and better weather expected, Richmond bicycle cops will soon be patrolling the neighborhood. They plan to continue to enforce the "no amplified noise within 30 feet" of any residence ordinance and be on the lookout for anyone suspicious.

Officer Krug reiterated the importance of getting all subdivisions to approve storm doors as they are great deterrents to thieves. A distinction was made between sturdy storm doors and flimsy screen doors.

TOM BRICHTA (of Pt. Richmond) spoke next, representing **RICHMOND CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAM**: The residents in all neighborhoods are the eyes and ears of Richmond P.D. We were reminded to NOT be shy about calling RPD and certainly to never be apologetic when we call them. RPD's non-emergency number is 233-1214, then select 0 when the phone tree begins. If there is a true emergency, of course dial 911.

Mr. Brichta encouraged everyone to establish Neighborhood Watch groups in their communities. He reminded everyone to know every car your neighbors in your neighborhood drive, know your neighbors' names, get their phone numbers, know their kids, know when they're having overnight guests (ostensibly, they will be driving cars unknown to your area so it's good to know if guests are staying over), start phone trees.

SAFETY REMINDERS [this is from his "Thirteen Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood Right Now!" document, posted elsewhere on this website]:

Notice your surroundings at all times.

DO NOT walk around with your iPod turned up full blast; keep the volume low so you can always hear people coming up behind you. He stressed how many crimes happen to individuals because they can't hear perps coming and they are not aware of their surroundings.

Notice ANY activity in shrubbery, bushes, etc.; stay aware, scan the environment as you walk or bicycle, just the way you scan the roads when you drive.

Carry a whistle with you at all times; creating noise generally causes criminals to run away.

Carry your keys in your hand with one key protruding visibly between your index and middle finger ready to be used defensively or even as a weapon should an incident occur. This also serves as a deterrent to muggers, etc.

Before ever getting into your car, always look thru the windows into the rear seats to ensure no one is hiding inside the car. Once in the car, immediately lock the doors. Keep your shrubbery trimmed and NOT blocking your windows as criminals sometimes hide behind thick shrubbery.

Keep window shades, etc. closed during the day so no one can see into your various rooms and inventory your possessions for future stealing. NOTE: when you're at home at night with the lights on and no shades or curtains or blinds drawn, everything you own is visible from the outside....another invitation to criminals.

Keep motion sensors on your outdoor lights.

Purchase the kinds of loud screeching alarms that hang from your door knobs on the interior of the front & back doors; if someone tries to break in while you are indoors, the alarm would emit an ear-splitting signal the minute the knob was tampered with -- which is a deterrent to a thief.

Engrave your Driver's License # on your possessions.

Register your Neighborhood Watch group. Generally 5 - 10 households join a N.W. group. Assign a captain. Stay in touch via email, phone, etc. Send a rep to the monthly Crime Prevention Meetings held on the 3rd Wednesday each month at the RPD, at 7 p.m. Participate in National Night Out. Ruth Zablotsky interrupted Mr. Brichta to state

that Marina Bay Community Assoc. has a huge NNO event yearly and this coming year is inviting all the subdivisions to participate.

RAILROAD QUIET ZONE: Assistant City Attorney, Carlos Privat, was the speaker. Currently, train horns are prohibited at three major RR crossings in our area: Marina Way South, Marina Bay Parkway, and Regatta Way -- which are considered "quiet zones." Historically, we had applied for Quiet Zone status ("routine sounding of horns"). BUT train horn tooting is ultimately up to the discretion of the train engineer and is defined and regulated by Federal, NOT local, rules (see below). Because the trains go thru private property ("All Aboard Storage" facility on Meeker) with its own small train crossing, the engineers are allowed to blast the horns four times: 2 long, 1 short and a 4th blast that can last as long as it can take for the train to fully occupy the crossing.

There are also two switching yards in our neighborhood, governed by the General Code of Operating Regulations, for the train crew on the ground and which mandates short blasts of the train horns. Mr. Privat stated that when these are not being adhered to, citizens should go to the Richmond City website and fill out a complaint form. They ARE read and analyzed and actions are taken.

All Aboard Storage is private property and has a very small train crossing area, and is governed by the FRA (Federal Railroad Administration) which does NOT require horns be used on private crossings, BUT the State of California DOES. Thus we often hear horns from the trains at weird hours, which is particularly aggravating for The Anchorage and Bayfront subdivisions.

The City has been laboring for a very long time to silence this particular private property crossing (All Aboard Storage) and has been working hard to come up with a formula to prevent the train horns being tooted as they traverse the Storage Facility crossing. They are contemplating putting up gates so that an exception can be made to the horns being used there. HOWEVER, the PUC (Public Utility Commission) seems open to this and what is being considered is a mounted, or "wayside" horn, to be used VERSUS leaving it up to the discretion of the individual train's engineer. The PUC will not grant exceptions to silence the horns completely, unfortunately.

Note: Quiet Zone formulas calculate numerous complex factors (# of train accidents, # of fatalities, etc.) and if the number arrived at falls BELOW the National Risk Calculator number, then the area qualifies as a Quiet Zone, and our area definitely qualifies as a Q.Z.

The train crossing grade separation (the roadway for cars will become an underpass and the train will stay at ground level) best case scenario: completion of construction should occur in 2013. Stage One will be the establishment of the Meade Street bypass across UC property so that we are not trapped inside Marina Bay.

MARINA BAY NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL OFFICER'S REPORT:

Pat Kiely, last year's Treasurer, gave her report for 2009. The MBNC is in the black. While there are fewer members this year, there is more money in the bank account. At 12/31/09, the balance was \$3,137.33. Current new dues collected for 2010 calendar year: \$1,450. A few minor expenses have been paid and the current balance is approximately \$4,540.

Virginia Finlay gave the President's Report for 2009: The City is currently experiencing great budgetary constraints. The MBNC's major expenses are the monthly mailing of the postcards, card stock, labels, and the annual holiday party. Virginia may have to ask local businesses to help defray postage costs, which they willingly did in the past during another recessionary period. Virginia stated that the Council brings both short-term items to the agenda for meetings, as well as longer-term, nitty-gritty issues and speakers. She itemized many of these from this past year. For planning agenda items, two to four months' lead time is needed so please make suggestions (an audience member at this point opened up the Ferry discussion).

Regarding the Ferry: enormous amount of study and work has gone into this so that this time around it will not be the failure that it was several years ago when we actually had Ferry service here located at the end of Harbour Way South. We are being reviewed by the Water Transit Authority (which has since morphed into the WETA...the E is for Emergency) to have ferry service. A similar project is also being reviewed for Hercules. Scheduling is paramount (the ferries need to ensure they are moving at hours that will get people to work for the morning commute AND home from work). Timing (i.e., duration of trip) is critical: 45 minutes to SF is too long, 35 mins is ideal. Access to the ferry is another issue; obviously railroad blockages on the feeder streets cannot happen if people are going to use ferries....therefore, the grade separation is an essential part of the ferry puzzle. BAD NEWS: ridership, or density, is critical. If the ferry is to succeed, apartment buildings will probably have to be built nearby. The only way a ferry system here can succeed is if it's heavily used. As it is, all the ferry systems around SF Bay have to be subsidized but they have a large ridership base because they are in more densely populated areas or provide huge parking areas for the people who drive to them.

The American Legion is now offering Veterans Services and Bingo games three to four nights per week in the Old City Council Building, on Marina Way South. There was a question about Pt. Molate and the plans by Upstream (developer) to build a casino there.

Next meeting: April 14, 7:30 p.m., Harbor Master Building

Respectfully submitted by,
Ruth Zablotsky
Secretary, Marina Bay Neighborhood Council