

South Watch: The South Side Flats and Slopes Code Enforcement Project
Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2017

Mission: South Watch: The South Side Flats and Slopes Code Enforcement Project works to improve the quality of life on the South Side by bringing people and institutions together to identify code violations, advocate for their remediation and monitor the outcomes. (This is also the mission of Oakwatch.)

- I. **Introductions** (5 minutes)
 - a. Barbara Rudiak shared the mission of South Watch and the meeting norms. The expectation is that the meetings will be 1.5 hours in length so it would be important for the agenda time limits to be respected as much as possible.
 - b. **Attendees** – Lizabeth Gray, resident; Jamie Earl, resident/block watch; Heath Johnson, crime analyst, Pittsburgh Police; JoAnn Evans, resident/Brashear Association; Bill Klimovich, Environmental Services; Shawn Wigle, Public Works; Roberta Jamison, Environmental Services; Frank Vitale, resident, SSCC board member; Alex Kozak, Duquesne University; Tim Lewis, Duquesne University; Commander Karen Dixon, Pittsburgh Police; Robert Burns, Representative Jake Wheatley’s Office; Officer Nathan Auvil, Pittsburgh Police; Gerry Kahl, resident; Ernest Rajakone, Mayor’s office; Brosha Tkacheva, City Council; Jirapa Kliewer, City Council; Teri Cataldo Fazio, Senator Jay Costa’s office; Jessica Durkin, Economic Development South; Jim Battista, resident; Rich Cupka, resident and business owner; Ed Wallo, resident/SSCC board member; Neil Manganaro, City Council; Julie Reiland, PLI; Candice Gonzalez, SS Chamber of Commerce; Barbara Rudiak, resident, SSCC/South Watch; Liz Style, resident, South Watch; Betty Kripp, resident, SSSNA/South Watch; Bridget Vyas, resident/South Watch

- II. **Presentation(s)** meant to educate, followed by discussion and Q & A. (15 minutes)
 - a. Barbara Rudiak explained that this portion of the agenda would be used to educate those in attendance to various practices, programs, etc that would be important to the South Watch group and South Side residents. When sharing the dates for future meetings, she suggested that Environmental Services prepare a presentation for the April meeting and Duquesne University in May or June. She explained that South Watch came about after learning about the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation’s (OPDC) monthly Oakwatch meetings. The public safety meetings that the South Side Community Council (SSCC) had planned in previous years on various topics didn’t necessarily have any follow-through so issues discussed at the meetings were never resolved. Since Oakwatch meetings were monthly and had city officials and residents at the table, issues/problems could be discussed and solutions found. After she met with the Oakwatch resident leads and attended a few meetings, Oakwatch leads presented at a SSCC meeting on March 14, 2016. Afterwards a SS working group was formed and met over the year to determine how the meetings would be formatted. They also met with Wendy Urbanic/311, Julie Reiland/PLI, Neil Manganaro/City Council, Liz Gray/Oakwatch to learn about city practices. An important part of the agenda is the property progress report and the South Watch committee needed to determine what properties they would focus on. The decision was to focus on refuse violations because the South Side Neighborhood Slopes Association (SSSNA) has been working on trash violations for years and Betty Kripp, a member of the South Watch committee, had already developed a relationship with Bill and Roberta in Environmental Services. There are significant trash violations throughout the flats and slopes that contribute to the perception/reality that SS is not safe place to live and visit. She spoke about the

impact that trash can have on a neighborhood, less pride in the neighborhood, breeding ground for rats, lower property values, etc. She shared the procedures that the committee – through the block watch leads - put into place so as to educate residents about the violations in order for them to be remedied before a 311 service request would need to be submitted. When a property had to be cited via 311, South Watch would inform Environmental Services so that they would be aware of which properties the committee was working on. The ES staff would then visit the property and talk with the tenant/landlord in an attempt to educate them about the refuse violations so that citations would not occur. If the tenants/landlords did not comply, citations would be issued. South Watch, Environmental Services and South Side's neighborhood plan all work on the premise that residents must first be educated to regulations before they can be held accountable for them. But once they are and they fail to comply, enforcement is necessary. In time, there will also be properties that need to be addressed with PLI – permits, licenses and inspections.

III. South Side Property Progress Report, Q & A (10 minutes)

- a. Bill Klimovich, Assistant Director, Department of Environmental Services
- b. Roberta Jamison, Administrator II, Department of Environmental Services
- c. Shawn Wigle, Program Supervisor, Department of Public Works
 - i. Bill shared the process of regular trash collection on Thursdays and how the ES staff handle the 311 service requests for refuse violations. He indicated that compliance on South Side can be difficult because of the number of rentals and absentee landlords but the ES staff do attempt to remedy the 311 service requests. In addition, ES staff work additional hours on Saturdays and Sundays to address the hot spots.
 - ii. Bill went through the property progress report and shared what the violation was and the action taken by the ES staff. South Watch leads will continue to monitor in order to determine if the actions taken were sufficient to consider the property remediated.
 - iii. Twelve (12) properties were remediated after a placard was placed on the door and one was remediated after ES spoke with the homeowner.
- d. Julie Reiland, Permits, Licenses, and Inspections
 - i. At this time there were no properties listed that needed to be addressed with PLI.

IV. South Side Crime Report – Trends in crime for the month, Q & A (15 minutes)

- a. Pittsburgh Police, Zone 3
 - i. Commander Karen Dixon invited Heath Johnson to share crime statistics for the South Side Flats from 2011 – 2016. The statistics for the slopes were not included this time but would be in the future.
 - ii. Heath Johnson, Crime Analyst
 1. Shared crime statistics for South Side Flats from 2011-2016. Part 1 crimes consist of violent crimes – homicide/murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault – and property crimes – burglary, theft, vehicle theft and arson. Part 1 crimes were at a low of 649 in 2011 with a high of 853 in 2012. In 2016, there were 761. There was a 4% change over the last 5 years which is considered a typical variation. A map showed where the hot spots were and it corresponded to where there were police park and walks and neighborhood patrols. Citywide heroin overdoses have exponentially increased from 34 in 2010 to 651 in 2016. In the South Side Flats, there were 12 overdoses and 1 fatality in 2015, 24 overdoses and 1 fatality in 2016 and already in 2017, there were 9 overdoses and 1 fatality. Commander Dixon stated that when looking at crime trends, South Side has a significant number of thefts from auto. Two arrests had

been made which resulted in a decrease for a short period of time. She also mentioned that most thefts were of cell phones left on bars and package thefts. Commander Dixon stated that opiate addiction has an impact on crime as addicts look for a way to support their habits. She currently has 96 officers to cover her 3 shifts and the number of citations on all crimes is increasing as a result.

- a. A resident asked when it was appropriate to contact 911 as opposed to 311. Commander Dixon indicated that residents should call 911 if the activity occurring is suspicious and/or a threat to quality of life. She stated that 911 calls inform the police where resources need to be.
- iii. Officer Nathan Auvril, Community Resource Officer
 - 1. Officer Auvril stated that he works 2 PM – 10 PM most days and attends community meetings to determine how he and others in the police department can be helpful. He is heavily involved in video surveillance and would be interested in sharing information during our presentation time.
- iv. After the meeting, Commander Dixon provided SW with saturation statistics for January and February.

Saturation Statistics		
	Jan	Feb
Physical Arrests	8	20
Non-Traffic Violations*	101	123
Traffic/Moving Violations	96	517
Vehicles Towed	17	26

*Disorderly conduct, public urination, open container, etc.

V. **Pittsburgh Parking Authority, Q & A (5 minutes)**

- a. John Fournier, Director of Meter Enforcement and Residential Permit Parking
 - i. John shared the enforcement statistics for February. We have the 3rd highest number of meters in the city next to Downtown and Oakland. He stated that these numbers were on par with other months.
 - ii.

	Feb
Enforcement Days	23 out of 24
Violations	
CC	214
DD	155
II	73
KK	71
Non RPP	178
Meter	2901

- iii. There are 40 enforcement officers and, at any given time, there are at least 25 working.
- iv. The parking authority is making changes internally to increase license plate recognition through technology and this should increase efficiency.
 - 1. There would also be changes with visitor passes at some point so that the enforcement officers wouldn't need to get out of the car to determine if the car has a pass. Residents will use technology to submit a visitor pass request.
- v. A question was raised about the lack of variation in enforcement times and an example was provided. John appreciated the information and would be looking into the concern.

- vi. There will be a soft launch with the parking meters starting on Friday, March 17th. The meters will extend until midnight and accept payment but only warning tickets would be given for a few weeks.

VI. News from Duquesne University Q & A (5 minutes)

- a. Tim Lewis, Director of Commuter Affairs
 - i. Tim shared that there are currently 1100 students living on South Side. They communicate with students in the fall via a South Side Guide. They also have a closed Facebook group for students. They do discuss with students the importance of being good neighbors, i.e. appropriate behavior. Prior to Halloween and St. Patrick's Day they remind students of the social host ordinance. He stated that students are aware that they are to remove snow from their sidewalks and remind them that the Chamber has shovels if their apartments do not. This past November the students and community came together at the Market House for a Thanksgiving meal for students and residents. The University invited residents to a women's basketball game in February but no one from the community attended. Tim discussed the relationship that has developed between the 17th Street Block Watch, the Pittsburgh Police and the Chamber. He assured the group that students are aware that they are accountable for their actions both on and off campus via the Student Code of Conduct.
 - ii. Candice Gonzalez from the Chamber shared that Duquesne students assisted as volunteers during the recent Soup Contest. Community members were extremely complimentary of their help.
 - iii. Tim understands the concerns regarding over occupancy in houses and addresses it with students. He wanted the language in the code so that it can be shared in the housing guide. Neil and Julie agreed to assist him in finding the language and location in the code.

VII. News from the Mayor's Office, Q & A (5 minutes)

- a. Ernest Rajakone, Community Affairs Liaison
 - i. Ernest brought greetings from the mayor who appreciated that South Watch has come into existence through the support of Oakwatch.

VIII. News from City Council, Q & A (5 minutes)

- a. Neil Manganaro, Chief of Staff
 - i. Neil shared information about the city's celebration of St. Patrick's Day on Saturday, March 11th. He spoke about the shuttle that would be operating 24 hours in order to support the bar employees who would need to be at work early and would be leaving work late.
 - 1. Barbara shared that the 24 hour shuttle came about because of the meeting that was held with Allison Harndan, the police, fire department and bar owners. The city asked the bar owners to encourage their employees to use the shuttle and the bar owners reminded them that their employees probably wouldn't be leaving the bars until 4 AM and would need the shuttle to run at that time.

IX. News from State Offices, Q & A (5 minutes)

- a. Robert Burns, Legislative Assistant, State Representative Jake Wheatley
 - i. Robert also shared Representative Wheatley's appreciation for the formation of South Watch. He informed the group of two events – a Senior Fair on April 7th at Point Park University and an Entrepreneur Fair in Harrisburg on March 20th.
- b. Teri Cataldo Fazio, Legislative Assistant, State Senator Jay Costa

- i. Teri thanked the group for being invited to attend and shared that Senator Costa now represents the Flats and Slopes

X. Community Announcements & Events

- a. March 14th – Planning Forum Meeting – 5:30 PM at Brashear Association
- b. March 14th - South Side Slopes Neighborhood Slopes Association General Meeting – 7 PM at Henry Kaufman Neighborhood Center at 2201 Salisbury Street.
- c. April 1 - South Side Spring Social at Steel Cactus from 5 PM – 9 PM.
- d. April 8 – Duquesne University’s Service Day

XI. Meeting adjournment

Next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 12th at 6 PM at Brashear Association.