

January 9, 2006, Safety and Security Committee Meeting Minutes, City of Ridgeside

Attendees: Linda Allen, Ellen Barth, Becky Hooper, and Janet Jobe (chair)

Janet reported on her recent meetings with the ER police Chief Phillips and Deputy Chief Mize, the City of Chattanooga Police Chief Parks, and the Lookout Mountain police (latter, by phone).

The ER Police offered to come to the next town meeting on January 17th. Janet relayed this request to Ridgeside commissioners.

Because of the heightened complaints and calls to members of the committee, we are sending out a message to the community to please come to the next meeting if you have safety and security concerns. Lack of attendance at town meetings is perceived as satisfaction by residents in all matters. According to the number of phone calls we receive, this is not always the case.

Topics at the meeting included: crime statistics, up tick in Ridgeside crime, deterrents, response times, police coverage, traffic violations, and neighborhood first response list.

ER Police say creating and maintaining deterrents to crime are the most important things we can do right now. They made several suggestions and offers, among which was to park a police car around the neighborhood. This has already been implemented and we have requested that the car be moved more often. They have also included our city in a grant for new and updated Neighborhood Watch Crime Prevention Program of which they were awarded. They are pleased to be able to share this information with us in the near future.

Janet researched the current contract with the ER police and their jurisdiction in the City of Ridgeside at the request of committee members and community residents after the question was posed to the commissioners at the last meeting. Here is a brief review of the service contract:

- Ridgeside pays \$25,000 a year (approximately) for fire/rescue and police services.
- This rate has not changed since 1997.
- For approximately 158 houses, one church (?), and one community center, this rate is about \$158 per house.
- The East Ridge ISO rate gives residents the same homeowner insurance rates as the City of Chattanooga.
- ER Police provide daily routine patrol. Janet was told that at least one patrol occurred during every shift, every day.
- Police provide crime prevention/neighborhood watch program and meetings.
- Fire/Rescue inspects and flow tests each fire hydrant twice per year.
- Fire/Rescue dispatches and coordinates response of emergency medical ambulance service.

Per discussion with Chief Phillips, all ER police are deputized by the Hamilton County Sheriff for their work in the City of Ridgeside and function as full-time, regular, armed police. They can give

traffic citations. All arrests go to the Hamilton County jail, and all court cases to Hamilton County Sessions/Criminal Court.

One recent neighborhood and police partnership did result in one arrest of a single black male. We hope this is the same person that has purportedly been seen entering garages and approaching people about completing 'prior agreed upon work'. Please be on the look-out for this type of activity, report it to the police, and do not let this person in your house.

Review of last few months calls to ER police noted that many of the car and garage break-ins in Ridgeside had not been reported to the police; hence, the report of calls shows an average number of calls for these same months. All residents are encouraged to call the ER police department first, to report any crimes, and then call a commissioner before calling a member of the Safety and Security Committee. This way, all up ticks in criminal activity in our neighborhood can be noted by the appropriate people. All calls, including hang-ups, to 911 have to be responded to by the police. There is no extra patrol on Sat. and Sun. evenings (from midnight to 2 a.m.) as reported by Mayor Cooper at the last town meeting, according to Chief Phillips.

The committee would also like to state a disclaimer for the bogus paper announcement that was delivered to many residents shortly after the committee's announcement regarding Halloween. It was a spoof on the official annual announcement from this committee, and was obviously a farce. Many residents reported being offended by the immaturity and uncivilized nature of the prank. We are also grieved at the nature and harm of such juvenile activities.

Upon review of recent criminal activity in our city and input from various police resources, and as a result of frequent calls and requests from the residents of Ridgeside, the Safety and Security Committee makes the following recommendations to the commissioners of Ridgeside:

1-The City of Ridgeside pay for more patrol and protection, at least doubling our current charge of \$25,000 and coverage. Paying an additional \$158 per house is a lot cheaper than alarm companies are charging. An annual outlay of \$50,000 is still not enough to pay for one full-time police, but can be used to increase coverage and patrol.

2-Purchase an *interactive voice response system* that can be used to relay messages, by phone, to residents and to conduct surveys. This system can be used, sparingly, to report on up ticks in criminal activity, remind residents of town meetings, and to take votes and surveys of lighting proposals, street closings, etc. The estimated cost is \$500.00.

3-That the commissioners and committee members solicit and maintain a list of residents who need to be on a 'first response' list in case of emergencies such as power outages, snow storms, etc. The elderly, handicapped, and others with medical needs would be included on the list, and put on the list by the individual at their response to a letter from this committee.

4-That the neighborhood watch program be refreshed with the residents and that the signs be refreshed as well. ER Police will help with this request.

5-That a long-term plan for low-level lighting throughout the neighborhood be created and implemented. At the very least, take a survey of residents interested in having consistent, low-level lighting for our city.

6-That more streets be closed off on Tunnel and Shallowford. First preference being the top of Windmere to eliminate 'straight shots' through our neighborhood. Second preference is the top of Hilldale. Fewer entrances and exits create deterrents to non-neighborhood traffic, of which we have experienced a heavy flow lately. These closings could contain a curb and grass so that, if necessary, they could be driven over by fire engines or ambulances.

7-That consideration be given to 'gating' the community, even if this means creating a traffic bar that automatically raises upon approach, as an additional deterrent to making it convenient to cut through and cruise in our neighborhood. Also, that a gate be installed at the entrance to the alley that runs from Tunnel Blvd. behind houses on Ridgeside Road – one of the crime hotspots lately.

8-Put speed humps on Hilldale. There is a pattern of cut-through traffic coming in from Tunnel onto Lyncrest, turning onto Brookwood and then to Hilldale, thus bypassing all speedhumps currently in the neighborhood, but passing by many houses with young children who play outside.

9-That surveillance cameras be posted at all streets into/out of neighborhood and that continuous surveillance be used as a deterrent as well as evidence for criminal cases. This is a one time expense (of approximately \$2,000), is used successfully in many other neighborhoods, and comes highly recommended by our police.

10-That the commissioners consider purchasing the church for sale on Shallowford Road, located directly across from the pool exit, for use in overflow parting for swim meets, for town meetings, and for other neighborhood functions.

11-That the commissioners names and areas of oversight be listed in the community directory, and that they be listed for calls regarding safety and security issues as well as committee members. This will create heightened awareness of the concerns of residents.

12-That residents be encouraged to call police for suspicious activity and that they report all criminal activity to the police department.

13-That traffic warnings for first time offenses and then traffic citations be given for speeding and running stop signs within the neighborhood, especially at this pertains to the intersections of Windmere and Lyncrest as well as Hilldale and Brookwood.