

June 16, 2008

The Police and Public Safety Committee met twice during the last month. The first meeting was held on May 16th at 2:00 PM at the Community Board office. In attendance, were Brian McCarthy, Inspector with the Narcotics Borough Brooklyn South office, Josephine Beckman, District Manager and Susan Pulaski, Chair of the Committee. The second meeting was held on June 11th at 1:00 PM also at the Community Board office. Those in attendance from the Police and Public Safety Committee were Bob Bounviono, Mary Ann Walsh, and Susan Pulaski, Chair. Also present were Dean Rasinya, Board Chair, Josephine Beckman, District Manager, Fran Vella-Marone, Community Board Member and representing the Dyker Heights Civic Association; Rosa Casella, representing The Neighborhood Improvement Association; Stephanie Giovinco representing Councilman Gentile; Susan Tirota, representing Assemblywoman Hyer-Spencer; Captain Rodriguez and Lt. Chris Montagna, representing the 68th Precinct; and Jack Malone and Larry Morrish, representing the Brooklyn District Attorney's office. Both of these meetings were held to address police concerns throughout the Community Board 10 area.

It was decided that a special meeting needed to be set up with the Narcotics office to bring to their attention, personally, the concerns from the Board. It was hoped that meeting directly with the Narcotics office would help to solve the drug problems more swiftly than the Narcotics office hearing the complaints via the police precinct. So, the May meeting specifically concentrated on the reported chronic alleged drug locations in Community Board 10.

The drug location list was created from the drug activity complaints received by the Board office. Ten building—both residential and commercial--locations were mentioned along with lengthy descriptions of the specific drug activity at that site. Locations were all on the Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights border. Four other sites mentioned were in parks and schoolyards. The drug activity is summarized as follows: the drug dealing is extremely organized and includes marijuana, cocaine and crack; the dealing involves mature adults with teens and young adults being used as dealers; the drug activity has been going on for a number of years; the drug activity is both low-end and high-end; deals are made by car and on foot, namely out-in-the-open transactions, in front of people's homes, apartment houses, parks, and schoolyards; and deals are made during the day and night.

The number of complaints from both residents and shopkeepers reaching the Board office is increasing monthly at an alarming rate. Complaints involve quality-of-life issues both from the sale and the use of drugs.

The June meeting was held to address a more broad range of police concerns in the Community Board 10 area. In addition to the civic associations, police and district attorney's office attending, the Narcotics office that attended the May meeting was asked to attend the June meeting. They did not do so and did not notify the Board office that they would not be attending. The aim of this meeting was to let all concerned know that

our Community Board is being proactive in improving the quality-of-life of our community and planning to get the appropriate agencies involved to supplement the work of our police precinct. The items addressed at the meeting were: an increase in chronic narcotic related complaints, Bay Ridge Nightlife noise complaints, burglaries, patrol strength update and local parks/loitering/vandalism/youth related problems.

To mention once again, there has been an increase in the number of calls from area residents involving noise, nightlife activity and most especially, narcotics related activities. The procedure of filing a complaint with the Board was outlined first, namely, all complaints that reach the Board office are forwarded on to the Precinct. Drug complaints are further forwarded on to the Narcotics office. Action is then taken at the appropriate level. Since the items discussed at this meeting are police issues and are involved in on going investigations, only a summary of the problems will be presented and not specifics.

Narcotic locations and their latest complaints around the entire Board area were discussed not just those in one specific location. Harassment issues in various situations were mentioned this time as being one of the new complaints. Residents, fearing for themselves as well as their children and seniors, expressed fear in their complaints, i.e. should they continue living here? Total frustration--Why were their concerns are not being dealt with quickly? There have been complaints concerning noise coming from six bars, five on Third Avenue and one on Eighth Avenue. Neighborhood burglaries were discussed as well as vandalism, graffiti in and near our local parks, and loitering of the homeless on benches near our local banks.

Discussion by all the attendees took place. The conclusion reached was that most of these problems all stem from one situation: drugs. Captain Rodriguez and Lt. Montagna filled us in on the police involvement on these issues. Summons are issued to bar owners in noise related problems and they were told that noise is their problem and they must control it. Eight arrests were made last month. But usually the individual is out the next day. Gang bullying was mentioned in connection with harassment issues. It was noted that harassment arrests cannot be made unless they are witnessed by the police. Gang behavior was outlined as to their actions and behavior. Police must be made aware of problems, so residents must overcome their fears and call the police. Without that notification, police cannot begin to act; they need our help. It is a constant struggle and both people and police must remain vigilant.

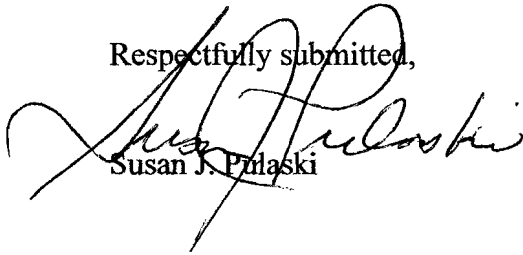
Captain Rodriguez said that in connection with many situations, usually drug related ones, a case must be built in order for an arrest to be made; and that takes time—months of time. So, if it appears that nothing is being done with our complaint, it is being addressed. The Captain elaborated somewhat on how a case is made.

It was noted that the age of the drug offenders is getting younger and that gang age is now younger also. The gangs that are present in our community are not from our community, but come here to deal drugs. However, when school is out, dealers tend to spend less time here. Neighborhood groups noted that they have seen negative changes

creeping up in our neighborhood, that complaints are up, but arrests are down and that what they feel is needed is more police coverage. The Captain noted, however, that Brooklyn South Narcotic arrests are down by 45%, but that the Precinct general arrests are up by 10%. He also stated that there has been a decrease in manpower Citywide, e.g. in our area: our 86th Street Officer has been pulled and is only on 86th Street 1-2 days per week. It was mentioned that we need to get the DA more involved and that the DA must "red flag" the narcotic arrests.

Dean Rasinya said, in closing, that our community is not satisfied with the way these issues are being dealt with. People don't feel safe here and our quality-of-life is being diminished. Our neighborhood is being overlooked with insufficient amount of police strength and that more attention is being given to communities with more problems. And, that if we don't see changes in the immediate future, he will make sure that our concerns are presented to the police commissioner in order to get better action.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan J. Pilaski