

Maxwell Park Neighborhood Council
Monthly Meeting—Wednesday, May 10, 2006
Location: Maxwell Park Elementary School, Room 6
Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Present: Jose Dorado (Chair), Robert McGillis (Vice Chair), Jan Hetherington (Membership Secretary), Jeremy Gluskin (Treasurer), Krista Gulbransen (Minutes Secretary), Adelle Foley, Ann Churchill, Barbara Taylor, Bettye Boston, Claire Antonetti, Haley, Helen da Silva, Jeanine Tu, Jennifer Vasquez, Jose Davis, Kate Phillips, Lease Wong, Lucille Jackson., Malia Saulala, Monique Moore-Racine, Nancy Sidebotham, Nick Stoughton, Patty Moore, Sarah Hipolito, Scott Fuller, Susan Scolnick, Tina Tu, Araina Richards, Lt. Sharon Williams, Officer Ron Ward, Officer Frank Mendoza, Emily Rogers (Desley Brooks' Office), Claudia Jimenez (Jean Quan's office), Darryl Stewart (Nate Miley's Office)

Guests: Sandy Quist, District Attorney's Office

Board Absent: None

Welcome Comments & Introductions

Jose Dorado (Chair) welcomed us to the meeting. April minutes put up for approval. Three changes made to notes. Motion to approve the minutes by Nick Stoughton. First and second from the audience. Minutes approved at 7:15pm.

Neighborhood Action Teams (NATs)

- *NAT (Neighborhood Action Team) Program – Sarah Hipolito reporting:* Take a look at the neighborhood article in the MacArthur Metro.
- *Traffic NAT—Adelle Foley reporting:* Recently witnessed some enforcement at Brookdale and High. Each month they are telling the traffic department where they want to see controls occurring. Each month they nominate a different area. You are encouraged to send your suggestions to trafficonat@yahoo.com.
- *Crime NAT –Susan Scolnick reporting:* Another count added to Antonio Russell's criminal counts. News that the 76 station across the street from Mills College robbed at gunpoint. Security tape did not provide any information that would be useful. A neighbor that was attacked 5 years ago in the neighborhood, we are working to get a stay away order when the criminal gets released which is very soon. Susan is working on making sure that occurs. Please continue to send your letters on Antonio Russell for his upcoming sentencing next week. No meetings happening right now or planned for the future.
- *Blight & Beautification—Claire Antonetti reporting:* Continuing to work on MacArthur/Pierson intersection to put in a pocket park. Working with 76 station owner and nearby apartment owners in addition to Caltrans. They are currently working on funding ideas. We had a successful Earth Day on April 22. We are trying to revive the mural on Redding. Susan Scolnick has been successful in getting some standing water issues taken care of where mosquitoes were obviously breeding. Everyone is asked to keep an eye out and call abatement.
- *Community Building NAT – Helen Da Silva reporting:* Plans continue for Maxwell Park-A Day in the Park event on September 16. Next meeting is Monday, May 22 at 7pm. Please contact Helen if you're interested in helping out, especially with our event. Please email her at hds222@aol.com.
- *Education NAT – Krista Gulbransen reporting:* We are sponsoring an evening at Maxwell Park Elementary School on Friday, May 12 from 6-7:30pm. Come hear about what is going on at the school, schooling your child in Oakland, and hear experiences from other parents in the Glenview and Peralta neighborhoods who were able to energize their neighborhood families to utilize the Oakland Public Schools.

- *CORE & MPERT Report—Nick Stoughton reporting:* Recent emergency drill was not as well attended as we would like. Further CORE classes will occur at the school soon. We will let you know when.
- *Neighborhood Walks – Adelle Foley reporting:* About to start the evening walks. An email will go out soon announcing those. The most likely day will be a Wednesday but we will be doing a survey on the email group asking people if Wednesday or Thursdays are better. We are looking for more people to help out with the walks. Please contact Adelle if you're interested at afoley@actransit.gov. There will be a walk this Saturday morning, look for the announcement.
- *Maxwell Park Elementary School—No one reporting.*
- *Neighborhood Watch Coordinator Report – Jan Hetherington reporting:* Still working on organizing and focusing on those block captains that have yet to make the first step. If you're interested in finding out who your block Captain is, please contact Jan at jan@moves-to-improve.com.

Guest Speaker – Sandy Quist, District Attorney's Office Retiree

- Sandy is known as the "Velvet Hammer." She is here this evening to explain the process in the D.A.'s office. Worked there for 30 years. Not speaking on behalf of any city entity.
- First thing they do is look at the case for what admissible evidence they have. The report doesn't always contain that particular evidence. Statements obtained legally, physical evidence obtained legally, witness testimony. There are many things that are not obtained legally or admissible. First thing she does is sift through the information. They determine if there is a case with "beyond a reasonable doubt." You are constantly told (during a jury duty stint) that you can't presume someone is guilty. You can only determine from what you learn on the witness stand and nowhere else. The only thing that can be used to obtain a conviction is what comes across the witness stand.
- What is a reliable witness? Word on the street, not reliable. If they have a motive or a bias, not reliable. A witness that is testifying from their own observation (i.e. not testifying from what someone else told them).
- OPD cannot reveal every single detail of the crime so that they don't compromise the crime. It's hard to tell if people actually witnessed the crime or read something in the newspaper. By not telling, they help to protect the reliability of the witnesses that they will use to prosecute the case. You never know how the police are going to get information from a witness.
- There is a huge difference between what is reported initially in the reporting of a crime and what a prosecution might look like.
- Question: How we can help in terms of an investigation? Answer: Talk to the police. Don't talk so much amongst yourselves. Let the police do the investigation. If you try to do the investigation yourself there is the possibility that you will taint the investigation. It's also dangerous if you become personally involved.
- Question: Of what value is a sketch artist? Answer: She has never prosecuted a case based on a sketch artist. One of the problems is that they are very generic and often the original sketch and the actual suspect do not look the same. You cannot bring victims together to describe a suspect. It's very important to keep witnesses apart from one another to maintain the integrity of the investigation.
- Question: We want to share information amongst ourselves to protect ourselves but are you saying that this is not necessarily a good idea? Answer: Not necessarily. It's very important to share information across the community but if you get to the point where you're influencing one another when it comes to witnessing people and activities, you could compromise the investigation. If you have a detailed description, give it to the police. That is the better way to go about it.
- Question: If I know something and share it with the police how long before I can share it with the community? Answer: There isn't one firm answer about that. But try to find out who the investigator is of the crime and ask them how you can help and how the community can help. Let the people who are working the crime make those decisions, not you.
- Question: Is the DA present when bail is determined? Answer: It depends. When a warrant is issued that's only between the judge and the criminal. When they are brought for arraignment than the DA is present.
- Question: We would like to have a handbook, is that possible? Answer: It's not really possible to create a general standard because each situation is different. It's not that cut and dry. There is not one easy answer

so you have to talk to the investigator and ask. Pick one representative in the community to talk to the investigator and then get the answer from them and distribute the information instead of having multiple people call the investigator at one time. You as a citizen need to determine what should be shared and what shouldn't be shared. Don't think everything should have to be shared.

- Question: What can we do as a community that is proactive? Answer: That's a question for the police. I think you're doing what has to be done as a community. Lt. Williams reiterated how important it is to be a good witness.
- Question: If I'm a witness how much danger am I going to be in? Are there statistics? Answer: It depends on the crime. Lt. Williams says she doesn't think there are statistics kept on that. She can't think of one incident her 16 years where that occurred.
- Question: What is the best way we can participate in the process of prosecution? Can you walk us through what it means to prosecute? The best way you can be a part of it is being a good witness. Honestly, I didn't do my job based on what people told me they thought I should do. I mostly based my case on witness information. As a D.A. I'm going to do the best I can do no matter what. I'm looking for information that is going to prosecute period.
- Question: As a witness what should I be noting? Answer: Whatever you hone in on. It just happens. Everyone sees things differently. There is no one right answer.
- Question: Can you explain sentencing? It depends on the level at which it's initially charged. And that determines where they go to trial.
- Question: Where can we affect anything if we can at all? Answer: There isn't. They should be doing the best they can, based on the information they have not because other people are trying to influence them to do so. You can send a letter to the probation department after they've pled. You can send letters after someone has been sentenced saying that you think that the sentence was too lenient. Should send letters to both probation department and the D.A. The D.A. gives it to Probation, then Probation gives it the judge. Follow the dates as to when people plead guilty. If they are found guilty in a jury trial, send a letter to the Probation Department for sentencing. It's good to know the name of the D.A. Letter prior to plea goes to D.A. Prior to sentencing goes to D.A. and Probation Department.
- Question: How is someone charged? Answer: If two crimes merged (i.e. robbery of property and shooting) then they won't necessarily get charged with both things. They want a robbery conviction with aggravating circumstances because it's going to carry a higher sentence. Their reasoning for charging people with certain crimes is based on the maximum sentence they're going to try to get although it may not make a lot of sense to us as citizens.
- Question: How can we be involved on the backend when a criminal gets out of jail after serving their term? Answer: If their sentence was in county jail you can find out their sentence. State prison: release conditions through the Parole's information. Each person released has a Parole Officer and you can use them to find out what the conditions of release are. It's best to have the docket number.

City & County Representatives

Councilwoman Desley Brooks—Emily Rogers reporting

- Construction down on MacArthur & Seminary is supposed to start the first week of June. Question asked as to what the construction is going to be. Emily is not sure of what that construction is going to be.
- Was able to shut down the liquor store at MacArthur Blvd & 60th (MacArthur Liquors) where there were 3 liquor stores on the same corner. A produce market is supposed to be coming in to that space now.
- Farmer's Market will open on June 3 from 9am-1pm. Will go every Saturday until the last Saturday in October.
- Monthly Town Hall Meeting this Saturday, May 13 at Frick Middle School. Chief Wayne Tucker will be there.
- Some letters distributed in regards to recent allegations brought against Desley. It is her response to those allegations.
- Claire Antonetti made mention of not getting return calls from Desley despite repeated attempts to contact her in regards to the construction occurring down at the MacArthur & Pierson work area. Emily will check into it and get back to her.

Councilmember Jean Quan—Claudia Jimenez reporting

- Additional funding for someone in the District Attorney's office to work fulltime on dealing with the city liquor stores that are problematic will now give the city the opportunity to have a full time attorney prosecuting these stores.
- August 12 will be the Laurel Street Fair.
- Claudia cannot comment on the Lighting & Landscaping Assessment tax but there has been much discussion on our Yahoo email group and Jean Quan has made some comments on it.

Supervisor Nate Miley – Darryl Stewart reporting

- In July there will be another Town Hall Meeting that will focus on the Violence Prevention Coordinator that has been recently hired. The second part of the meeting will be "Alameda County 101" so people can learn what city and county responsibilities are. More cuts are coming their way based on missing funds.

Community Policing Reports--Araina Richards reporting

- Will be canvassing in the neighborhood to garner interest in the Neighborhood Council and the Neighborhood Watch program.

Police Report – Ron Ward & Frank Mendoza reporting

- Used to be in Community Policing in the Maxwell Park area. Knows that we have quite a bit of crime related to car burglaries and car break-ins. They are focusing on the teens and youth that are committing the crimes.
- A burglary that occurred the other day: Kid going around the neighborhood saying, "Hi, do you want to sponsor me for school?" turned out to be an opportunity to check out whether a homeowner was home and then a break-in occurred. Someone in the neighborhood started questioning him. He was alone and was not caught but there is a lead on him through a witness. The only reason he didn't get in the house was because the window he tried to break into had a barrier stop on it.
- Emails: rcward@oaklandnet.com and fmendoza@oaklandnet.com. They are required to check their email at least once a day now so this is the best way to reach them.
- Seems to be a couple of incidences where people were surprised between 3am and 6am by robbers. General trend now is just to pick up money left around. Ipods are pretty popular as is the loose change and money. Computers aren't very popular.

Crime Statistics – Lt. Sharon Williams reporting

- Handed out report of crimes for homicides in our neighborhood since the beginning of the year. We have nothing. So don't think we'll get a walking beat officer.
- What are you doing about High and Fairfax? They won't get a PSO for quite awhile. There are other areas that have to be worked first that are worse off. We have to rely on our Beat Officer to deal with a lot of the problems as a result. PSOs can only work on their beat and not on other beats. Beat officers are the ones who take calls for services. PSOs do not take calls for services.

City Auditor Candidate introduction made. Available for questions at networking.

Announcements

A family representative from **Seagull Market** stood up to introduce herself and make announcement that her family was trying to work to make certain Seagull Market was appropriate for the neighborhood. She was concerned because they had recently received a "bad" marking from the city and they didn't want people to think they weren't a good liquor store. Claudia Jimenez of Councilwoman Quan's office stood up to say that the Councilwoman does not really put any worth into those ratings. Lease Wong of the BID/Laurel Merchant's Association got up to say that they want to make sure that markets that sell liquor don't automatically set a bad target on their back just because they do so.

Adelle Foley introduced Courtney a woman running for **City Auditor**. Courtney made brief intro of herself and left some brochures.

A **Neighborhood Law Attorney** from the city's office introduced herself and mentioned the liquor store that they are prosecuting at 6200 MacArthur Blvd. She explained a little about what her office is there to do for the people of Oakland. Community testimony for the upcoming prosecution is critical so she was encouraging people to attend a meeting on May 20 where testimony was being taken.

Next meeting – Wednesday, June 14, 2006 at Maxwell Park Elementary School

Broke for networking at 9:15pm

Krista Gulbransen reporting
Minutes Secretary
510-436-7177 or krista_gulbransen@yahoo.com

Contact info: <http://www.maxwellparknc.com>

Jose Dorado	Chair	chair@...
Robert McGillis	Vice Chair	vicechair@...
Jan Hetherington	Membership Secretary	membsecretary@...
Jeremy Gluskin	Treasurer	treasurer@...
Krista Gulbransen	Minutes Secretary	minssecretary@...
Sarah Hipolito	NAT Coordinator	natcoordinator@...
Claire Antonetti	Blight & Beautification NAT	bnbnat@...
Helen da Silva	Community Building NAT	communitynat@...
Susan Scolnick	Crime & Drugs NAT	crimenat@...
Jim Gilsenan	Traffic NAT	trafficnat@...
Lisa Cartolano	Education NAT	mpncpc_ednat@yahoo.com
Pat Patterson	Arts NAT	pmacp@aol.com
Nick Stoughton	CORE/MPERT	nick@...
Araina Richards	NSC-Beat 28X	nsc@...

Each person can be contacted via their 'maxwellparknc.com' email address (unless otherwise noted)
To join the Yahoo! Email group go to: <http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/MPNCPC/>