

Citizens and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee
Monday, January 22, 2024 6:00 p.m.
B Street Community Service Center
230 B Street
Lake Wales, FL 33853

CALL TO ORDER:

Lt. Michael Smith	PRESENT
Andy Oguntola	PRESENT
Al Goldstein	PRESENT
Narvell Peterson	PERSENT
Tiffany Davis	PRESENT
Kristin Royal	PRESENT

POLICE ACTIVITY

Lieutenant Michael Smith reported Lake Wales Police Department statistical data from December 1, 2023 to January 19, 2024.

47 Alpha Sector calls for service: 794

47 Bravo Sector calls for service: 820

47 Charlie Sector calls for service: 1,208

47 Delta Sector calls for service: 638

Calls involving weapons: 2

Total calls for service: 3,460

Total arrests: 156

Lt. Smith explained the zone areas. The City is divided into four sectors. Central and Scenic divides the City from East, West, North and South. 47 Alpha is the Northwest Sector, which is north of Central Avenue and west of Scenic. It goes a little bit east of Scenic, but for the most part, west of Scenic. Delta is everything north of Mountain Lake Cut Off. Bravo is pretty much the whole eastern side of the City from Scenic east. Charlie is Central south.

Traffic Complaints: 52

Traffic Stops: 741

Traffic Crashes: 132

Citations Issued: 454

Traffic Warnings Issued: 233

Lt. Smith advised that at the last meeting, Mr. Peterson asked if we expound on the Sectors of the traffic statistical data. Below is a break down by Sector of the traffic statistical information from December 1, 2023 to January 19, 2024:

Alpha: 71 warnings, 28 citations

Bravo: 22 warnings, 97 citations

Charlie: 85 warnings, 283 citations

Delta: 55 warnings, 46 citations

Also at the last meeting, Lt. Smith was asked to provide a list of some of the programs that the Police Department is involved in. Lt. Smith provided copies of the list of 73 programs. A list is attached to these Minutes. Lt. Smith discussed several of the programs from the list.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:

The resident of 413 E Street spoke of a concern for the safety of the children. The resident asked if an officer come around when kids get out of school. The children are getting out of school, and the traffic does not respect the Janie Howard Wilson area. Traffic goes through the area fast and through the alley fast. The resident saw 13 kids come out of a house. Cars do not stop at stop signs and that is when kids are getting out of school. Never seen a resident come in the neighborhood and bring this problem in the neighborhood.

Mr. Peterson advised he went to the Police Department on this date and got a summary of complaints of the resident at 405. He said he has been asking this several times and nothing happens. There are little kids there all day long and walking up and down the streets. They just moved in the residence, there are all these complaints, and we are just putting Band-Aids on it. It is a nuisance. The resident of 413 E Street spoke further regarding the safety for the children.

Chairman Oguntola asked Lt. Smith what could be done to bring peace to that area. Lt. Smith advised that when the officers are available, we will be there.

Michelle Threatt. 606 W. Jackson Avenue. She said last year she was at a meeting, and this same street was discussed. The street we are talking about is Florida and E Street. Janie Howard, and then when you go around the corner to Spook Hill. She said she brought this up to the Commission, and there was an officer at the location. Then the school got themselves set up. She asked what kind of set up Hillcrest has because there are always officers at that location on Highway 60. Lt. Smith said the Hillcrest officer is a detail paid by Hillcrest. Lt. Smith said Hillcrest went to the Commission to have the street off of Highway 60 blocked off in the mornings before school and the afternoons after school. A paid officer is there to make sure traffic does not turn down that street off of Highway 60. Ms. Threatt asked if that is an option for Janie Howard if they chose to, and Lt. Smith replied yes. Janie Howard Wilson did opt into that option about two years ago, and they blocked off Florida Avenue at Scenic. Janie Howard Wilson used to have an officer there, but they opted out of that option and they put

their employees there. Chairman Oguntola advised that some schools have more money than other schools. If we expect Janie Howard Wilson to pay for an officer out of their budget, they are not going to be able to make it. Unfortunately, Janie Howard Wilson has been one of the schools that has been less fortunate when it comes to finances. Hillcrest and Babson Park have had more money, but that is how the Charter Schools work. Chairman Oguntola advised if there is anything the community, the Board or law enforcement can do to help, he would recommend that, because if Janie Howard Wilson has to pay out of their budget, it will never work because they do not have the funds. We would have to go to the City for funds, because the school does not have it. Ms. Threatt asked if that is something that the community needs to bring up to the City Commission, and Chairman Oguntola advised, "100%". Further discussion was held regarding this concern.

Lt. Smith began by introducing Sgt. Figueroa, as he is over CSU and Traffic, and paused to update on the promotions at the Police Department. Lt. Smith advised of promotions. On January 7, we had a couple of promotions. Sgt. Hampton was over CSU and Traffic, but Sgt. Figueroa is now over CSU and Traffic. Sgt. Hampton was promoted to Lieutenant, and he is over the Criminal Investigations Division and CSU. Andrew Brown was promoted to Lieutenant, and he is over Charlie and Delta patrol shifts. Ricky Hartwell was promoted to Sergeant, and he supervises the Criminal Investigation Division. Martin Petkevich was promoted to Sergeant, and he supervises a patrol shift.

Sgt. Figueroa was present at the meeting and Lt. Smith asked Sgt. Figueroa to have a Traffic officer in the area of Florida Avenue to address this traffic issue. Mr. Peterson said that community is tired of putting a Band-Aid on the issue, and if the Police Department cannot do it, we need to go to the Commission. This is just a temporary fix.

Ms. Kristin asked what the cost of the detail is, and Lt. Smith replied \$40.00 per hour.

Chairman Oguntola advised that he feels 3 hours for detail 15 hours a week is worth a kid's life. We do not want citizens coming to the meetings with the same issues. He also said we need to reach out to the Charter School and have a conversation with the Charter School.

Sgt. Figueroa advised they could start tomorrow.

Chairman Oguntola reiterated having an officer tomorrow morning at the school and at the residence of 405. He also brought up the issue of the trucks sitting on the road blocking the road.

Ms. Kristin asked what is the best way to organize support from the City Commission and the Charter School.

Chairman Oguntola advised he would bring the superintendent to this meeting.

Al Goldstein advised that the commission should facilitate the dollars.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding getting the Police Department, the Commission and the School Board involved to have officers at Janie Howard Wilson on a daily basis.

Al Goldstein recommended we go back to meeting every month.

Chairman Oguntola asked Ms. Howell if Janie Howard Wilson is a part of CRA, and she replied no. Ms. Howell stated that CRA can put money into that, but she does not know how it is now.

Margaret Robinson 702 Greenleaf Lane spoke of her concern of Burns Avenue, and it has been her concern for five years. She has called the high school and the police department. It is a serious concern, for when she comes out of the Greenbriar neighborhood, the speeding is ridiculous. She said a sign needs to be re-done and a tree limb taken care of w they speed. Within the Greenbriar neighborhood, people illegally park day in and day out.

Michelle Threatt added an additional concern at Janie Howard Wilson. She advised it is not just the morning, but the afternoon is bad as well. Officers are needed there every day in the morning and in the afternoon. She asked if we need to plan to be at the Commission together and the Charter Schools, for there is always the same few people that go to the commission. All in the community need to show up and speak up. She said she has a good relationship with the police department. She said we have to show up and stand up. She asked if these meetings could keep coming back to B Street Community Center.

Further discussion was held regarding the traffic near the school and the alley.

Lt. Smith advised that we could work with the school to work with the parents.

Ms. Robinson advised she did not get a response regarding her concern of the traffic at Greenbriar, Burns Avenue and the high school zone.

Lt. Smith advised we have officers there all the time. Lt. Smith reiterated that 1,208 citations were written in 47C from December 1, 2023 to January 19, 2024.

Michelle Threatt recommends the community go to the City Commission regarding Burns Avenue and Janie Howard Wilson to use CRA for funding. Ms. Threatt advised that CRA meetings are at 2:00 p.m., and we need that time to change because people are working during that time. She advised CRA is giving out money. She recommends going to the Commission to request funds be appropriated for special details for all these issues.

Chairman Oguntola advised that the Charter School meet on the 4th Monday of every month.

Chairman Oguntola wanted to confirm that Sgt. Figueroa will have an officer at Janie Howard Wilson tomorrow. Sgt. Figueroa responded yes.

Al Goldstein advised that instead of waiting until the next meeting, to write the CRA members a letter with these concerns and to have the item placed on the agenda. Al Goldstein suggested the community have a speaker at the Commission for all these concerns.

Ms. Howell spoke on her concern to have more police presence in the neighborhood. Ms. Howell stated that the police say that they patrol, but they do not. They sit, and they are not working. She said that if the police were patrolling the neighborhood, it would be controlled. She stated the meetings are too far apart to solve anything. Ms. Howell spoke many minutes of

her concerns of the meetings, the police and Janie Howard Wilson. She also spoke several minutes about making the meetings productive. The police need to teach people how to make a complete stop, such as what is a correct stop and where at the white line do you stop. She gave examples of how the police can teach the community things at these meetings. Also, such as if someone is talking with someone on the street, and the police ask for their name, do they have to give them their name. Things like this, this Board is supposed to be doing.

Chairman Oguntola responded to this concern by sharing the history of the meetings to include the various trainings, and information and pamphlets that were made and that were shared with the community through the many meetings that have been held. He advised that B Street is the area that the meetings were mostly held. The B Street meetings were also the most attended. Chairman Oguntola explained the limits of the Board, and he explained the difference between Lakeland's Board and Lake Wales Board. Lakeland's Board assists in the outcomes on investigations, but this Board is not designed for that.

Linda Thompson spoke on her concern that her business has cameras and no trespassing forms, but no one has been arrested. She said the police would pass by, see them, and not do anything.

Lt. Smith and Ms. Thompson when the last time she signed an agent agreement. She said it was last year. Lt. Smith advised that Sgt. Palmer would get with her to update to update her agent agreement. Lt. Smith explained that agent agreements have to be done again every year.

Mr. Peterson brought up the issue that is going on at 545 E Street. He asked if we are going to come back and nothing will be done. He said there are kids there all day long not going to school, and is the police going to do something or just put a band-aid on it. Sgt. Palmer responded and said that regarding the truancy side of this; unfortunately, the State law has taken this out of the hands of law enforcement. It is now a civil issue.

Mr. Peterson also had a concern about the continued speeders. Sgt. Palmer advised that Sgt. Figueroa will take care of that, as he is over traffic.

Chairman Oguntola advised that we will come back to B Street next month on Monday, February 26. We will also be here in March and April.

A citizen asked how does the Board get this meeting out to the community. Chairman Oguntola advised that the meetings are advertised on social media and posters are given to Board members to post. The posters are also posted at the Police Department, on the B Street building and at City Hall. It was asked that we also advertise through Daily Ridge.

Advertise through Daily Ridge.

Patricia McMillan, 442 E Street, spoke about an address relating to the address Mr. Peterson spoke about. The house she is referring to was 418 E Street. She advised there is someone in that house, and the house has no electricity. She advised they come out in the morning, and there is a truck in the rear. She said there is some relation to that address that Mr. Peterson

has given. The house is boarded up, but there is always trash by the road on trash day out on the curb, so something is not right.

Mr. Peterson thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting.

A resident recommended speed bumps on Park and Orange Avenues.

Ms. Threatt asked if they could get some information within the next couple of months of gang activity so the community can be aware.

Closing comments were made by the Board members.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Chair/Vice Chair

Staff Secretary