

German Village Society
Neighborhood Safety Forum Minutes, March 14,
2018

Attendance: GVS Safety Committee Chairman Dan Glasener; 2 GVS Board of Trustees; Mark Weiss & Shiloh Todorov, GVS staff; Officer Robin Medley, Columbus Division of Police, 11th Precinct Community Liaison Officer; Sgt. Rashawn Sykes and 22 community members, including block watch leaders from Merion Village and Schumacher Place.

Dan Glasener opened the meeting by asking how many were first-time visitors to the Forum. There were 11 new attendees. He reviewed the Forum program, which now sets four quarterly meetings, two in the daytime and two in the evening.

January State of the City. Dan Glasener shared that along with GVS Trustee Josh Miller and staffer Mark Weiss, he attended the January panel at Reeb Ave. Center which discussed neighborhood public safety. This event was the first in a series of State of the City forums by the City. More information on the City's approach to neighborhood safety [can be found here](#).

Officer Medley was introduced.

Online Reporting. As citizens, we need to report all crime to show the frequency with which it happens. An online system was created for criminal offenses valued at \$3,000 or less. Officers only come onsite to take a report if value is over \$3,000. Reports under this threshold **MUST BE REPORTED ONLINE**. Officers would like to be able to show up onsite for any report, but the system in place has mandated a threshold for online reporting vs. onsite reporting. The importance of these online reports can't be undersold. "If it's not documented, it's as though it never happened." Statistics drive action. Reporting drives statistics. If 22 incidents occurred but only 2 were reported there's no evidence of a pattern of crime. There's no guarantee property is recovered.

ALWAYS REPORT! <https://www.columbus.gov/police-offensetypes/>

Criminal Activity. The south side includes German Village, Merion Village and Schumacher Place. These communities are within Zone 5. Within each zones there are four separate precincts. 20 precincts total. 11 Precinct boundaries are Livingston Ave. on North, east to Lockbourne Rd., west to Olentangy River, south to Frebis Ave., including Berliner Park. Crime information provided is on entire precinct, not just German Village.



Zone 5 Stats
030818.pdf

11th Precinct Bi-Weekly Crime Stats can be found here.

Officer Medley went on to describe the subtle differences in criminal activity according to the stats. Burglary is committed against property, split among commercial and residential. 'By average' compares to last year, which then determines the percentages. Robbery is crime against a person, a more serious offense – again, split into

residential and business.

Most crime is on the weekend in warmer weather.

It's getting warmer outside and this creates more opportunity for crime (i.e. open windows, more people in the park). Theft and burglary increases as opportunity increases. So the vigilance of making oneself a "hard target" is emphasized. Garage doors, second floor open windows are examples of opportunity and making sure the opportunities are eliminated is a neighbor's responsibility.

Drug addiction was referenced as a motive to take advantage of these opportunities. Don't leave anything in open sight in a vehicle. Police video shows potential criminals checking door handles. If they find an opportunity (unlocked door) they're going to come back. Citizens and neighbors are encouraged to make themselves hard targets by eliminating these opportunities – lock your car doors, windows, garages, etc.

Medicine cabinets and bedrooms are the most visited areas of a home in the event of a burglary.

Question from neighbor: Is there a better way to inform neighbors to not leave items in cars or recover stolen items?

Answer: Unfortunately, neighbors tend to act only once affected. There's not an easy answer, and a proactive approach is far better than a reactive approach.

As far as preparing your property, UV marking pens were handed out to mark items as way to recover stolen items. "OH and driver license number" is a great way to mark your property.

Other Proactive Measures:

[Leads Online](#) – Is another property tracking device. Folks can prepare themselves by taking inventory through images/video, then accessing this database.

Make a list of cards in your wallet/purse so that you know what should be canceled in the event your wallet/purse is stolen. Now you know what needs canceled

Sergeant Rashawn Sykes was introduced. – 11B second shift. 14 officers on B Company. Shared that vigilance among neighbors is key. If you see suspicious activity, reporting license plate numbers, reporting actual burglaries was reiterated so that stats will continue to drive officer response. Officers can't be in one place all the time, so neighbors will continue to be relied upon to help monitor crime in the neighborhood.

When a call is made, a 30 minutes response time should be expected depending on priority. If you find yourself waiting an hour, please call back and ask for a status on your report. **Emergencies are ALWAYS 911. But non-emergencies are (614) 645-4545.**

DO NOT Rely Upon NextDoor:

NextDoor was brought up as a resource, but neighbors challenged each other to NOT RELY upon NextDoor as a reporting device. Officers cannot monitor NextDoor as policy, so direct Police reporting is the only method that documents crime.

Question: What's going on with the ATM theft on Thurman Ave.?

Medley: Criminals are stealing vehicles and using stolen vehicles to crash facades of buildings to steal the cash machines. Someone was caught recently, but the activity and groups of criminals persist. The robbery unit has connected with the ATM machine companies directly to a) notify and b) see what other solutions may exist on location to retrieve cash safely and not create the opportunity for criminals.

Question: When someone comes in my house, if I choose to, can I shoot?

Answer (Sykes): If the person is there to cause harm to your person, you are within your rights legally to shoot and protect family and property.

It was heavily emphasized that situation, comfort level and the implication of using a gun must be put into context. When you fire that weapon there is no taking it back. Caution is advised.

Question: Someone takes a package off my porch, what do I do?

Answer: Depends on level of comfort. When it comes to law, “reasonableness” is an operative word to determine the situation. If you feel comfortable approaching the active thief, you can do “what a reasonable person would do in the same situation.” Using force becomes a tricky situation. For example, shooting as someone is leaving is not a threat. If an individual has a gun and is running away that is still a threat. Circumstance, reasonableness, and articulating the situation is where you find just cause. The use of threat, the feeling of threat, and therefore using deadly force is not to be taken lightly by neighbors. When you pull the trigger, you are firing a weapon with deadly force that could hit almost anything, and you cannot take that back.

Question: Can citizens purchase tasers?

Answer: Yes.

Question: During night, a driver drove across yard, knocking down two trees, then fled the scene. Is this a reportable incident, what kind?

Answer: Yes, traffic accident or malicious destruction of property report.

Question: What about Ring security door bell system?

Answer: (Sykes): A great tool to have. Also a cloud service recording system that allows your voice to be activated when someone steps on your porch, thereby activating sensors.

Question: Are we the largest precinct?

Answer: NO, 13th precinct is largest. All the precincts in this zone, can fit inside 13. The largest by residential density may be 14th. 11th precinct is relatively small by comparison.

Q: Is the online system getting better to report?

A: It’s a system that honestly needs improved. Officers would prefer to respond to all reports in person, but that’s not possible nor a decision made by CPD.

Q: When I walk my dog at night, should I be {concerned or prepared for the threat of crime}?

A: Who wants to live in a community where you’re afraid? Are you ever anywhere where you don’t have a weapon? Concealed carry weapons and tasers are within legal right. Another suggestion, have the non-emergency number pre-dialed on your phone if you see suspicious activity.

Q: Does crime happen more during the day or late at night? Are the stats accurate according to times reported?

A: Always be aware of your surroundings no matter the time of day. As weather warms up and schools release for the summer, there's a correlation in increase criminal activity.

Question: How can surrounding communities unite to stand up against crime and appeal for more officer support in the neighborhood?

Answer: Continue to voice frustrations, explain how long it takes officers to respond. In person attendance at city meetings is also advised. But officer attrition has been an issue. Councilmember Mitchell Brown is another resource as Safety Committee member with City.

Officer Medley's parting advice: Always remember that YOU cannot be replaced, your property can be. Whatever you do to ensure your safety in the moment, know the police are often moments away. You should be thinking 'what if?' – have a plan of preparation so you can react instead of panic.

In a critical event we don't rise to the occasion, we sink to your planned preparation. Know where exits are, know your neighbors, know your surroundings, have a plan in place for any given situation, have an exit strategy. Don't panic, breathe and think clearly.

Adjourned 7:43 p.m.