

# November 20, 2007 Emergency General Meeting Summary

1. **Opening Remarks:** Dave Durofchalk called the meeting to order at 8PM by noting that the meeting was called due to a rash of incidents of vandalism in the past couple months including the recent egging of three (3) houses recently. Dave followed through with a brief review of a handout that listed, described and dated several past incidents in our community. After taking a comment from the floor, Dave concluded his opening remarks by introducing guest Officer Steven Tyree of our regional police force who was on hand to answer questions. Following Dave's remarks, the floor was open for new information, questions, and suggestions provided by the residents as summarized below.
2. **Attendance:** 5 Board Members, Officer Tyree and more than a score of residents
3. **Information Provided by the Floor:**
  - 3.1. During the opening remarks, several unlisted acts of vandalism were provided by the floor including a number of pumpkins and other items stolen on last Halloween. In response to this comment, Officer Tyree advised us that if we see someone vandalizing property, do not make contact, rather call the police.
  - 3.2. One resident noted a sense of escalating vandalism noting a case of a razor blade put into a tire.
  - 3.3. One resident noted that cars of kids drive through the neighborhood and (in the summer) were in the pool during off hours and the police were called.
  - 3.4. Several residents noted that the police indicated that eggs were thrown at Ann Burkardt's house from a hill but to the residents the persons throwing the eggs had to be standing in front of the houses.
  - 3.5. One resident noted that a group of boys, who loitered and blocked cars, were hanging out in Wyndham Court and in the following week things started to happen. In response, Officer Tyree noted that residents need to report these kinds of things to the police. What occurred may not be a police offence but an incident that could be handled through the juvenile panel.
  - 3.6. One resident expressed a concern that all of the homeowners are not aware of the incidents listed in the hand out.
  - 3.7. It was noted sometimes signage is just taken down.
4. **Questions from the Floor:**
  - 4.1. In response to a question from the floor if the problem was only in our community, Officer Tyree noted that these problems are occurring in other neighborhoods and in Wallace Township, and that thieves maybe from outside of the neighborhood.
  - 4.2. In response to the question, "How often are the police coming through?", Officer Tyree noted that the police come through our development multiple times a day: at night as well as in day; and sometimes in unmarked cars.
  - 4.3. Following a very general discussion about a juvenal from Pinebrook who was recently arrested, and a general question about the statute regarding the arrest of juveniles and where are their parents, Officer Tyree explained the process by which a juveniles processed and the required involvement of the parents.
  - 4.4. In response to a question about break-ins, Officer Tyree noted that last year there was a burglary, but not a break-in (no forced entry, the front door was unlocked). After which, Officer Tyree stressed locking our doors when not at home even during a quick trip to Croppers.
  - 4.5. In response to a general question on the pattern of vandalism, Officer Tyree noted that overall the vandalism appears to be random. The police, however, always ask those who were vandalized if they know anyone whom they angered recently.
  - 4.6. In response to the question, "What can we do as homeowners to make the environment safer?", Officer Tyree suggested additional lighting and motion sensor-lighting. He did note, however, that burglaries often occur during the day.

- 4.7. In response to the question, “Does the Association have the ability to levy fines (for bad behavior)?, the board answered, it does not.
- 4.8. In response to the question, “Are we allowed to park on Hawthorn?”, Jim Mesiti of the board suggesting calling the police ahead of time if you are having a party that requires parking to spill onto Hawthorn.
- 4.9. In response to a question about restricting the age of children on the swing sets, there was some discussion if such restrictions would reduce vandalism.

**5. Suggestions from the Floor and Officer Tyree:**

- 5.1. Clean up the common ground to open up the line of sight.
  - 5.2. Need to contact police if incidents occur. This suggestion was given in the context that when the police get all the information, they are better able to see patterns of problems.
  - 5.3. Out of a concern for personal safety, it was stressed that residents contact the police rather than confronting suspects.
  - 5.4. Perhaps we can better involve the teenagers in the community by providing small jobs,
  - 5.5. OT suggested increasing awareness, motion-sensor lights, potentially a Townwatch, and proper signage (e.g. No Entrance after Dark). Officer Tyree further noted that if we go Townwatch, we should let the police know beforehand who is on the watch and when, and that, although proper signage may not stop vandalism, it does aid in prosecutions.
  - 5.6. Use of email blasts (mass communication via simultaneous emails) to communicate additional incidents to the residents.
  - 5.7. The residents need to remember that whenever they need to contact the police, they can contact them via 911. Calls to the police telephone number after hours may get hung up in an answering machine. All 911 calls are prioritized so that a non-emergency call does not tie up the system if there is an emergency.
  - 5.8. If we go Townwatch, we should contact the police with a cell phone. Best reception in the community is Verizon.
  - 5.9. The Association should increase lighting (some suggested motion-sensor lighting) in common areas such as the playground and tennis court.
  - 5.10. Remember that violations of curfew are a reportable offence to the police.
  - 5.11. Remember to report petty vandalism to the police so that the police can quickly see a trend in the small incidents and to the community to increase awareness.
  - 5.12. The Association should put out a letter emphasizing that everyone should lock their house. In response to this suggestion, Officer Tyree noted that people often only break into unlocked cars and unlocked houses to steal small things.
  - 5.13. Develop a sense of pride in the neighborhood.
  - 5.14. Investing our teenagers by establishing a job center on the web site and providing something to do (e.g. ping pong or a game room).
- 6. Announcements:** Next meeting 27 November 2007
- 7. Adjournment:** Meeting concluded at 9:15 pm.