



MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

Eye on Midtown – 1/21/ 2008

PATROL UPDATE

Sgt. Cooper is now on a much needed vacation and will not return to the green streets of Midtown until February 11th. He arranged for officers to pick up extra shifts to cover the slack. Normally calls not answered on the patrol hotline are forwarded to his MPSA-issued phone. During his absence another officer will monitor this phone, but given that she still works full-time for APD she will primarily only monitor the voice mail. While on duty patrol will answer the hotline as usual.

Always call 911 first for situations needing law enforcement attention, and then call MPSA Patrol.

All other MPSA activity will continue as usual, so please continue to keep us posted on your observations and insights.

PROBLEM PROPERTY AT 292 9TH STREET

The unscrupulous owner of our newest problem property, Midtown Development LLC, was cited for code violations related to its detrimental condition and ordered to appear in the Atlanta Municipal Court this past Friday (1/18). The owner of this property failed to appear, and Judge Jackson issued a bench warrant. The property has been officially condemned by the city, which means that police can automatically enforce criminal trespassing laws regardless of whether the owner (even if only by default) is willing to afflict the surrounding community with public disorder.

CREATIVE LOAFING ARTICLE

Last week Creative Loafing ran an article about Steve Gower, an MPSA Board member, and his contribution to the eradication of neighborhood prostitution in our service area. Some of the reader responses criticized the MPSA for "simply running them off to another area" rather than solving the underlying problem itself. We would save the whole city - or the whole world for that matter - but we can only handle our little Midtown. Every neighborhood needs to stand up and take charge of its streets and public spaces. We wish further to stress that improvements to community safety call for a two-pronged effect - law enforcement especially in the form of problem-oriented community policing as one prong, and citizen engagement as the other. Neither side can accomplish its vision of a safer and more orderly neighborhood alone.

The Broken Windows theory, a concept coined by Kelling and Wilson in their ground-breaking 1982 *Atlantic Monthly* essay, comes into play with the kinds of public security issues we face. In a nutshell the Broken Windows theory holds that criminogenic factors such as graffiti, vagrancy, problem properties, prostitution, and cruising trigger a chain reaction leading to serious crime patterns if left unchecked and unchallenged by both law enforcement and especially the community affected by it.

As its most basic objective, the MPSA coordinates funding for a patrol by off-duty officers by way of membership and community sponsors. But because the patrol is not a silver bullet we must take additional measures to reduce the need for the patrol in the first place. We do this by coordinating neighborhood disapproval of criminogenic factors such as the resilient prostitution problem in some parts of the neighborhood, and problem properties such as the burned-out building at 292 9th Street. In order to keep rampant crime and public disorder from overshadowing the vitality and spirit of the dynamic and diverse neighborhood we proudly call home, we must start by expressing community disapproval and intolerance for criminogenic factors.

Andisheh Nouraei, the author of the Creative Loafing article, correctly quoted car break-ins as our most chronic public safety problem (though certainly not our most serious). Problems such as this cannot be targeted directly. Instead, neighborhood improvement measures must go after the

factors attracting phenomena like car break-ins such as prostitution, the open-air drug market just south of our area, and the severe levels of vagrant activity afflicting all intown neighborhoods. Your neighbors at the MPSA are working diligently toward the day when we are in "maintenance mode." But we are still very much in "eradication mode," and, for quite some time to come, continued support for the MPSA will remain a critical strategy to ensuring that the Midtown experience can flourish...

- You can read the article and share your observations, insights, and experiences at http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/one_man_s_battle_against_midtown_prostitutes_and_their_johns/Content?oid=394425

STAY SAFE AND KEEP WARM! Please encourage your fellow Midtowners to join the MPSA!

- Your Neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance

WITH MUCH GRATITUDE FOR OUR COMMUNITY PATROL SPONSORS

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