

## MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

### *Public Safety Report 11 / 2006*

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**IN ATTENDANCE:** 45 in total, including:

- Moderator Peggy Denby,
- Officer S. Hale of Atlanta Police Department
- Sgt. Bill Cooper – MPSA Patrol Coordinator
- Special Guest Officer Darlene Harris – APD Liaison to the GLBT Community

#### **CORRESPONDENCE READ AT THE MEETING**

##### **1. An E-mail about another carjacking at the Publix on Ponce de Leon Avenue**

*I was carjacked this afternoon at 4:25 in the afternoon at the Publix on Ponce at N. Highland. An apparent crack addict came up to me as I got out of my car to go into the store. It was raining so no one was around. He showed me what I thought was a gun and he told me he wanted my keys and my purse and that he needed money.*

*He took me to the car, all the while saying "Don't make me hurt you" I need money. I gave him my keys and my purse and told him I did not have any money. He got very agitated. I told him I had credit cards that he could use. He then told me not to call police and drove away. I tell you this so you will be aware. I had let my guard down because I see homeless and shady people every day and lived on Boulevard for four years!*

*When this happened, I remembered someone telling me once that your wallet, your money, your car all of not worth risking your life over.*

MPSA Note: This lady has asked the Publix to put security people in the parking lot during the day – they already have them at night. If you shop there you might give the manager a call to reinforce that suggestion. This is the second time we have heard about the parking lot of that Publix.

##### **2. Magazine sales scammer.**

We recently alerted the neighborhood to the possible return of the “magazine scammer.” He had previously worked his way around the neighborhood some months ago. We immediately received several reports of his presence in the neighborhood.

The door to door scammer was on St. Charles about a week ago knocking on doors. He did not stick around because folks came out and he felt uncomfortable being there.

The door to door scammer came thru mid-town last week (Myrtle Street near 10th), on Monday, 11/6. I was home for lunch and he stopped by to sell magazine subscriptions. He was a little suspicious, so when I left I turned our alarm on.[ I would describe him as] mid to early 20's dark brown hair, short on top and slightly spiked, and dressed like a student. Said he was a Georgia Tech student and was the son of a Midtown neighborhood association member and was selling magazine subscription extensions. I told him we had no interest. He had no paperwork with him or magazine information.

With regard to the door-to-door scammer described below, this sounds like the same guy who came to my door on Saturday, Oct. 23, at about 6:00pm.. He claimed to be just going around meeting the neighbors, but I immediately smelled a scam. When I cut him off mid-spiel and asked him his name and exactly where he lived, he got belligerent, although he did say that his name was "Joel." I wound up slamming the door in his face and telling him that he'd better clear off before I called the police. He beat it out of there on foot, but I still called 911 and gave a

description. He was probably in his 20s, white or Hispanic, dark hair, scruffy-looking (big baggy jeans), and crooked teeth. His whole sleazy demeanor seemed to be too "old" and practiced to be that of a high-schooler.

**3. Redevelopment rumors**

Reports are going around about a possible re-development of boulevard between North Avenue and Ponce. Specifically, we have unconfirmed reports that the property with the old laundromat will be torn down and replaced with condos. We have also unconfirmed reports that the Bedford Pine properties along the east side of Boulevard will be torn down and redeveloped. We will monitor this, as this block attracts a very high volume of vagrancy, illegal drug use, and other criminal activity. We would certainly welcome a pedestrian-oriented redevelopment of appropriate scale in the Ponce de Leon corridor.

If anyone is able to verify any of this please put us in contact with potential developers so we can build effective partnerships and assist in this process in some way.

**4. Correspondence from an attack over the summer.**

I was attacked in July at the corner of 17th Street and W. Peachtree. The court process is very slow and will last possibly last about two years. As mentioned before I am working every day on getting better. I hope to be able to speak at the December or November safety meeting. Thanks to you and everyone at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance for the support.

**MPSA Note:** the assailant, Damon Foson, is on our high-priority court watch list.

**5. Correspondence from the robbery of the manager of McCray's.**

He was robbed at gunpoint on a Sunday night around 1AM after exiting the bar. The subject, a black male, took his wallet, briefcase with laptop, his keys and stole his Lexus! The car was later recovered by Atlanta Police. He was also in attendance at the safety meeting to tell the story.

**6. A statement from the MPSA for the City Budget Hearing**

*The Midtown Ponce Security Alliance, a neighborhood security group representing 900 member households, strongly recommends that the city budget include funds to bring current police officer salaries up to the incremental step where each officer belongs. We are not talking about back payment, but to update each salary to the appropriate level. The salaries have been allowed to languish over the years. During that time officer salaries have not increased. The problem is so severe that in some instances officers are brought in from outside at higher salaries than current officers with the same training. We understand the situation, this is a large part of why our police are leaving APD in large numbers - numbers equal to or larger than those coming in. We believe we are in a state of emergency.*

*To quote a long-time APD officer when asked where to start in solving the attrition problem: "The city would be wise to reinstate the frozen increments this budget season. The officers do not expect back pay, but if the officers could just be restored to the step they belong on, I think it would go a long way to improving morale and do more to curtail the attrition rate problem than anything else the city could do at this point."*

**Board of Directors, Midtown Ponce Security Alliance**

**PROSTITUTION IN MIDTOWN**

Prostitution was once again the main topic of this month's public safety meeting. Officer Harris discussed her role with APD is to build and maintain communication between the Atlanta Police Department and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender population in Atlanta.

She emphasized that prostitution is not condone by the Atlanta Police Department, and that APD will continue to address the issue as best as they can. She does not work with prostitutes although she does meet regularly with group leader in the GLBT community, some of whom may condone or sympathize with prostitutes in some way.

There were at least 6 in attendance representing the interests of the Transgender community. Monica Helms, an activist in the Transgender community, spoke about general transgender issues. She talked about one individual who had lost her job, and eventually committed suicide because nobody would hire her. Monica feels that many prostitutes in our area fit a similar profile – because of general lack of acceptance many feel compelled to work the streets. Monica emphasized that she does not condone prostitution but rather, she works to get fellow transgender citizens away from the streets. In her estimation the city does have a non-discrimination law but it has no teeth in light of the lack of legal support for such at state and federal level.

Southern Voice was also in attendance and wrote about the meeting. The article is at <http://www.sovo.com/2006/11-17/news/localnews/activists.cfm>. They were not very sympathetic with neighborhood improvement efforts.

The MPSA statement on prostitution after Southern Voice ran an article in October on Midtown prostitution.

*A number of factors drive the need for the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance including street prostitution. Street prostitution adversely affects safety, quality of life, aesthetics and good public order in any community afflicted by it. Among the way it adversely affects our neighborhood:*

- *Harassment of residents by prostitutes and johns*
- *Considerable litter including used condoms*
- *Unreasonable noise and disturbances during the night*
- *Trespassing and criminal destruction/vandalism by the prostitutes themselves*
- *Traffic obstruction*
- *Attracts additional criminal activity into the neighborhood.*

*We do not see prostitution as diversity or moral issue but strictly one of crime and quality-of-life.*

*We will continue working to get rid of such undesirable activity, and request that the Atlanta Police work with us to eradicate this problem as efficiently and effectively as possible.*

***Board of Directors, Midtown Ponce Security Alliance***

In short, the MPSA made its position clear – that prostitution of any kind has no place in the neighborhood, and we will maintain our hard stance on behalf of the Midtown community.

#### **ATLANTA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Officer Hale talked about the Midtown Mini-Precinct, which is a special division of Zone 5 comprising the area including Midtown, Downtown, Old Fourth Ward, and various things that they are doing here.

Officer Hale usually works a Midtown detail during the 7am to 3pm shift. He encouraged residents to flag him down when he is on duty to share insights and observations.

APD recently arrested two criminals breaking into cars. Midtown Blue assisted in one case and MPSA Patrol assisted in the other.

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There was discussion about heavy traffic in various places, including the intersections of 10th & Myrtle, and 6th & Peachtree. APD put extra traffic details in the neighborhood during the BET Awards and other special events.

APD has observed fewer prostitutes largely because of colder weather.

**CONCLUSION**

When reading our reports please remember that the MPSA focuses solely on safety and security issues, which are threats and therefore inherently negative. We are proud to call this vibrant and diverse neighborhood home, with its wonderful amenities, historic character, interesting events, and most importantly its fantastic neighbors. This drives our dedication to a safer and more secure Midtown...

Have fun and enjoy the neighborhood, but be safe...

- YOUR NEIGHBORS AT THE MPSA

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A Safer Midtown... You are truly a part of it! [www.midtownponce.org](http://www.midtownponce.org)

**The Midtown Public Safety Meeting is held at 7pm on the second Monday of the month, at Mary Mac's Tearoom.**

**A very special thanks to our Corporate and Community Sponsors who provide a major enhancement to your patrol's effectiveness:**

**Westminster Commons  
The Sembler Company  
Post Parkside  
Midtown Neighbors Association  
Midtown Tire, Inc.  
Ackerman & Company  
Grace United Methodist Church  
TLC Rents - National Night Out sponsor**

<b>SUPPLEMENT 1: MPSA PATROL ACTIVITY</b>	
<p><b>ARRESTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Urinating in public (4)</li> <li>▪ Drinking in public (1)</li> <li>▪ Prowling (1)</li> <li>▪ Poss. of crack cocaine (1)</li> <li>▪ Weapon/knife (1)</li> </ul>	<p><b>TRAFFIC DETAIL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Speeding (10)</li> <li>▪ Running Red Light (3)</li> <li>▪ Expired/invalid tag (2)</li> <li>▪ Suspended or no Driver licence (3)</li> <li>▪ Wrong way on one-way street (1)</li> <li>▪ Stop sign (2)</li> </ul>

<b>SUPPLEMENT 2: CRIME INCIDENTS REPORTED TO APD - ONLY THROUGH OCTOBER 28TH - selected categories</b>
<p><b>ROBBERIES</b></p> <p>Incident # / Street / Offense / Report Date / Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 62801254 / PONCE DE LEON AVE / ROB-STREET-GUN / 10/07 / near Kennesaw</li> <li>▪ 62810906 / 8TH ST / ROB-STREET-STRONGARM / 10/08 / near Myrtle</li> </ul>
<p><b>BURGLARIES</b></p> <p>Incident # / Street / Offense / Report Date / Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 62740087 / 3RD ST / BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC / 20061001 / near Argonne</li> <li>▪ 62800933 / 6TH ST / BURG-NO FORCD ENTRY-RESID / 20061007 / near Piedmont</li> <li>▪ 62811132 / PENN AVE / BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC / 20061008 / near 5th</li> <li>▪ 62830265 / PIEDMONT AVE / BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC / 20061010 / betw 3rd &amp; 4th</li> <li>▪ 62890764 / PIEDMONT AVE / BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC / 20061016 / near 8th</li> <li>▪ 62900940 / MYRTLE ST / BURGLARY-FORCED ENTRY-RESIDENC / 20061017 / near 4th</li> </ul>
<p><b>AUTO THEFT</b></p> <p>Incident # / Street / Offense / Report Date / Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 62761214 / MYRTLE ST / THEFT OF TRUCK/VAN/BUS / 20061003 / near 4th</li> <li>▪ 62820113 / 10TH ST / AUTOTHEFT / 20061009 / near Myrtle</li> <li>▪ 62840068 / 9TH ST / THEFT OF TRUCK/VAN/BUS / 20061011 / near Argonne</li> <li>▪ 62861608 / KENNESAW AVE / THEFT OF TRUCK/VAN/BUS / 20061013 / mid-way</li> <li>▪ 62950154 / 9TH ST / AUTOTHEFT / 20061022 / near Argonne</li> <li>▪ 62961978 / PIEDMONT AVE / AUTOTHEFT / 20061023 / at 10th</li> </ul>

Source: APD website crime mapping feature. Data only through October 28th available as of this report.