

MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE
Public Safety Report 05 / 2007

I. MAY PUBLIC SAFETY MEETING

In Attendance:

- Peggy Denby – Moderator
- Officer S. Hale – APD
- Sgt. Bill Cooper – MPSA Patrol
- Sharla Jackson – Fulton County DA's office
- Judge Deborah Greene – Atlanta Municipal Court Chief Judge
- Phillip McDonald – Court Programs Director – Atlanta Municipal Court
- 18 additional Midtown residents

Issues raised by attendees at the meeting

1. A man peeking into cars in the 800 block of Piedmont Avenue. This should always be reported immediately to 911
2. Prostitutes in the Myrtle Street/Piedmont Avenue area
3. A large heavy -set black male following women in the St. Charles and Lakeview Avenue area. One attendee relayed a report heard from neighbors about a subject following women in Old Midtown. So far we only have second-hand information. If anyone has seen this man please contact us immediately.
4. A resident in the Piedmont/4th area reported that when he ran off a vagrant he turned on him.

City Solicitor position

The City Solicitor position is up for re-appointment. Mayor Shirley Franklin has been given a list of three final candidates. One is the current City Solicitor Raines Carter. Another is Sharla Jackson, who is currently the Community Prosecutor for our area.

Special Guest Judge Deborah Greene

Judge Greene was appointed to the Atlanta Municipal Court in 1990 by former Mayor Maynard Jackson. She was voted by her fellow judges as Chief Judge in 2004, and again in April of this year.

Because of a requirement of impartiality, she could not say what could be done about specific issues in Midtown. When she makes public appearances she can only educate about how the court system works.

Under the Franklin Administration the city court system was overhauled. Under the old arrangement Atlanta Municipal Court conducted preliminary hearings on state cases. Under the new arrangement preliminary hearings are now in State and Superior Courts where they really belong.

Atlanta Municipal Court now hears only violations of City Ordinance and Traffic cases.

Atlanta Municipal Court now operates from 7am to 7pm every Monday through Friday. The court schedules are designed to work better with police officer schedules. The court scheduling system was overhauled in a way to minimize comp time for police officers, thereby saving the city millions in comp time.

They are now working on a paperless system. Police officers would use PDA's to issue citations. These would be uploaded at the end of the shift into the court system. Court case schedules are now online and on monitors at the courthouse.

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All judges are re-elected for 4-year terms. Initially they are appointed by the mayor but have to be reconfirmed by voters during the regular elections for City Council and Mayor (next election will be in 2009).

Special Guest Phillip McDonald

Phillip McDonald spoke to us about how the Municipal Court wants to work with the citizens of this city.

A community court is in development to handle quality of life cases. This court would deal with issues such as vagrancy, prostitution, and panhandling. Also in the works are impact panels – among them one each for:

- The johns who pick up prostitutes
- The prostitutes themselves
- Panhandlers
- Parks after hours

This would afford offenders the opportunity to understand how their deeds adversely impact the community with their deeds.

II. VICTIM OF RECENT ATTACK

The editor of a local publication, apparently also a Midtown resident, was recently attacked on Monroe Drive as he walked to the Exxon. According to his report, he was stabbed by two males who had beset him.

When he reached the Exxon, bleeding from his injuries, they would not call 911 for him and insisted that he use a pay phone instead.

You may read the full article at <http://www.atlantaprogressivenews.com/news/0160.html>

III. TOWN HALL MEETING HOSTED BY ANNE FAUVER

Join us at Councilmember Anne Fauver's Town Hall meeting to receive updates and express your concerns. This will be held Tuesday, June 12, 2007, 6:30pm, at First Presbyterian Church - 1328 Peachtree Street, NW (north side of 16th street-parking behind the church)

District 6 neighborhoods include: Atkins Park, Candler Park, Virginia-Highland, Morningside-Lenox Park, Midtown, Piedmont Heights, Sherwood Forest, Ponce Corridor, Lindridge-Martin Manor & Druid Hills.

The town hall meeting will begin at 7pm. Representatives from the following department will be available at 6:30pm for individual concerns or questions:

- Executive Office
- Finance
- Fire
- Parks & Recreation
- Planning
- Police
- Public Works
- Watershed Management

For more information: call (404) 330-6049, email afauver@atlantaga.gov or visit www.annefauver.com

IV. PROSTITUTES ATTEMPT TO VICTIMIZE DISABLED RESIDENT ON MYRTLE STREET

As sent to MPSA – another example of the dangers of the prostitute gang in Midtown.

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I left a message for the patrol this morning. At about 8:00, My husband saw our neighbor (who has dementia after several strokes) walking his dog. A hooker approached him and started petting his dog. Then another hooker came over and spoke to him and petted the dog. My husband kept a close eye on this and stepped outside when he saw the hookers walking with the man down 4th St. towards the alley and one of the hookers signaling the pimp to come over.

My husband made some noise and the hookers saw him and split off from the potential victim, heading in different directions. The pimp came to the corner and my husband told him to leave the neighborhood and never come back. The pimp protested that he wasn't doing anything wrong and my husband reasserted that it was time to leave Midtown, permanently.

This was 8:00 am on a Thursday morning, which is very late for this kind of activity. And I think these were real women. My husband said there were actually 3 hookers out there.

The pimp was driving a white Suburban or Expedition. He's a thin black guy with close-cropped hair. I called 911, too.

It really worried us that they would consider taking advantage of someone as mentally disabled as our neighbor has become. Thank goodness my husband and our catty-corner neighbor were home, saw it happening, and went outside to supervise. But we're not there during the day and our neighbor is now an easy mark.

V. VOLUNTEER PATROL

We will soon overhaul our patrol program. Tentatively the off-duty officers will focus on daytime issues, when burglaries occur, and night-time issues. We are looking to start a volunteer watch during the early evening hours in which participants would drive the patrol truck adding visibility to our program.

Volunteers, ideally in pairs, would watch the neighborhood, for 1½-2 hours sometime between 6pm and 10pm. Other daytime hours, when the regular patrol is not on duty, may become available at a later date.

The emphasis would be on the residential area, and not Ponce de Leon Avenue.

For safety reasons there will be no late night / sunrise hours for volunteer patrolling. Those interested in these hours may go on a "safari" with an MPSA Board member. We will have clear guidelines to ensure safety.

Activities for volunteers could include:

- Watch for activity to be reported to the police
- Scout for burned out street lights
- Talk to neighbors about the value of MPSA
- Drive-bys of houses on the out-of-town list.
- Street spam removal

If you are interested in participating please contact Steve Gower at info@midtownponce.org

VI. MPSA MAILBAG

We continue to have problems with the aggressive panhandlers in the parking lot at Midtown Promenade. According to Unique Nails, an arrest was made yesterday because one of the panhandlers was harassing customers and then followed them into the premises.

You'd think that Ponce & Monroe would get more coverage from APD based on how dangerous it looks. Yet, you hardly see patrol cars. On the flip side, why aren't the businesses on the four corners taking responsibility. You see a lot of willful blindness to what is happening. I think the MPSA should write Popeyes (I have seen an off-duty cop present), Shell, Exxon, Wachovia and the old Church's Chicken. Too much loitering!

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In November 2005 my husband and I bought a home [near 6th and Piedmont]. We always felt safe in the area even though we live in the heart of the city. Unfortunately in the last few months (since February) that has changed. Since February we have experienced no less than 4 personal incidents that have been unsettling.

First, we have had two prostitute sightings. The first was in late February early on a Monday morning (5:30am). My husband and I were on our way to the airport (as we both travel for work) and were going to stop at the USPS box at the corner of 4th St. and Piedmont. When we pulled up there were two women "working" the corner. My husband and I did not get out or approach them, we just promptly drove away. The second sighting was just last Saturday (5/19) at the corner of 5th St. and Myrtle. We were with two friends coming home from dinner and were parking their car (12:15am). There was a woman who was obviously soliciting. (A side note: One of the friends with us is a detective in Texas and was the first person to notice the prostitute.)

Second, two Fridays ago we brought a new car home. This is a new car for us but is a used car (2000 Camry). In the last 16 days it has been broken into twice. The first time it had luggage inside (understandable, we live in the city) but the second time some broke the window and tried to steal the radio and ransacked the rest of the car. There was absolutely nothing in the car (we definitely learned our lesson the first time).

VII. SAMPLING FROM STREETS OF MIDTOWN – a blog-style internal memo by MPSA Board member Steve Gower.

(5/21) I was out on the streets Sunday night into Monday for about 6 hours in the patrol truck. Though there was relatively light prostitution activity, I saw no police – zip, zilch, nada - drive through the neighborhood!

(Every day and night) Ponce and Boulevard remains a daily and nightly freak show. They are so strung out on crack that it is like watching a live production of Dawn of the Dead, starring the whole smorgasbord of vagrants, hustlers, prostitutes, drug boys, and thugs. What's even scarier is that men from the suburbs pay good money to have sex with some of these walking corpses. Though the visible activity seems to be mostly contained to the south curb, there are those who wander away into the neighborhood up to no good. There are obviously a lot of drugs to be had down there. As long as drugs are abundantly available these street people will continue to invade our neighborhood.

(5/21) One particular prostitute, Gabby (a white transvestite), is still very visible. Because she is on Ponce so much, she goes a long way in perpetuating the prostitution problem. We have got to target this one very aggressively, like we did Joyce and the others that don't come around any more. Gabby also has a very serious drug problem. Like any other prostitute, she tums a trick, buys a hit of drugs on Parkway Drive, and solicits on Ponce again, all day and night long. Overall we are seeing fewer prostitutes in the area but the few that remain are very resilient. Until they do something police cannot do much – the prostitutes are very toned down and much less blatant than four years ago. But residents can do certain things that the police cannot do, like make their disapproval known.

(5/20) A fire broke out at 764 Charles Allen around daybreak. This is a house with at least 5 apartments. No word on what caused the fire but the smoke sure blanketed the eastern half of the service area with smoke. There were lots of Fire Department and Police vehicles on the scene. A neighbor told me the owner of the building is a responsible person, and this property will not likely become a problem property like the burned out house on Glendale that stayed in that condition for over four years.

(5/13) I kept seeing a white male in a white pickup truck with a Gordon County tag cruising the area. This was around 4am. At one point he went the wrong way on Piedmont. As a resident and

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I were talking at 3rd and Piedmont the guy came cruising down 3rd to Myrtle. I knew instantly he is looking for a hooker, or maybe drugs.

He parked on Myrtle and was out on foot. He started talking to a prostitute at Penn and Ponce. The hooker she was being watched and turned him down and left the area. The guy started walking back to his truck so I got the Myrtle Street resident I was just talking to, who waited with me near the guy's truck. When the redneck got back we let him hear our two cents worth about coming here to find a hooker. It shook him up, and I would imagine he will not be coming back any time soon...

(5/13) I watched a probable drug transaction at 2am on Tenth Street. Luckily the MPSA Patrol was on duty so I called him about what I was watching. A female in a black Mercedes Kompressor came to meet a guy in a silver Honda. The guy walked to her car and stood at her window as she was looking down at something. The MPSA officer was on his way when they drove off. We were within a hair of busting a drug transaction – what a good court watch case this would have been...

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A Safer Midtown... You are truly a part of it! www.midtownponce.org

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

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