

MIDTOWN PUBLIC SAFETY MEETING REPORT

April 2006

INTRO

The Midtown Public Safety Meeting was held on April 10th, with 15 Midtowners in attendance along with Lt. Hedley and Sgt. Cooper of Atlanta Police Department.

TOOL THEFT AT CONSTRUCTION SITES

Construction tool thefts have been reported in the area. Contractors, handymen, and the like should keep an extra eye on their tools. The contractors for Jason's Deli recently lost \$9,000 in tools during a recent (commercial) burglary. The same location was broken into the next night but this time there were no tools left to steal. Another case of stolen tools was reported somewhere on Myrtle Street.

Tools and equipment should be removed from or otherwise well-secured at construction/renovation sites, as they provide a lucrative market for criminals. Thieves regularly case all neighborhoods and communities, including Midtown, for such locations, where they return at night to steal tools and equipment.

VAGRANT ACTIVITY

A resident at 3rd & Piedmont complained to MPSA about a vagrant camping on the property of an elderly man. MPSA Patrol responded by cleaning out the debris and recovered substantial stolen property in the process.

DOOR-TO-DOOR SCAMMER

Atlanta Police arrested Casey Harms the week of April 3rd; for selling without permit. This individual was the subject of a special alert issued by MPSA last week. For clarification City of Atlanta does issue solicitation permits but at a cost of \$500 plus a background check, so most folks don't bother. Scammers and others, up to no good, would certainly not get a permit. Look for the permit before buying anything from anyone, or better yet, do not open your door if you do not know the visitor. And, call 911 if it is a suspicious person. Fulton County permits are not valid in unincorporated parts of the county and not in any of the municipalities.

Casey Harms has been known to work Brookhaven and Ansley Park. This individual has also become belligerent with people who do not buy from him.

PHOENIX LIQUOR LICENSE

The Phoenix has appealed its loss of liquor and business licenses, so they can legally stay open while the civil case is in court limbo. It was speculated in the meeting that it will take about two years for the case to wind its way thru the court system. Unfortunately, there is no limitation on

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how long this can/will take and some local attorneys are known for their skill in dragging this process out for years.

PROSTITUTION

Residents have complained of prostitutes working Penn and 6th St. area, possibly pushed over from Myrtle and 4th. It was speculated that transactions are occurring in nearby buildings under renovation. Sgt. Cooper will make this information known to the MPSA patrol, who will keep an extra eye on this area.

HOME INVASION

There were rumors in the neighborhood of a home invasion and pistol whipping incident on 4th Street. This turned out to be a domestic incident, not a random street-oriented crime.

APD UPDATES

Sgt. Stewart has taken command of the Midtown morning watch (11pm – 7am). He reported by email during the week of April 3 that his officers arrested 7 prostitutes in a neighborhood sting, followed the next night by a sting by Vice Squad, who arrested 7 more prostitutes. Sgt Stewart will attend the next Safety Meeting.

Lt. Hedley, who now commands the Midtown Mini-Precinct, is currently working to shift officers to Midtown to deal with crime issues here. He expects we will have three additional officers just for the Midtown area.

The Midtown mini-precinct is being forced out of its current location in the Howard School (down in Old Fourth Ward on Randolph/Irwin Streets), due to the sale of the building. They are scrambling for a new temporary location until they can move into their permanent space in the Bell South building on W. Peachtree at 5th Street. The sale of Bell South to AT&T has slowed things a bit.

Lt. Hedley can be contacted at the Midtown Mini-Precinct (404-658-7035). If you get no answer there then call the Mobile Unit at (404-658-7830).

RECENT BURGLARY ARRESTS

Two noted burglars who have hit Midtown in the past were arrested in Home Park.

The modus operandi of one of them is to break in through doors with “lever handles” typically found on French doors. He simply puts all his weight on the door handle until the lock tumblers break. If you have such door handles on the exterior of your home, APD strongly advises to add dead-bolts as a security measure.

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Midtown precinct officers are planning a crack down on Peactree noise from car stereos at night. They plan to impound the cars as a future deterrent strategy. Working with Midtown Blue, officers in vehicles will drive around scouting for vehicles with loud music. An officer on foot will then be alerted, who will issue a citation to the owner and impound the car.

For the last three months Sgt. Cooper has worked on getting "No Cruising" signs for 3rd, 4th, and 5th Streets. These signs would enhance police ability to conduct John prostitution stings, as no arrests can be made without them. To date the city has not cooperated with these efforts.

MPSA PATROL ACTIVITY

MPSA Patrol made 9 arrests in the last month, what we feel to be a low number. The arrests have slowed down in part because the street elements are more careful in the area. Another factor is that information from the neighborhood has slowed down. Cleaning up our neighborhood a long and slow process, and it is important that residents keep us informed.

APD REQUESTS TO RESIDENTS

Please record all the serial numbers on items you own: laptops, mountain bikes, stereos, TV's, etc. The Property Room at Atlanta Police Department is full of stolen mountain bikes and other obviously stolen property. They cannot be returned to owners because, without serial numbers, they cannot prove ownership.

Please ensure your house numbers are prominently and conspicuously displayed on your property – including rental property. Emergency vehicles have difficulties responding to calls because they cannot find clear house numbers at night. Street numbers are often almost the same color as the house, or are recessed in dark areas in or near the porch.

As noted above, Atlanta Police also stresses to dead-bolts on all exterior doors, particularly those with "lever handles."

As always, be observant and report suspicious activity by calling 911. If you are aware of patterns you may also send those to us to forward to APD.

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PROBLEM PROPERTIES

Peggy Denby maintains regular contact with the owner of 151 Ponce de Leon Avenue, which is next door to Abbey. They want to be good neighbors and will put up a fence around the building to keep the vagrants off the front steps. They will also spray paint over the signs plastered all over. Their long range plan is to take the building down and put up a high rise condo.

The Abbey (former fine dining restaurant in old church at Piedmont & Ponce) has been sold.

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There is considerable concern about the new owner's reported plans to feed vagrants there. Peggy will work on contacting the new owners to discuss the severe impact this kind of activity would bring to our neighborhood.

The two properties at 1037 and 1041 Piedmont Avenue are a mess again. The owner was fined in Housing Violation Court and ordered to board up the houses and to clean up. Peggy will report to Housing Code Enforcement.

Rats have become a serious problem at the property on Piedmont next door to Blake's and Outwrite. Rats, at times in significant numbers, are observed from businesses around 10th & Piedmont emanating from an open sewer located on the vacant lot where a house was torn down.

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