



MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

Public Safety Report 07 / 2008

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NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

The tradition continues. Clear your calendar for the evening of August 5th, and plan on joining your neighbors for Midtown's 6th annual National Night Out party. Help us say "Good Bye and Good Riddance to the petty criminals roaming the community. Slowly but surely we are winning the battle. Your neighbors at the MNA and the MPSA will be putting this event together from 6:30 to 8pm on August 5th, on Mentelle Drive near 7th Street.

Shane's Rib Shack will sponsor the Bar-B-Q, hotdogs and fizzy drinks. Target and Environs are also among this year's sponsors. We will have the Moon Walk and chalk for the kids. Atlanta Police and the MPSA Patrol will be there for your entertainment and education. And most of all, this is a great chance to meet more of your fellow Midtowners!

ATTENDANCE AT SAFETY MEETING

Along with a handful of Midtowners, several public officials attended the meeting moderated by Peggy Denby (President of MPSA & MNA Safety Chairperson). Our main guest was Major Khirus Williams, who recently took the helm of APD Zone 5. Also in attendance were:

- Sharla Jackson, Community Prosecutor for the Fulton County District Attorney's Office
- Lt. B. McGee of the Midtown Mini-Precinct
- Sgt. Cooper for the MPSA Patrol

MAJOR WILLIAMS

We are very pleased to have Major Williams back home in Zone 5. Previously, he was the commander of the Midtown Mini-Precinct before taking a promotion in Zone 2 (covers Buckhead et al.). We enjoyed a very good working relationship with him, and anticipate a new energy in working with the Atlanta Police Department to address the various issues in upgrading the public safety, security, and public order in our beautiful, diverse, and dynamic neighborhood. We sense that he

appreciates what we do and what we have accomplished over the last five years, and he will support us in any way that he can. In fact, he asked us what we need from him to make our work more effective, so we will thoroughly review our needs and priorities in the near future.

He discussed some of his strategies for addressing the issues affecting all of Zone 5. He will assign foot patrols along Peachtree Street from Downtown to Pershing Point. By focusing on Peachtree, he expects to reduce crime elsewhere in the zone. He also announced that Zone 5 will deploy foot patrol in the Boulevard and Parkway Drive corridor.

MIDTOWN MINI-PRECINCT

Lt. McGee announced that the Midtown Mini-Precinct conducted 21 roadblocks, handled 912 calls for service, issued 33 traffic citations, and made 67 arrests.

One call for service involved a suspicious person. Police responding to the call discovered that the individual in question had an active warrant in Spalding County for a serious felony. When a concerned resident asked about making 911 calls on suspicious people, Lt. McGee stressed that the police would rather investigate and find nothing of concern, than to come back and take an incident report.

The Midtown Mini-precinct continues to work with the Vice Unit to address the prostitution problem in certain areas of Midtown. We are happy to report that we have sustained significantly fewer observations and reports of transvestitutes in the MPSA service area - they are remaining largely west of Peachtree. The few that continue to come here are under more intensive observation than before, and we are working on improving collaboration with the Atlanta Municipal Court to more effectively address these troubling individuals.

The Midtown Mini-Precinct is a detachment of the Atlanta Police Department Zone 5 covering Midtown, Ansley Park, Home Park, and Atlantic Station.

MONITORED COURT CASES

According to Community Prosecutor Sharla Jackson, three high-priority court cases will take place in the next month.

Ricky Love has been found competent to stand trial for his brutal assault of a woman on Peachtree Street during the summer of 2006. After several delays to accommodate psychiatric evaluations, the case will move forward in August.

Kenneth Lamb, the “barefooted panhandler” with an extensive history of rapes, aggravated assaults, and robberies, will stand trial for multiple charges on July 24th.

Tywong Mccoy, who allegedly exposed himself to several women in the neighborhood, will stand trial also on the 24th for multiple charges ranging from theft of transaction cards to aggravated stalking.

We are awaiting the result of the court hearings, and will pass them along to you when they are available.

PROJECT TURN-AROUND

The Fulton County DA's office recently launched Project Turn-Around to address repeat drug offenders. Project Turn-Around's stated goals are two-fold:

To remove from our streets experienced, repeat drug offenders who have decided to make selling drugs a life-long occupation.

To provide an opportunity for young drug dealers, with limited criminal histories, a chance to remove themselves from illegal drug activity and to turn their lives around.

More details in their press release at

- <http://www.atlantada.org/latestnews/pressreleases/061308.htm>

ATLANTA MUNICIPAL COURT

While neighborhood court watch efforts tend to go smoothly at the Fulton County Superior court with the help of Sharla Jackson, the bulk of our quality of life arrests are handled in the Atlanta Municipal Court. Residents show up for cases, only to find that the prosecutors handling the case are often not very receptive to these kinds of participants, or do not know what to do with them.

Sometimes the residents are told to come at (for example) 11am, only to find that the case was disposed of at the 8am hearing. On the surface it appears that a given case may be a run-of-the-mill jaywalking or other petty case, but many of these defendants have a long history of nuisance activity in the neighborhood - this is especially true of prostitutes arrested in the residential area.

We strive to put out the message to trouble makers coming to the neighborhood that we know who they are, we do not want them coming here, and we intend to do something about them. This requires good collaboration between the community, law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges.

RECENT INCIDENTS ON THE STREETS OF MIDTOWN

Two attendees at the July safety meeting shared their stories of recent incidents while walking in the neighborhood. One was a robbery, the other involved menacing conduct.

The victim of the robbery wrote to us this account ahead of the meeting:

I was mugged tonight while leaving TOP FLR restaurant shortly after 9 p.m. I live on Myrtle Street, less than one block from TOP FLR, and had never until tonight felt unsafe in the bright lights of the intersection of Myrtle and Ponce.

My attacker asked me for money as I left the restaurant. I said no, and did not look directly at him. It is my habit not to engage people who ask for money in our neighborhood. I did notice that he was not one of our "usuals" -- I would have recognized the usual panhandlers who hang out in the area. He was young, slightly shorter than I (5'6" or 5'7"), black, and wearing a light colored shirt. Beyond that, I didn't notice much, because I did not make eye contact. I crossed the street so as to be on the side closest to my home, but never heard him coming behind me. He tackled me and I fell to the pavement, letting go of my wallet, Blackberry, and keys. I recovered the Blackberry and keys, fortunately, but he got my wallet. I screamed and my neighbors all came running out. They chased him, but he got away.

I do want to note that the APD had four cars here within minutes. They were very responsive and sympathetic. I bought my home here five years ago. I have never felt unsafe in our neighborhood until tonight. One of the things I have loved most is that I could walk to the grocery, the restaurants, the park. I was within spitting distance of my bedroom and my car when I was attacked. I do not know how I can feel safe again in my own neighborhood.

MPSA NOTE: AT the safety meeting the victim noted that she should have "kept her guard up" by continuing to know where this man was. She was totally surprised by his rear attack, close to her home, under a street light, and around several people.

The informant in the other situation wrote this account after the meeting: On Saturday evening, July 5th, my partner and I were walking from WetBar back to our condo on Peachtree Street. For whatever reason, we walked on West Peachtree and then up 7th Street to Peachtree, rather than walking up Peachtree Place to Peachtree. Along 7th Street we encountered probably 10-15 men just hanging around. Some were in the parking lot of the

vacant business at W. Peachtree/7th, some were in the middle of the block leaning against buildings and a few more were on the corner of 7th and Cypress. It felt a bit tense, and we walked in the middle of the street to feel a bit safer.

Once we reached Peachtree Street, we called Midtown Blue, and they dispatched a patrol in about 4 minutes. While I think some of the Midtown residents are aware of the “street problems” we have, I think many of them are not aware of how serious things are/can be in the early morning hours, when many of us are tucked away in our high rise buildings. The residents need to get more involved in the neighborhood and put pressure on the City to clean up this area!

MPSA PATROL

The patrol is working on the reduction of vagrant activity especially near Ponce de Leon Avenue. Eliminating as many vagrant nests and hubs as possible will help us reduce crime and public disorder in all parts of the neighborhood - we operate very heavily on the “Broken Windows” theory. The MPSA Patrol is achieving good results with the letters of agency for problematic properties, which enables the patrol to enforce criminal trespass statutes especially when the businesses are closed.

We continue to have problems with the Bedford Pine tenants throwing their garbage over the fence onto an adjacent property rather than walk 30 more feet to a dumpster provided for their apartment building. Bedford Pine is a project-based Section 8 housing complex housing tenants that draw a large volume of drug activity into our area (see our earlier report at <http://www.midtownponce.org/news/BedfordPine20080131.pdf>)

The street people living along the Beltline remain a problem, especially for the businesses and residential areas located along the defunct track. These drug-addicted bandits come into the surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas to shoplift, panhandle, break into cars, and engage in a wide range of criminal activity, and then disappear to their Beltline habitats furnished and stocked with items stolen from the surrounding area. We received word that the owner of the Beltline area will kill the kudzu which renders police control impossible in that corridor, and a major clean-up is planned in the near future.

The patrol removed a small but rapidly growing vagrant nest this week, and returned stolen goods to known owners. Just one small camp filled the bed of the patrol truck with junk. Several individuals were found camping at the nest under the Virginia Avenue Bridge. Pictures at

- <http://www.midtownponce.org/truckload/>

MPSA PATROL LOGS

- **6/13** - subject arrested for criminal trespassing and obstruction of law enforcement officer
- **6/15** - Criminal trespass arrest
- **6/16** - criminal trespass arrest
- **6/18** - subject arrested for soliciting a ride
- **6/20** - arrest - pedestrian in roadway
- **6/23** - arrest - pedestrian in roadway
- **6/30** - arrest - pedestrian in roadway
- **7/02** - arrest for disorderly conduct
- **7/03** - criminal trespass arrest
- **7/04** - criminal trespass arrest
- **7/04** - arrest - drinking in public

- **7/10** - 2 subjects arrest for drinking in public, one of which had active warrant
- **7/10** - arrest for violation of prostitution duties
- **7/10** - driving under the influence

PROSTITUTION

Last week, the patrol encountered two of our most problematic transvestite prostitutes in separate incidents. One of the individuals was taken to jail, the other escaped.

Prostitute #003 has been arrested by the patrol numerous times in the last year for a variety of offenses like soliciting rides and prowling. Now (s)he faces felony charges for assaulting an officer. The violent nature of the last incident necessitated the deployment of pepper spray. This individual remained in jail for only a day and a half before being allowed to sign “hir” own bond.

Prostitute #008 also put up a fight, but fled and hid somewhere in the area (after leaving his ID with the officer). This individual is notoriously elusive. A felony warrant has been taken out on this individual. The subject was booked into the Fulton County jail on 7/22, but it is unclear whether the arrest was related to the warrant, or if the warrant is still outstanding.

In addition to numerous arrests for prostitution and related offenses in Midtown (including twice in the same sting last year), #008 also has convictions for things unrelated to prostitution and Midtown issues. We are working with the community prosecutor to effectively address these highly problematic individuals. Stay tuned for court watch dates.

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

- Your Neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance

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