

Spenard Community Council Public Safety Meeting

December 20, 2008 1:00 PM. Spenard Recreation Center

Introduction: This meeting was called as part of a process to implementing a new way of policing (the CAP team and the SARA process) in Spenard. The impetus for a different approach to policing in Spenard was an increase in disturbances in the vicinity of Player's House of Rock since the bar extended their hours of business on the weekends with a breakfast club.

Discussion: Captain Tom Nelson and Lieutenant Gary Gilliam gave a general description of the Community Action Policing team, contrasting it to traditional policing methods. APD is trying to blend the two approaches, given limitations in staffing. Traditional policing tends to be reactive and is measured by the number of arrests. The CAP team focuses their efforts to identifying and solving the root cause of problems early on in a proactive manner in order to reduce the total number of calls. This is done by the SARA process: Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment that operates in a cycle that repeats itself, depending on what is most important to the community. This is the process that has worked well this past year in Fairview dealing with chronic inebriates, drug and alcohol problems and open air drugs and prostitution. This process depends on the community acting in partnership with the police. The process is driven by statistics, i.e. calls from the community. Central coordination of data is essential for the process – data (calls) from the community and data sharing within the police department. There will be workshops and opportunities to citizens and businesses for education and training. AMC 880, a new ordinance allowing police to charge property owners after multiple calls, is a tool being used. Area restriction is another. Senator Ellis was successful in amending Title 47; starting next year the most habitual inebriate offenders can be involuntarily committed to an honor farm program.

An informal roll call revealed a good cross section of residents, landlords and business owners plus reporters from the Anchorage Daily News and KSKA public radio. Community members have observed less open prostitution now than in the past, but the perception is that violent crime is increasing. Besides the shootings etc. people expressed concern about loud boom boxes, dark tinted windows and the general feeling of intimidation. Community members voiced their frustrations coming from a history of dealing with a slow to respond police bureaucracy. People also were concerned that the process was fair to businesses that call the police to address problems. Capt. Nelson and Lt. Gilliam acknowledged the difficulties associated dealing with a limited system and a website that isn't user friendly, but it is important to not give up. There will be education to make dealing with the system as effective and painless as possible.

The meeting adjourned with a commitment to continue the process.

