

Strategic Planning Meeting for a Cooperative Preventive Anti-Crime effort in Takoma DC and Takoma Park, 3/16/06

Present

Seth Grimes (TP), Patti Ghezzi (TP), Chief Cindy Creamer (TPPD), Julie Schor (T-DC), Keats Kirsch (TP), Jeff McCandless (OTBA), Kim Brooks (TP), Alan Henney (TP), Dr. Dagmar Henney (TP), Lt Juan Espinal (MPD), Faith Wheeler (ANC), Kathy Porter (Mayor), Joy Austin-Lane (Member Council TP), Wolfgang J. Mergner (TP)

Things that can be done with our current resources: The agenda listed the following items: e-mail informational systems between TP and Takoma, cross-jurisdictional sharing of reports, periodic meeting of commanders and detectives collaboration between citizens groups. The group felt that all these things are already in place. There is Alert Takoma an electronic reporting system that has input from Takoma Park and Takoma DC. There are regular commander meetings and particularly meetings between detectives with exchange of information. PSA meetings are other community related anti-crime activities and the monthly meeting of the police chief subcommittee under the Council of Governments. Maryland-side participation in the orange hat patrol recruiting event on 3/22/06 at 5:30 serves as an example of inter-jurisdictional cooperation of citizen groups. Furthermore the Council of Governments member jurisdictions will have a common communication system for on the scene communication between police agencies expected to be active in 10 month.

There was a motion from the floor to explore other means of radio communication between Metropolitan Police and Takoma Park Police, while the police officers are acutely responding to crimes, where TP officers would monitor District police radio. A commitment to explore this question further is pending.

Safety Measures beyond C-Safe: It was proposed to think of other crime prevention measures until, or if ever, a C-Safe can become reality. Several items were mentioned such as video camera surveillance at the entry to Takoma Park. Find ways to increase the frequency of patrols at or close to the inter-jurisdictional border as well as obtain food and bicycle patrol. There was no resolution to these proposals.

It is expected that the Takoma Anti-Crime Task Force report will be released in a couple of weeks. An Abstract was distributed. It was requested that officials detail how they will evaluate task-force recommendations and implement those worthy of being implemented.

A participant brought up the issue of continued lack patrol presence and visibility on the Maryland side, and it was noted that the Takoma Park Police force is now 6 sworn officers understaffed with one new officer to join the force in coming weeks.

What is C-Safe and how can it work for Takoma Park and Takoma, DC?

The idea to develop a comprehensive inter-jurisdictional program was developed by the Chief of Police while attending the Takoma Anti-Crime Task Force meetings in 2002. In short: the model focuses the resources of two police departments on an area experiencing intense crime activity that takes place under protection of an inter-jurisdictional border. Addressing recidivism with the combined efforts of police and probation officers augments the program. This allows to track people who commit crimes. Community outreach and addressing community problems are furthermore an essential part of the initiative.

Such program is estimated to cost \$150,000 per year. This pays for office rent, the salary of a coordinator and two community organizers. The positive developments are that the Chief of the METRO Police Commander Hansen has expressed interest. The Chief of the Metropolitan Police Mr. Ramsey is in favor and Mr. Fenty DC Council Member is supportive. A similar inter-jurisdictional program is in existence at the Langley Park Corridor. It has been very successful, however dependency on discontinuous grant funding has impacted the program negatively, since it made it difficult to maintain good staff. So, it was emphasized that such initiative should not be dependent on on-again/off-again grant support.

City Council Member Austin-Lane said that she intends to introduce a \$75,000 funding request in the council for FY2007. It was proposed that the staff could be brought on as regular Takoma Park city employees without regard to the source of funding for their positions.

Planning to obtain financial support. The discussion of recruiting support support for financing was deferred to the April 5 meeting. It was stressed that a groundswell of public support is necessary to persuade community leaders to

allocate the necessary funds to maintain such program. That meeting will also conclude a mission statement, a map, and a steering committee.

Organizational matters: The groups felt that a decision had to be made to indeed move forward with a program, similar to C-Safe. Such a program would be quite different at the Takoma DC/Takoma Park border. This decision was made unanimously. Because the program is different in many respects, the group felt that a new name is in order. “Safe Takoma” was chosen. The program does need leaders on both sides. Ms Julie Schor and Ms Kim Brooks volunteered to work jointly as coordinators. A tag line was chosen. It was felt that a mission statement has to be developed such mission statement, it was argued should also include concerns about violence and violence prevention in all its forms: Domestic violence, bullying, street violence.

Next meetings:

Orange Head Organizing meeting 3/22/06

Takoma Park Emergency Preparedness Meeting 3/22/06

ANC, Meeting Takoma DC 3/23/06

OTRA Meeting 3/23/06

Takoma DC Neighborhood Meeting 3/28/06

Decisions:

The group decided.

1. Go ahead and pursue a C-Safe like Program spanning the perimeter of the Takoma METRO station on the Takoma DC site and on the Takoma Park site. The area under consideration, per previous discussions, would be approximately a mile square around the station.
2. Rename the effort: “***Safe Takoma***”.
3. Develop the following Tag line: “***Cooperative community crime prevention initiative***”.
4. Select Ms Julie Schor and Ms Kim Brooks as coordinators who spearhead the effort in their part of town.
5. A sub-group is to develop a mission statement
6. Next meeting: April 5, at 7:00 to consider budget-impacting proposals.

