

MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE
Public Safety Report - 12 / 2006

ATTENDANCE

The December Public Safety Meeting was held on Monday December 11th. 25 people in total were in attendance, including:

- Moderator Peggy Denby
- Officer S. Hale of the Atlanta Police Department
- Sgt. Bill Cooper of both APD and MPSA Patrol
- Two victims of street attacks in the last few months.

Captain Coxton of the Atlanta Fire Department was unable to make the meeting. His presentation has been re-scheduled to the January safety meeting.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

911 calls

- Residents claimed that they get a recording to call back later!
- Residents feel that the 911 operators do not take calls seriously, such as suspicious person calls, irrational conduct, etc

Car break-ins

Car break-ins are at high levels in the general area, not just our little Midtown. People are still leaving laptops, i-pods, change, etc., in their cars. It is very difficult to target this problem directly.

Aggressive scammers at area shopping centers

Aggressive teenage scammers have been working area shopping centers - this was published in our last mailing. We reminded all to keep an eye out for teen age scammers, to call 911 if they see them and try to get tag number of van. This triggered the discussion on making 911 calls.

NOTE: A few days after the meeting, Sgt. Miller, while working for MPSA, caught 3 aggressive panhandlers in the parking lot of Borders/Home Depot. 1 got away, but the others were served with criminal trespass warnings. This means that they will be arrested if they return to either shopping parking lot, Sembler or Promenade. Their "sale form" was confiscated, identification information was noted, and pictures were taken. All subjects are around 16 years of age and live on North Avenue. This is a more aggressive group than the group in the van (there are several similar groups occasionally seen in the area.

"Black Mafia Family"

Creative Loafing has been running a series about the "Black Mafia Family," which operates hip-hop nightclubs and is also said to be a major factor in drug activity in Atlanta and other cities. Wikipedia.org also has a page on the "Black Mafia Family." This has to do with nightclubs in Atlanta including those near 10th and Peachtree on the Dewberry Capital properties.

You can read the series on Creative Loafing's website.

Car-jackings at area grocery stores

The two Publix Stores now have security during the day and the evenings in the parking lots because of the carjacking. Publix asks that everyone be very vigilant because they can't be everywhere at the same time. (Ponce and Piedmont/North).

Redevelopment around Ponce & Boulevard

We have heard reports about redevelopment around this intersection. We have heard so far:

- A video rental store (is now open for business)

- Townhouses
- Checkers Hamburger

MPSA PATROL ACTIVITY

MPSA Patrol activity during the month of November included:

- An arrest for dinking in public near Ponce / Boulevard
- Urinating in public at Piedmont and Ponce
- A criminal trespass and obstruction charge near Argonne & Ponce – the subject struck and cut MPSA officer with a crack pipe.
- Possession of cocaine and possession of a firearm during commission of a felony in 600 block of Penn Avenue.
- A fight at 10th and Piedmont – subject charges with disorderly conduct and obstruction
- MPSA officer observed a hit-and-run which caused serious damage to 2 vehicles near 10th and Piedmont – MPSA officer followed the car to Clairmont and I-85 where marked units were finally able to take down the car. The subject was charged with DUI and leaving the scene of an accident.

Traffic detail

Sgt. Cooper conducted traffic stings for MPSA during the month of November. Among them:

- 2 expired or invalid tags
- 2 insurance violations
- 6 speeding tickets
- Two cars were impounded

Misc.

Sgt. Cooper recommends not to use cell phones, earphones/ipods, etc when walking and driving so not to be distracted. He strongly advises to be always be aware of surroundings. This comment was made after the victims gave their stories (see below).

REPORT FROM APD

Officer Hale says car break-ins are all over, as this is normally a bad time of the year for petty crimes. He particularly warned about leaving wallets in glove box when at fitness center. People are breaking in cars parked around centers and looking for wallets in glove boxes.

Many people simply leave car doors unlocked and windows down - this may prevent street criminals from actually breaking the glass to see what is in your car. If the door is open they will simply rummage through the car, hopefully finding nothing to take.

PIEDMONT PARK

Chris Nelson of the Piedmont Park Conservancy talked about park security, which draws around 3 million visitors every year. They plan to increase security in 2007, and to add more lighting along with swimming pool/bathhouse renovations.

ACCOUNTS OF RECENT STREET ATTACKS

Both happened around 8:30am on the given days!

Incident 1:

The male victim was headed to his car to take his dog (was already put into car) to the vet and then to work. He was struck sudden in the back of the head with a tire iron by a black male approximately 6' 3" in height. He yelled for help, neighbors heard and called the police. Prior to police arriving, the perpetrator reached into his pocket as if to pull a gun or knife. Fearing for his life, the victim asked the perpetrator what he wanted and then offered him money. The

perpetrator ran away with the money. Two women came out to assist him. The police arrived about 5 minutes after the attacker left and an ambulance followed soon after. He was taken to the hospital where he received six stitches. The perpetrator was never caught.

Incident 2:

This past July the female victim parked her car in lot on 17th and then walked to W Peach toward Arts Center Marta Station. She encountered a "crazy, large black vagrant talking out loud". She had seen him in the area the day before, but this day she knew something was very different. She kept walking even though she was terrified about this man. As they passed, the man turned on her from behind and began beating her. The perpetrator held her by her hair as he beat her head against the pavement. The people driving by simply ignored the situation. She does not remember yelling – she remembers only going back and forth between conscious and unconscious.

Finally two teenagers driving along West Peachtree stopped to run the psychotic man off, and then called 911. Her injuries included two broken facial bones, a fractured jaw, three missing teeth, severe head wounds, a dislocated shoulder and a torn rotator cuff.

The perpetrator, Damon Foson, was caught later that day. A psychiatric evaluation has revealed that he is incompetent to stand trial. He is also being evaluated by another physician. We will continue to follow this case. It is speculated that he spent the night in a shelter in the area to be in the same place two days in a row.

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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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