

MIDTOWN PUBLIC SAFETY MEETING REPORT

January 2006

IN ATTENDANCE:

- **Peggy Denby** – MPSA President and MNA Safety Committee Co-Chair
- **Steve Gower** – MPSA Vice President and MNA Safety Committee Co-Chairs
- **Hank Cleare** – MNA President
- **Sgt Bill Cooper** – APD and MPSA Patrol
- **21 additional Midtowners.**

NEW APD LIEUTENANT FOR MIDTOWN

In December Lt. Whitmire retired and has been replaced with Lt. Gibbs. We welcome her to the Midtown Mini-Precinct and look forward to working with her. She was unable to make the safety meeting but will attend in the future. Peggy Denby has already spoken with her about Midtown public safety and security issues.

THE PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF CAR BREAK-INS

The MPSA has been hearing a lot about car break-ins. While the December stats are not up yet on the APD website, the November stats are up and show roughly a typical month for our area (30-35). Residents are reminded not to leave valuables in their vehicles even for a short period – take those laptops, purses, gym bags, etc. with you when you leave your car – anywhere, not just in Midtown!

One suspect was arrested after a break in on 10th street. An off-duty Sheriff's Deputy working for the Children's School witnessed a car break-in on Tenth Street and subsequently chased the suspect into the park. With help from ADP they arrested the suspect in the park. Many of the break-ins are happening in the mornings.

VAGRANCY ISSUES

People at the safety meeting commented about the large number of vagrants in the neighborhood. It was commented that many of them appear to be Hispanic. Attendees asked what to do about them and how best to help them. It was stressed that street people often have weapons and are very dangerous – one should stay away from them. Since plenty of churches run feeding stations their meals are mostly covered. Vagrants panhandle primarily to support drug and alcohol habits.

The best option is to get them to some place like the Gateway Center (near Garnett Street station), where they can be referred to substance abuse counseling and other assistance.

Midtowners have noticed an increase in panhandling around the BP station (Ponce & Piedmont). It was pointed out that the BP station has committed to stop selling single beers after midnight. They have also repaired and turned on lights behind their business and promised to run off vagrants when they are present.

The owner of the Abbey has shown no signs of maintaining that property. **[MPSA Note: the property has since been sold]** Vagrants are sleeping on the property and littering. Peggy Denby will contact Councilwoman Mary Norwood for assistance on the issue.

WRONG WAY DRIVERS

Several residents have noticed wrong-way drivers more frequently although this has been a problem ever since Piedmont was made a one-way street in the early 70s. People who work all day long on Piedmont often see this many times a day, often at high speeds. Everyone was encouraged to report traffic related issues to www.midtowntraffic.org

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MPSA UPDATE

The organization is doing well. 2005 revenue totaled approximately \$100,000 with 95% of that going to patrol hours. Most of the non-patrol \$\$ is spent on insurance. The MPSA allocates patrol hours based on incoming revenue. Because of the recent increase in daytime car break-ins more patrol hours will be needed during daytime hours again.

A fundraising effort is underway to purchase an MPSA patrol vehicle. So far the MPSA has raised \$12,000 toward the goal of \$18,000 to purchase the vehicle. We expect that the annual vehicle operating expense will amount to around \$12,000.

CRUISING ORDINANCE STRATEGY

Sgt. Cooper is working to re-activate the "no cruising" zones within Midtown. New cruising ordinance signs will be put up and the law will be enforced to deter the "johns" from coming into Midtown. He is hopeful that the signs will be up by next week. Target streets are 4th, 5th, and 6th, which are the high prostitution areas. By arresting the johns the customer base for the prostitutes will be heavily impacted and with the right amount of sustained effort this will hopefully push the prostitutes out of our area. Even if the judge throws the case out they will still have to pay the \$105 impound vehicle impound fee (and have to explain to wives, moms, etc why they were locked up in Midtown at 2am).

In early Spring the cruising areas near Piedmont will hopefully be aggressively targeted, as 10th Street and Charles Allen Drive are also covered under the cruising ordinance.

SEC. 150-296. CRUISING ON PUBLIC STREETS (*excerpt*).

(a) Definitions.

(1) Cruise or cruising means to operate a motor vehicle, or to permit the operation of a motor vehicle under one's care, custody, or control, so as to pass the same traffic points within a no cruising zone more than twice within any two-hour period.

(2) No cruising zone means the area bounded by and includes the following streets or portions of streets and any other area as designated by city council (Midtown-related excerpt):

- Cypress Street 5th Street to Peachtree Place // Cypress Street Peachtree Street to West Peachtree Street // Seventh Street West Peachtree Street to Peachtree Street
- **Piedmont Park** - 10th Street Monroe and Piedmont Avenue // Piedmont Avenue 10th to Monroe
- **Midtown** - 4th Street // 5th Street // 6th Street // Charles Allen Drive // Vedado Way // Lakeview Avenue // St. Charles Avenue // St. Charles Way // Ponce De Leon Court // Greenwood Avenue // Monroe Circle // Ponce De Leon Avenue // Durant Place // Argonne Avenue // Myrtle Street

(3) Traffic control point means any point established by the chief of police within a no cruising zone for the purpose of monitoring cruising.

a. A person commits an offense if, between 7:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. on any day of the week, he or she cruises in an area marked in accordance with this section as a no cruising zone. A citation will be issued under this section any time after the two passages of the vehicle by the traffic control point.

b. The department of public works shall mark a no cruising zone by conspicuously posting appropriate signs at each entrance to the zone.

MISC

Residents from 673 Boulevard were present to discuss problems around this property. The residents were encouraged to continue to take down tag numbers, surreptitiously take digital photos, and any other information that help APD plan a sting operation.

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Sgt. Bill Cooper discussed the numerous prostitution arrests. 8 road blocks were conducted within the neighborhood in the last month.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE CITY

The Neighborhood Deputy Program is Back!

Blight from poorly maintained properties can impact the safety, health, and economic growth opportunities of each and every Atlanta community. The Neighborhood Deputies Program (NDP), a community outreach program under the Bureau of Code Compliance, plays a vital role in helping to keep communities as healthy as possible, for as long as possible by helping protect the "curb appeal" of our communities.

For information about the program, please call or email for upcoming training and activity.

Corliss Claire, Planning Resource Coordinator

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MNA HAPPY HOUR

MNA President Hank Cleare announced the monthly happy hour event from 6 to 8pm next Tuesday, January 17th, at the Grape (Peachtree and 10th, in the 999 Peachtree Building).

They will have complimentary appetizers along with wine specials. They have different categories of wine 1-10 and will have one special in each category.

- Categories 1 - 6, \$5 a glass for wine.
- Category 8, \$5 a glass for champagne.
- Categories 9 & 10, \$10 a glass special on premium wines.

If you plan to drive, parking is available in the parking deck directly behind The Grape, adjacent to the Wyndham Hotel.

In the future the monthly happy hours will be held on the third Tuesday of each month, at different venues. What a great way to get to know neighbors!