

NFB
NEIGHBORS FIRST FOR BYWATER

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General meeting on July 2, 2014:

President Julie Jones called the meeting to order. She thanked Sally and Phil Cobb for providing refreshments. She then introduced Councilperson at Large Jason Williams (JW) and our Councilperson Nadine Ramsey (NR.)

They both acknowledged that crime is at the top of everyone's list. There is a need to study what resources we have and how they are being used. There is a budget for new police recruits but getting applicants is not as successful as one would have hoped. They have some tough questions for the chief of police. They would like to find a way to lessen the load of officers to put more of them on the streets.

On another topic, they commented that NORD parks are on line but not ready to offer programming for children.

QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

One suggestion is to sell abandoned houses in the Lower 9th Ward to city employees to incentivize them to live in N O and also rebuild that area.

There was a discussion of the educational requirements for police. Some want to increase them others to decrease them. Both sides of the issue were discussed in the meeting: increase may or may not attract better officers; decrease may or may not attract lesser applicants. There is a belief that all of this "cheapens the dignity of the calling to be a police officer."

What to do while waiting for numbers to rise. NR said to do nothing different. JW suggested that we might try to lessen the load of officers, for example if you are involved in a fender bender simply exchange the information with the other driver and not wait for a police officer to arrive on the scene.

There was a question about police details and if the city response to the consent decree was what led to the current rules. JW responded “yes and no” and went on to explain that changes had to be made but not necessarily what the city did.

A concern was expressed about property taxes being raised and perhaps over and above the Homestead Exemption. It was suggested that the council seek a more progressive tax rather than a regressive one. JW agreed stating that the council knows that no one wants to increase taxes but it might be a necessary reality. NR said that she is not for increasing taxes and millage rates but she is also realistic.

Petty crime from the French Quarter to Bywater was discussed. Street robberies, several coffee shops were recently robbed at gunpoint, and so on. JW suggested that we all have responsibility to be alert and watch out for others.

Where did the increase in the police budget go if not to pay the anticipated new officers? JW said that they are looking into that; some of it went to overtime pay.

The speakers were thanked and applauded. Julie Jones then introduced Christopher Goodly (FG,) the commander of the 5th district. He started off by saying in 2011 he had 112 officers, today he has 79. The loss is due primarily to the fact that for a while the city wasn't hiring to replace officers when they retired or resigned. Now they are trying to do so. He gave crime statistics from 2014:

	All of 5 th district	Bywater
Armed robbery	52	12
Single robbery	25	4

He also pointed out that most robberies occur between 10 p m and 5 a m. When tracking serial robberies the 5th district shares information with the neighboring 8th district (across Franklin). It is also important to remember calls to 911 are prioritized and that due to shortages of staff, issues with lower priority will be answered much later. In addition to this it was pointed out that a car accident is a civil matter between two parties and you can simply call your insurance company.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE POLICE BE KEPT ABREAST OF
CRIMES THAT ARE COMMITTED. ALL SHOULD BE REPORTED.

FG then introduced Sgt. Roderick Franklin, the Community Affairs Coordinator (CoCo Officer) and our two Quality of Life officers: Victoria Guidry and Dwight Alcorn. Sgt. Franklin informed us that there is a program called *safecamnola.com* whereby citizens with security cameras can link them to the police. He emphasized the importance of having security cameras.

Incidentally, Commander Goodly can be reached at 658-6509, and Sgt. Franklin at 234-0344 (rbfranklin@nola.gov). The police station is still located at 4015 Burgundy, and it is easy to go in there to file reports, complaints, etc.

Anthony Eschmann,
Secretary