

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
CALIFORNIA

PUBLIC SAFETY  
COMMITTEE

CHAIR                      VICE CHAIR  
JJ Popowich              Marilyn Robinson  
  
MEMBERS  
  
Dwight Burgess  
Herbert Schwartz  
James Valdez



WINNETKA  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
COUNCIL

**Mailing Address:**  
Winnetka Neighborhood Council  
PO Box 3692  
Winnetka, CA 91396

TELEPHONE: 818-781-0016  
FAX: 818-781-0929

[www.winnetkaneighborhoodcouncil.org](http://www.winnetkaneighborhoodcouncil.org)

**WINNETKA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**To:** Council Members, Public  
**From:** J.J. Popowich, Secretary  
**Date:** February 28, 2005  
**Subject:** Public Safety Meeting Minutes 02/20/05

1. Call to Order and Committee Members Roll Call.

JJ Popowich	Marilyn Robinson	Dwight Burgess	James Valdez
Herbie Schwartz			

2. Approval of minutes.

2.1. Minutes approved with no changes.

3. State and local government representatives' updates: LAPD, Fire, and any other local, state, or federal officials that wish to attend to discuss items of importance to the Public Safety Committee.

3.1. Senior Lead Officer Karen Rodriguez was present representing the LAPD. During the period between 2/13/05 to 2/19/05, overall crime was down since the same period last year. Felony arrests are up 52% and misdemeanor arrests are up 3%. She didn't have any specific violent crime data.

She announced there are some organized robberies taking place by what are being called the Ski Mask Bandits. These bandits have struck restaurants from North Hollywood to the local area. The case is being handled by the Robber-Homicide Division and they are not releasing any specific information.

3.1.1. Mr. Popowich asked if these were the same bandits that were hitting Popeye's and KFC.

3.1.2. SLO Rodriguez said they are a different group. The group that was hitting those restaurants was caught about two weeks ago without incident. That group was believed to be connected to at least two violent crimes in the area as well, possibly three.

She went on to say that Winnetka is not really prone to residential robberies but there have been some in a trouble area near Roscoe and Cantera. These robbers are coming through open doors and windows. Some around Oakdale and Oso as well.

BMVs (Burglary and Motor Vehicle) crime is traditionally the highest crime in Winnetka. This type of crime is up 14.9% since last year across the West Valley. Mason and Roscoe are the second highest concentration of thefts of this type in the Valley. These crimes usually happen at night and are concentrated in areas around apartment complexes. Within the last few weeks there have been 5 unrelated incidents.

Grand Theft Auto is down 7.23% across the Valley. Though they have noticed an increase in Cadillac Escalade lefts since last fall, totally 8 since last summer.

The West Valley is down 18% in general. Overall everything is heading in the right direction.

- 3.2. Mr. Burgess asked if she has noticed a decline in Neighborhood Watch membership rolls.
  - 3.2.1. SLO Rodriguez agreed that there has been. Generally she says that until something happens in their neighborhood, usually large events, people tend to not get involved.
- 3.3. Mr. Valdez asked about Fireworks and what can be done this year to improve the response times to their calls.
  - 3.3.1. SLO Rodriguez said she had a neighbor who had similar issues. She went on to say July 4<sup>th</sup> is a high drinking time. She offered to put him in touch with SLO Sue Harold in Devonshire when it gets closer to the holiday. She suggested that he ask her to look into the issue he's had in the past to see if they can improve it this year. However, she said there is not need to do this until its closer to the holiday.
  - 3.3.2. Mr. Valdez said it is getting worse.
  - 3.3.3. SLO Rodriguez suggested they do this in May. She also pointed out that this is a maximum deployment day for the LAPD.
- 3.4. Mr. Popowich asked what SLO knew about various halfway houses in the area. He said that while they were out campaigning a few weekends ago they met a few folks on Hart St who complained about a half way house across the street.
  - 3.4.1. SLO said she was aware of the complaints by Sue and Bill. She said hat she has had numerous discussions with the manager of the location in question and most of the complaints were addressed right away or not valid. She suggested the WNC take this issue on as something that needs to be addressed. She pointed out there are no ordinances or laws dealing with half way houses. These types of businesses she said fall under the parameters of family.
  - 3.4.2. Mr. Burgess asked if this was a closed case in that area and the complaints were not valid.
  - 3.4.3. SLO Rodriguez disagreed and said that Sue has some valid concerns. She pointed to some specific issues which occurred but once she spoke to the manager at that location was advised he addressed the concerns immediately and they stopped. That particular location has done everything we've asked.
- 3.5. Mr. Burgess brought the discussion back to the issue of Neighborhood Watches and asked what the SLOs can do to encourage a return to block parties as a way to get people to get involved.
  - 3.5.1. SLO Rodriguez suggested that the WNC contact the Block Captains and work with them.
  - 3.5.2. Mr. Burgess said we have to do something because morale is going down quickly.
  - 3.5.3. SLO Rodriguez said that in the last four months she has recruited four new Block Captains and taken five off of the roles who have moved or passed away. She suggested that we work hard on a block party.
  - 3.5.4. Mr. Burgess said he knows that she does tell people about the program.
  - 3.5.5. Ms. Robinson said that nothing is happening right now so they are all complacent.
  - 3.5.6. SLO Rodriguez said that they just don't listen to her when she tells them now is the time to prepare and stay active.
  - 3.5.7. Mr. Popowich said that the WNC could intervene if we have a specific area we need to focus on. We can invite them to the WNC as a start.
- 3.6. SLO Rodriguez brought the discussion back to the half way house issues. She suggested that the WNC start a letter writing campaign to get some movement on this. There are just no rules about where they are concerned except those pertaining to sex offenders. The community needs to have this addressed.
  - 3.6.1. Mr. Popowich said this was a great idea. We can begin the process at the next meeting. I've heard about this as a problem all over and we should do something about it. He went on to say that you should not be able to run a business from a house that has an adverse impact on your neighbors.

3.6.2. SLO Rodriguez said there are not even any rules about the number of residents in a house.

3.7. Ms. Robinson said she had a question about the newsletter she handed out about the SLO summit. She asked if she could expand on it.

3.8. SLO Rodriguez said the summit is where the neighborhood gets together and decides on three quality of life issues that they want to focus on with the LAPD.

She took this opportunity to announce there is a community outreach meeting to discuss the Federal Consent Decree, its implementation, and how we are processing and using the data collected. She said there will probably be a guest speaker at this meeting to discuss crimes like burglary's and crime prevention. She is pretty sure that it will be at the new building in Devonshire division. As a result there will be no NW meetings in April.

3.9. Mr. Popowich said that he wanted to discuss shopping cart problems as well.

3.9.1.1. SLO Rodriguez said she would provide a phone number for California Shopping Cart Retrieval Hotline. This is a private company that contracts with many of the larger stores to pick the carts up. She said she is aware of some efforts to try to legislate a mandate for the stores to pick them up or increase the penalty for people removing them. She suggested that we also talk to the owners of stores like Food 4 Less and encourage them to create a pick up and delivery service like Vallarta has.

3.9.1.2. Mr. Schwartz suggested that we look into how Jon's does it. He said they will not even let you take them out of the store. They have a person who helps you out of the store with the packages.

3.9.1.3. Mr. Popowich said he would place this on the next agenda as well.

3.9.1.4. A stakeholder said referred to how they do it back east where they have a drive up area to load packages.

3.9.1.5. Mr. Popowich said he would put it on the next agenda so we can address it in more detail and create a plan on how we will work on it. He took the time to ask how we could get copies of Crime Bulletins to post on the web site, or can they even be distributed.

3.9.1.6. SLO Rodriguez said she would look into it.

4. Presentation, discussion and possible action on a request for recognition and support by Mr. Ed Castillo in his efforts to establish a Medical Reserve Corp team for Winnetka & surrounding areas.

4.1. Mr. Popowich announced that Mr. Castillo has decided to wait for awhile until his plans are further along before he brings them to the NC.

5. Discussion and possible action on addressing stakeholder concerns about suspicious activity at Runnymede Park. Stakeholders have reported possible gang, gambling, and narcotics activity.

5.1. Mr. Popowich introduced Mr. Seflin and briefly outline his concerns.

5.2. Mr. Seflin thanked us for having him. He said he represents about 45 homeowners (condo/town homes) just off of Leadwell adjacent to Runnymede Park. He said there are three separate condo / town home units in that area of about 13 units each. There are two on Runnymede and one on Leadwell. He said his unit is separated from the park by a chain link fence.

Their main concern is the park seems to be over utilized. He said there does not seem to be any real enforcement of the laws and rules of the park. He said the community likes the idea of the park, but just not one that is so well used.

Until last year there were about 30 park benches. His group worked with the Department of Parks & Recreation to remove some, but not all of these tables. They now have about 20 tables. These tables are used constantly. He said from 3 – 9 PM there is usually a group of men playing cards and drinking. When they leave they just throw their trash on the ground and their cans and bottles. He has also caught people urinating against a tree outside his home.

He has addressed these concerns with Parks & Rec and was told they only have two Park Rangers for the entire Valley area.

5.3. SLO Rodriguez said she has been advised that the LAPD Vice Squad has been working the area undercover recently. She said in November we had a Park Ranger Sweep that lasted about three days.

5.4. Mr. Selfin said he would like to see the LAPD go through the park at night with their lights on while they are patrol.

He went on to say that there are numerous birthday parties in the park. He said the Parks & Rec did post signs that prohibited Moonbouncers but they are not in Spanish and it's not enforced.

5.4.1. Mr. Burgess said that is a separate issue. He said this park sounds like it has a lot of problems. The birthday issue is separate. It's a public park and they can use it if they want to.

5.4.2. Ms. Robinson said when they put up signs in the park near her area in both English and Spanish it didn't matter. No one read them. The SLO met with her and when they pulled the tables from the park they moved.

5.5. Mr. Seflin said the party issue gets much worse in the summer and can really affect parking in the area. He would like to see some type of permit system to regulate and limit the parties. Soccer playing is also an issue. There have also been some cases where windows have been broken.

5.5.1. Mr. Popowich said it is unlikely that the soccer issue would be addressed. The Parks & Rec system and the LAPD do not have the resources to prevent that the use. They will simply tell you there are bigger crimes they need to focus on.

5.6. Mr. Seflin also spoke about illegal dumping of trash and graffiti as problems. He said there does appear to be some small gang activity and of course shopping carts are an issue as well.

He did point out that it is not all negative. He said he would like to compliment the groundskeeper, Kelly. She does an excellent job cleaning the park up.

He also wanted to let us know there is an alley way between Leadwell and Runnymede that parents of Sutter Middle School seem to use as a pick up and drop off point. The residents have called the Principal but nothing has changed.

5.7. Ms. Robinson said they had similar issues at Quimby Park. We addressed it there by having undercover police and in one night they confiscated \$700.00 in one night.

5.8. Mr. Popowich said we can do a letter on the drive thru problem and see if we can get it addressed with the school. We can also do a letter to the SLO and Captain to ask that they begin to patrol the area more. We can do a letter to the Parks & Rec area about the Rangers

5.9. Mr. Schwartz suggested we also contact the Traffic Division

5.10. Ms. Robison suggested we also do a letter to the School Police.

5.11. Mr. Popowich said there doesn't appear to be a permit system at this time. He said Simi Valley has a system where park use for parties is by permit. He said they could look into the Moonbouncer issues and permits if that is something that we want to do. He said that he wants to keep the permit problem separate and we can have an agenda item because we need to ensure that parents have a chance to say their piece on it. Mr. Popowich made the following motion:

***WNC-PS-022005-2: "The WNC PS Committee will write a letter to the LAPD, SLO, Captains about increasing patrols and getting regular updates on crimes in that area. The WNC PS will write a letter to the Parks & Rec Dept. requesting an increase in Ranger Patrols at this location as well as a request to reduce the number of tables in the park to 4 – 5. The WNC PS Committee will write a letter to the LAPD School Police about the drop off and pick up area that is adversely affecting the community. The WNC PS Committee will also send a letter to Sutter Middle School requesting a bulletin to the parents asking them to not park in the alley way, or use the alley way as a drop off and pick up area."***

5.12. Ms. Robinson seconded the motion

5.13. Mr. Popowich called roll and the motion passed 5 – 0.

5.14. Mr. Popowich said he would write the letters once it was approved by the WNC Board and mail a copy to Mr. Seflin.

6. Discussion and possible action on the following motion:

***WNC-PS-022205-1: “The WNC will hold a Winnetka Night Out at Runnymede Park to send a clear message to the community and the more unsavory elements that the park is for recreational uses by law abiding citizens.” (Popowich)***

6.1. Mr. Popowich opened the discussion on this item by saying that he felt this is something that really needs to be done to take back the park. He said that in order for the problem really to be solved, the people need to have a presence.

6.2. There was no discussion. Mr. Burgess seconded the motion.

6.3. Mr. Popowich called roll and the motion passed 5 – 0.

7. Discussion and possible action on efforts to bolster CERT enrollment in Winnetka and surrounding communities.

7.1. Mr. Popowich explained what the CERT program was and what they do. He went into a bit of the history of the CERT program. There was a general discussion about the various involvement levels of CERT volunteers from those who do not actively participate but are trained only to take care of loved ones and neighbors to those who are very active and could be called out for all sorts of emergency issues. He also explained some of the problems that Battalion 17 has had in keeping people active.

7.2. Mr. Schwartz said from his experience people tend to shy away from this type of event or program. They need to know it’s only for emergencies. It has to be brought to their attention at all times.

7.3. Mr. Popowich said he would like to see the WNC take a more active role in this program and lead by example. He made the following motion:

***WNC-PS-022005-3: “The WNC will promote and hold a CERT training course. Furthermore the WNC PS Committee will invite and request that all WNC Board personnel attend the training.”***

7.3.1. Mr. Schwartz seconded the motion.

7.3.2. Mr. Popowich called role and the motion passed 5 – 0.

8. Public Comments – Comments from the public on non-agenda items within the Committee’s subject matter jurisdiction.

9. Committee Business –

A. Comments on Committee Member’s own activities/ brief announcements.

-Mr. Popowich will provide a copy of the letter that is scheduled to be sent to all SLOs asking them to encourage NW groups to participate in the WNC.

-Ms. Robinson announced she is working with the Winnetka Chamber of Commerce to hold a Blood Drive with the American Red Cross.

Mr. Popowich asked if there was anything the Board needed to do as he felt it was a good idea.

Ms. Robinson said all we need to do is gather a list of names and set up appointments.

B. Brief response to statements made or questions posed by persons exercising their general public comment rights.

C. Introduction of any new issues for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting/request that the item be placed on the next meeting’s agenda.

D. Requests for Committee Members to research issues and report back to the Committee at a future time.

6. Adjournment

---