

Cherry Blossom Village Homeowners Association

Homeowners Security Meeting

December, 8 2015

Minutes

This special CBVHOA Homeowners Security Meeting was held in the Crossroads Christian Church on Oxford Road. CBVHOA Board Members in Attendance: Pat Fannin, Bob Moeller, Lou Rose, David Stropshire, and Chris Steinberg. Numerous homeowners were also present along with Georgetown Police Officer, Natalie Payne.

The meeting was called to order by President Pat Fannin at 6:35 P.M.

Pat Fannin welcomed everyone and stated that the meeting was called to address CBVHOA residents' concerns regarding a rising number of incidents and suspicious activities that have occurred in our community over the last few years

Lou Rose, the CBVHOA Neighborhood Watch Captain welcomed everyone and stressed the purpose of the meeting was to stimulate discussion on home safety and security. He described the challenges of living in a neighborhood with increased traffic from an increasing number of residents, golfers using the golf course, and the numerous construction workers entering and exiting. He estimated that there have been approximately three reported home burglaries, and numerous garage thefts and vehicle break-ins over the past three years. He introduced our guest speaker, Police Officer Natalie Payne, our neighborhood. Georgetown Police Liaison Officer. Officer Payne's opening comments stressed the importance for every resident to take ownership of increasing our community's safety. Some of her points included:

- There will be increased Georgetown Police vehicle patrols within Cherry Blossom.
- Residents can call the police dispatcher at any time (856-863-7820) to request a patrol car to drive by
- If you have a home alarm security system, use it-they are very effective and will generate an immediate police response unless verified by the homeowner
- Keep your garage doors locked. It is also a good practice to keep all of your doors locked whenever you aren't using them. Two of our recent home break-ins have occurred during the day
- Go through your home and video all of your major/valuable possessions along with serial numbers whenever applicable-keep the list in a safe place
- Get familiar with your neighborhood. Know your immediate neighbors, their vehicles, and their routines. If you notice something that gives you concern call your neighbor or the police dispatcher
- Make your house looked lived in (keep a radio/TV on, use timers to turn your interior lights on/off at night, etc.)
- Keep vigilant and aware of your surroundings no matter where you are

- When traveling, have your mail and paper stopped, have neighbors or family check your house every couple of days, and you can let the Georgetown Police Department know so they can check on your home with increased patrols (contact them for the form to fill out)
- Don't open your door to anyone you don't know. If they say they need help, keep the door locked and call the police

During the question and answer session following her initial remarks, the following points were made:

- If you have a problem with unsolicited sales representatives tell them to leave. Some communities have posted "No Soliciting" signs to discourage the practice
- Georgetown Police Department always has at least one Sargent and three officers available within each sector of the city-they are only a phone call away by either calling 911 or the Police Dispatcher
- Follow up policy: reports are generated by the investigating officer and forwarded to a Detective for following up. Generally more serious cases get more follow up than minor ones
- Motion activated lights along the perimeter of your house are also good deterrents
- If the CBVHOA wanted to hire an off-duty police officer to patrol the neighborhood, the cost would be approximately \$40-50 per hour
- When asked about security cameras, she mentioned that home alarms and cameras were much better to deter and follow up crime

She will brief the Police Chief regarding our concerns and mentioned that we could invite him to our Annual Meeting in March or a follow up Security Meeting if desired.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to the issue of security cameras. Pat Fannin summarized actions to date that include:

- The CBVHOA Board of Directors has received briefings by four different companies that install security systems for businesses, communities, and homes. She will summarize this information and make it available to homeowners.
- The cost for installing cameras at all four entrances to our community ranges from \$12,000 to \$23,000. That cost includes only the procurement and installation.
- The Board of Directors was concerned about the cost compared to the relative value returned in light of the heavy transient nature of traffic in and out of the community. Their decision was to host this Security Meeting and gather opinions from our homeowners rather than make a yes/no decision.

A spirited discussion regarding the value of installing the cameras ensued. A high level summary of the discussions/comments includes:

Pros of installing cameras at our entrances:

- Enhancement of overall property values

- Tool that could be used by the police when following up on an incident
- Deterring potential crime-criminals might prefer neighborhoods without cameras
- Possibility of sharing some of the cost with the Golf Course

Cons of installing cameras at our entrances

- Due to the volume of in/out traffic the cameras would be minimally effective unless a description of the car involved in the incident was known in order to obtain the license number for police follow up
- The quality of pictures from cameras varies widely and they still can't identify who was driving the car
- Cameras are easily damaged by vandals/potential criminals
- Retention and access to recorded information varies widely between companies
- Initial acquisition costs do not include routine upkeep, servicing, and repair
- Concerns by individuals who may not want to be tracked in/out of the community (residents/visitors)
- The disadvantages of camera systems compared to the "feel good" factor of having them-is it worth the cost?

Pat Fannin asked homeowners to fill out the security survey and return it to her. Of the surveys submitted on December 8, 2015, there were 23 homeowners who voted against installing cameras and 7 homeowners who voted for installing cameras. The survey will be held open for two more weeks to allow people who could not attend the meeting an opportunity to weigh in. A questionnaire from the Georgetown-Scott County Planning Commission was distributed in case homeowners wanted to make an input to the Commission regarding their opinion of what the community's strengths and weaknesses were. A resident recommended a Task Force be established to evaluate how to better protect our community. A sign-up sheet was provided and more than a half dozen people signed up to work on the issues. A meeting will be held to begin organizing patrols for the neighborhood, as suggested by Natalie Payne. After input from the audience, she emphasized that this needed to be accomplished immediately and not deferred. She encouraged all homeowners with strong interests to volunteer to be on the committee.

Pat Fannin adjourned the meeting at 8:20 P.M.

Submitted by Bob Moeller, Secretary