

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

Date: February 3, 2014

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Marc A. Grant, *Chairman*; John J. McCann and Bill Harkins, *Council Members*

Members Absent: None

Town Staff Present: Greg DeLoach, *Assistant Town Manager*; and Lynn Buchman, *Administrative Assistant*

Others Present: Kim Likins, *Council Member*; Captain Joey Woodward, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*; Kiera Morris, *Beaufort County Sheriff's Office*; Toby McSwain, *Director of Security, Sea Pines Plantation*; Lt. JoAnn Jones, *Port Royal Plantation Security*; and Eleanor O'Key, *Lowcountry Inside Track*

Media Present: Tom Barton, *The Island Packet*

1. Call to Order

2. Freedom of Information Act Compliance

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Public Safety Committee Meeting of January 6, 2014

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2014 meeting of the Public Safety Committee was made by Mr. Harkins and seconded by Mr. McCann. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

4. Unfinished Business

None

5. New Business

a. 4th Quarter 2013 Crime Statistics – Capt. Joey Woodward

Captain Joey Woodward of the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office presented a PowerPoint outlining the crime statistics for the 4th quarter of 2013, as more specifically cited in the Uniform Crime Report, which is included in the agenda packet.

Captain Woodward reported that crimes against persons in the 4th quarter of 2013 totaled 40, and he noted the breakdown in aggravated assaults, robberies, and forcible rapes. He reported the crimes against property totaled 192, and he noted the breakdown in burglaries, larcenies, and auto thefts,

which is considerably down from the 4th quarter of 2012. Mr. McCann inquired about the increase in aggravated assaults, which Captain Woodward indicated could be typical of a spike during the holiday season. They discussed the fact that the one forcible rape was an incident of a known offender, possibly in a domestic situation. Mr. Harkins asked for an update on the hit and run that occurred on South Forest Beach, which Captain Woodward indicated was being handled by the SC Highway Patrol and is still under investigation.

Captain Woodward reported the breakdown of the 194 total vehicle collisions for the 4th quarter of 2013, which he noted was a decrease from the 4th quarter of 2012, with the fatalities also being investigated by the SC Highway Patrol.

Captain Woodward gave a breakdown of the 3,698 total traffic tickets issued for the year 2013 by the patrol, the traffic team, and the warnings issued. Mr. McCann asked for statistics on tickets and/or warnings that may have been issued for texting while driving, and Captain Woodward indicated that while these figures would be included in the next quarter, he estimated that to date 15-20 warning tickets had been issued. He was not sure when actual tickets for this offense would commence, as they were continuing the public education, but he indicated it would start soon. Mr. Harkins noted the need to educate the public about the seriousness of the ban, and suggested the Sheriff's Office share the ticketing information with the press. Captain Woodward noted the School Resource Officers (SROs) are conveying the message to the students and teachers. In response to Mr. McCann's inquiry about whether a second warning would result in an automatic ticket, Captain Woodward indicated they are working on a method to track the warnings, which is not reflected on an individual's driving record. Captain Woodward provided the breakdown of the criminal tickets issued by patrol and traffic team for 2013, with no stats reported for marine tickets for 2013.

Captain Woodward cited the 817 volunteer hours in 2013 for reserve deputies and 2,339.25 hours for volunteers, which Mr. McCann noted was outstanding, and which Captain Woodward agreed enabled the department to perform better.

Captain Woodward concluded his presentation with a detailed breakdown of the 220 drug violations for 2012 – 2013. Mr. Harkins asked if data was available to recast the breakdown by age groups, to help educate the community and motivate them to take action. Captain Woodward indicated this could be obtained from the incident reports, and he would include this in next quarter's report. Captain Woodward clarified for Mr. McCann that the drug violations cited were definitely tickets, but most could also be arrests. He pointed out the areas where the violations occurred, most of which were outside the gated communities. He also noted that most of the drug dealing is being done by those from out of town, as you rarely find someone locally who is the actual distributor.

Chairman Grant inquired if enforcement of illegal marijuana use had changed locally, and Captain Woodward indicated enforcement was taken seriously and would continue as long as there is a State law prohibiting smoking, possession, and trafficking of marijuana. Chairman Grant also noted the higher figures in non-gated communities for aggravated assaults and the increased presence of police in those areas, and asked if this is a good deterrent to crime or if other solutions are needed to reduce such incidents. Captain Woodward offered tips for everyone, whether in a gated community or not, including vigilance, watching their neighbors, and calling in suspicious activities, combined with increased police presence. Chairman Grant asked about the absence of marine tickets in the statistics presented, and Captain Woodward explained that the Sheriff's Office is attempting to capture better statistics, as most of the violations from the marine patrol are at the magistrate level. While they are continuing to patrol the marinas and boat ramps, the figures are not being captured because a lot of the violations are not occurring within the Town jurisdiction.

Kim Likins, the Ward 4 Representative on Town Council, noted that Dr. Sharma, head of Neighborhood Outreach, was opening a facility on the southend of Hilton Head Island around Hilton Gardens apartments. He had expressed concerns to her about the higher incidents of drugs and crimes against persons in the South Forest Beach area as it related to the safety of his volunteers working in that area. Ms. Likins asked if there were issues in that particular area, and if so, if there was a remedy that could be found. Captain Woodward noted the Sheriff's Office is aware and has identified trouble spots in that area, and they are working on the problem. As will be reported in the next quarter's report, he reported there have been several arrests made, with investigations ongoing and increased patrols occurring, which should make the area safer.

Chairman Grant thanked Captain Woodward for his report.

Adjournment

At 10:16 a.m. Chairman Grant moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. McCann seconded. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Respectfully submitted:

Lynn W. Buchman
Administrative Assistant

Approved: 2/11/2014

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Marc A. Grant, Chairman