

**CITY OF FONTANA
FONTANA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

TO: All attendees of the Village of Heritage Community Meeting
FROM: Mark Weissmann, Lieutenant
DATE: August 23, 2007
SUBJECT: Community Meeting Minutes of August 16, 2007

Lieutenant Weissmann

- Introductions
- Advised he is currently the Area Commander for the area of Foothill to the 210 freeway. Advised the city is broken up into four beats. Beat one is everything north of the 210 freeway. Beat two is from the 210 freeway to Foothill. Beat three is from Foothill to the 10 freeway, and Beat four is everything south of the 10 freeway. Advised the Village of Heritage is in Beat two and if you have any problems feel free to give him a call at (909) 356-7142 or email him at mweissmann@fontana.org.
- Effective October 1, 2007 the Fontana Police Department is changing their policy on how alarm calls are dealt with. As of today the Fontana Police Department responds to all alarms calls and many are false alarms. Starting October 1st we are going to what is called “Verified Response” (VR). Most alarms are motion censored and are set off by your dog, a balloon moving through your house or even the wind. What happens now with alarms is when an alarm is activated the alarm company usually calls you to see if you had accidentally set it off, if they can’t get any response they automatically call the police and we send officers out to the call and usually find out that it’s a false alarm.
- *What is Verified Response (VR)*-It places the responsibility on alarm owners/alarm company to ensure burglar alarms are “verified” before police are dispatched to the location.
- *What is considered a Verified Alarm*-Audio verification, video verification, verification by a security guard or an eye witness.
- *Why Verified Response*- In 1998 police in our nation responded to about 38 million alarm activations, which cost an estimated \$1.5 billion. In the United States solving the problem of false alarms would relieve 35,000 officers from providing an essentially private service. During the Fiscal year of 2005/2006 Fontana Police Department responded to 8,529 alarms, 8,507 (99.7%) of those alarms were false! Fontana spent \$255,603 responding to false alarms which is equivalent to having 2 officers doing nothing but responding to alarm calls. Out of those 22 calls which were not false we only made an arrest on one.
- *Attempted solutions*- Ordinance #1356 which was adopted on 08/07/01 was an attempt to relieve officers from responding to an increasing volume of false alarms. After the 3rd false alarm in 12 months a warning letter is issued, any false alarm after that is \$63. The city has also provided door hangers to educate violators. The result of this ordinance was an approximately 24% drop by 2004 and has remained stable since.

- *Where do we go from here*-The problem is clear and also thoroughly researched. Verified response has proven effective in a large and growing number of communities. We are expecting over a 90% decrease in false alarms using the VR approach. After 6 months we will review the ordinance and see how effective it was.
- *Know Jurisdictions using Verified Response*- Broomfield, CO; Fremont, CA; Ventura, CA; Turlock, CA; Modesto, CA; Milwaukee, WI; Eugene, OR; Lane County, OR; Westminster, CO; Burien, WA; Las Vegas, NV; Salem, OR; Arvada, CO; Henderson, NV; Winnipeg, Canada; Breckenridge, CO; Lakewood, CO; Aurora, CO; Dallas, TX; Salt Lake City, UT; Bellingham, WA; West Valley City, UT; Victoria, BC; Yakima, WA; Summit County, CO; South Salt Lake City, UT; and Madison, WI.
- ***What our policy is***- If you have a verified alarm our dispatcher will take the information and dispatch at least two officers immediately. If the alarm is not verified our dispatcher will do a previous event search if there was no suspicious activity within 72 hours the dispatcher will then send a message to officers in that area stating there is an unverified alarm, if no officers respond to check on the alarm the call is closed out after 15 minutes. If the previous event search shows suspicious activity within 72 hours then two officers will be dispatched to the location.
- *What your options are*- Get rid of your monitoring service and rely on signs and an audible alarm. Install a panic alarm, we will still respond immediately to those. Insist your monitoring company provide a verification service (security guard). Or install a verified alarm (audio or video).
- ***Frequently asked questions:***
 - *Why doesn't the City just charge more for alarms and hire more officers?* This still puts a burden on the police department and the city (in regards to tracking, billing, and collecting) instead of the alarm owners and companies who are responsible for the problem. Also there are drawbacks on hiring officer through an unpredictable revenue stream.
 - *Why don't we just charge the alarm companies for false alarms and let them collect from the customers?* Alarm companies have threatened litigation against this in the past. Most don't even track false alarm rates unless related to equipment failures. They would have to add new divisions to their organizational charts to deal with this and much like us, don't want to have to deal with the tracking, billing, or collecting on huge numbers of false alarms.
 - *If you adopt this policy, will my homeowners insurance increase?* A common, yet completely false, scare tactic of alarm companies. Many insurance companies give discounts for alarms and a slightly larger discount for a "monitored" alarm. They are not concerned with who monitors the alarm or responds to check it.
 - *Should we expect our burglary rate to increase?* No! This had not occurred in the other jurisdictions where VR had been adopted. Fontana should be no different. Considering that over 98% of alarms are false, there is no correlation between alarms and actual burglaries. Owning an alarm can be preventive, police officers responding to the sound of an alarm is not (typically a 15 to 20 minutes response time). Additional free time will be much more beneficial than responding to false alarms:

- Focus on areas with higher burglary rates
- Investigative vehicle and pedestrian stops
- Parolee and probationer follow up
- Focus on arrests of drug users
- *Will people become victimized in their own homes if you don't respond?* Burglar alarms are designed to protect property, not people. Manually activated alarms such as panic/duress alarms, robbery alarms, and medical aid alarms are designed to protect people. We will continue to respond to these alarms and they will continue to be given a high priority.
- *I pay my taxes and your salaries; I want my tax dollars being used to respond to my alarm.* The majority of homes in Fontana are not alarmed. The alarms we are responding to are almost always false. Automatic police response is a personal service to alarm owners that has become detrimental to public at large. Owning and operating an alarm is a private contract with a private for-profit firm, for a private service.
- For more information please visit www.fontanapd.org.
- July 4th stats- 44 extra officers were out, they wrote 35 illegal fireworks cites which the fine is \$1000. We had a total of 103 vs. 131 in 2006 Calls for service for fireworks. Next year will be the last year for any fireworks in the city of Fontana.
- REMINDER: To have a yard sale you need to have a permit. An individual or household shall be limited to one such sale per six-month period (i.e., six months must pass between sales) and shall be limited to three consecutive days, or two consecutive weekends of two days each, a weekend being Saturday and Sunday. Such sale may be conducted only between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. If there is a problem contact Lt. Weissmann.
- Top calls for service:
 1. Traffic citations
 2. Disturbances
 3. False alarms
 4. Medical aids
 5. City Code Violations
 6. False 911 calls
 7. Noise calls
 8. Party Calls
 9. Commercial Alarms

Councilmember Janice Rutherford

- Advised if any one would like to make a contribution to the library Yahoo set up a Yahoo Good search. If you need to search for anything on the internet please use Yahoo Good search for the library every time someone searches on that website a couple cents will go to the library.

Councilmember Acquanetta Warren

- Advised she was glad to see everyone out.
- Advised the neighborhood is progressing. The council is currently working on a plan to help maintain this area. If you see any broken sprinklers call 428-PARK.

Field Representative for Assemblymember Wilmer Amina Carter-Amos Young

- Thanks the Police Department for holding the meetings.

- Provided toll free phone numbers for the government.

Mayor Mark Nuaimi

- The Community Center is finally being built. There was a citizen's design team which designed the Community Center but it never had the funding. When there was funding an architect designed it and when it reached the contractor they said they couldn't build it so it had to go back and be redesigned. It should be complete by late spring or early summer. The city will offer programs in the facility.

Questions and Concerns of Village of Heritage residents

(THE ITEMS IN BOLD PRINT REFLECT ACTIONS TAKEN)

- Asked if they still respond to the red flags for broken sprinklers. ***Dan from Parks and Landscape advised the maintenance crew still responds to the flags and to get more contact him.***
- Asked who is supposed to take the signs down from the yard sales. ***Lt. Weissmann advised the people who put them up should remove them. Sandra Pelayo advised no signs are suppose to be put up. Code Compliance drives around twice a week trying to take all the signs down.***
- Advised he has been calling code numerous times and has been ignored. There is a car parked abandoned for weeks.
- Advised the graffiti removal is not doing a good job because if you are far away you can't see it but when you are close you can. ***Dan advised to call City yards when that is happening.***
- Asked what the construction start time was. ***Lt. Weissmann advised weekdays it from 7 am to 6pm on weekends it's 8 am to 5 pm.***
- Asked if there was a certain amount of times that Code Compliance has to be called to get a response. ***Lt. Weissmann advised him to give his information to Officer Frydendall and they will check into it.***
- Advised they were told by a neighbor that there is a drug house on their street, asked who they can call to report that. ***Lt. Weissmann advised to call the police and we will look into it.***
- Advised if you go south on Mulberry from Foothill the whole back of the store is covered with graffiti, asked if the graffiti crew will clean that up. ***Councilmember Rutherford stated yes they will clean it. Both of those shopping centers are city.***
- Advised her alarm has a cancel button, and thought the police's job is to protect and serve and her life is more important than an accident and would expect the officers to go to her aid first. Asked what the response is for officers on alarms. ***Lt. Weissmann advised the response time right now it about 15 to 20 minutes. Mayor Nuaimi advised most of those alarms that it takes officers to get there 15 to 20 minutes are unconfirmed alarms. If someone has a panic alarm and that alarm, which has to be set manually, is pushed they will be there right away. Panic alarms are considered verified alarms because it has to be manually pushed. Nuaimi advised the police get a lot of alarm calls when the wind is blowing. Who ever has an alarm is paying a monthly rate and all that company is doing is forwarding all the alarm activations to the police department to check to see if they are verified.***

The police are doing the alarms companies customer service without getting paid for it.

- Asked what the property tax on her alarm bill is for. *Councilmember Warren advised her to get with Lt. Weissmann and give him a copy of that bill and we'll check it out because the city doesn't get any money from the alarm companies. Mayor Nuaimi stated we have 200 officers budgeted and 189 currently staffed, it's your tax dollars that are paying for the police and why would you want to waste your tax dollars on sending officers to false alarm calls when they can be dealing with real legitimate issue within the city.*
- Asked if the police department is saying to get rid of the monitoring company. *Mayor Nuaimi advised you can keep your company but for the police to respond the alarm must be verified either by audio, video, or a witness. The presence of an alarm is a deterrent. Check your contract you might be paying for the monitoring and the response if that's what you pay for that's what you should be getting but from the alarm company not the police department. The object is police don't go to all the alarms that are activated which are false and they will be able to respond to more important situations.*
- Since the charging of \$65 doesn't work, if you increase the fees then the customers will go to the alarm company to fix the alarm? *Mayor Nuaimi advised we don't always collect what we charge for. If we are unable to collect the fees then we have to go into the collection business.*
- Asked when the new policy starts. *It will start October 1, 2007.*
- Asked if you are going out of state can you notify the police if there is an alarm. *Nuaimi advised the police have vacation patrol however if the alarm goes off it will still need to be verified.*
- Asked when the library is going to be completed. *Nuaimi advised it will be done in April 2008. The grand opening will be late March or early April. The children's library will be named Dr. Martin Luther King Children's Library. Councilmember Acquanetta Warren requested items such as flyers from the first bus boycott or old ebony magazines, etc. to display in the library.*
- Advised he saw something about low income housing on Foothill just south east of East. All the city has to do is change the housing. *Mayor Nuaimi advised that is a Rancho Project. The city has expressed concerns about the low income housing being on the border. The problem is we know residents don't want low income housing however the State mandates every city to have low income housing. If the city has an apartment complex that is a major problem our Housing Department will take care of the problem and go in and improve it, however the State says we can't do that just for seniors but we need low income housing for everyone. It's not Rancho or Fontana's fault, because of State law, developers can ask for 30% additional density and if Rancho tries to restrict the development, the developer can take the city to court and then the city will have no say in what goes in there. Most of the people living in low income housing don't consider themselves low lives, they are single men and women with children trying to improve their lives. Other city's have low income housing but they manage it. The community needs to stick together. Councilmember Warren advised we always ask people to sign up for Neighborhood Watch but we don't have enough groups here. We need to start*

taking our neighborhoods back. Before we worry about what is coming across the street we need to be concerned about our own neighbors. Get a Neighborhood Watch group established, tell your kids to turn their radio down. We need to police ourselves first. It's not outside people who are damaging our community.

- *Advised the developer is asking to make it denser, it's only zoned for 150 units. Mayor Nuaimi advised its state law there is nothing the city can do. The developer can ask for a 30% increase because it's low housing. The city can not reject a request for a density bonus. The city got sued by an affordable housing advocate because they felt Southridge didn't have affordable housing, when those houses started to be developed they were \$75,000. We wanted to put high end apartments next to the freeway, if we put housing next to a freeway it should multi-housing. When Heritage was developed residents wanted to make it a gated community and keep everyone out but it's the residents here that are doing all the damage. We have firemen, police officers, teachers, etc. who can not afford to live in Fontana.*
- *Asked with school starting is there going to be more police presence? Mayor Nuaimi advised no, we have 48 schools in Fontana we can't send an officer to each one of them. Suggest you walk your kids to school for at least the first two weeks.*
- *Asked what school the low income housing students will be going to. Nuaimi advised it won't be a school in Heritage.*
- *Advised on trash day there are people going through the recyclables. We have a city code we will cite anyone caught going through the trash.*
- *Councilmember Acquanetta Warren asked everyone to bring someone next time.*

THE NEXT MEETING DATE IS NOVEMBER 15, 2007. THE MEETING WILL START AT 6:30 PM AT HERITAGE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL (13766 S. HERITAGE CIRCLE).

PLEASE SUBMIT ANY ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA BY NOVEMBER 14, 2007 TO:

AMBER SMITH
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THE CITY OF FONTANA COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD, KFON CHANNEL 3, GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNEL ANNOUNCES THE VILLAGE OF HERITAGE COMMUNITY MEETINGS' DATE, TIME, AND PLACE DAILY.