

**CITY OF FONTANA
FONTANA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

TO: All attendees of The Landings Community Meeting
FROM: Mark Weissmann, Lieutenant
DATE: August 13, 2007

SUBJECT: Community Meeting Minutes of July 26, 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 Landings is in Beat two and if you have any problems feel free to give him a call or email him at mweissmann@fontana.org.
- Advised the community meetings are an hour and a half long and are over at 8pm. Advised the Area Commander program will be able to address any issues such as a neighbor parking in front of your driveway, graffiti, etc.

Captain Alan Hostetter-Verified Response

- 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 the 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:***
 1. *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.
 2. *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.
 3. *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.

4. *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
5. *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.
6. *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.

Sergeant Granillo-Met Unit

- Advised he is assigned to the Multiple Enforcement Team (MET). He is currently the sergeant for the bike and gang officers. Currently there are 16 officers in the MET unit.
- There is a difference between gang graffiti and tagging graffiti.
- The Bike officers patrol the parks and certain parts of the city.
- The gang unit can either be in uniform or undercover just depending on what they are working on.
- Prior to working in the MET Unit he worked in Patrol and the officers on patrol want to catch the bad guy. The main goal of the officers on patrol is to make sure everyone is safe. Fontana has an excellent police force.

Lieutenant Weissmann

- Latest Calls for service for the Landings:
 - 1) Traffic stops
 - 2) False Alarms
 - 3) 415 Subjects
 - 4) 911 Call (which are false)
 - 5) Pedestrian stops
 - 6) Medical aid
 - 7) Party calls (these calls include 4th of July)
 - 8) Vehicle checks
 - 9) Noise Calls
 - 10) City Code Violations

- You have to go ½ way down the list to get to 415 domestics.
- Latest Calls for service for Morningside:
 - 1) Traffic Stops
 - 2) Towing Cars (mainly because of the shopping center)
 - 3) Thefts (mainly because of the shopping center)
 - 4) False Alarms
 - 5) 415 subjects
 - 6) Medical Aids
 - Theft to vehicles is way down on the list.
- July 4th stats- 44 extra officers were out. 35 citations were issued, each fine was \$1000. We had 103 calls for service vs. 131 last year. After 2008 there will be no more firework (safe and sane or illegal) fireworks allowed in the city of Fontana.
- The new Fontana Park is scheduled to open in April of 2008 along with the library along the same time.

THE ITEMS IN BOLD PRINT REFLECT ACTIONS TAKEN

Concerns of Landings residents

- **Advised she was a victim of a burglary this week and is having an alarm installed tomorrow, there have been quite a few burglaries in this past year. Asked when there is a burglary how is the city liable?** *Captain Hostetter advised according to Case Law there is no liability what so ever on the city if we are unable to get to a burglar alarm in time. The typical burglar is looking for the crime of opportunity and usually looks for the easiest targets.*
- **Advised he manages a business who owns a audio alarm and it's really expensive, there is no way he would be able to afford one for his home.** *Captain Hostetter advised with Verified response going nation wide there will be more companies making audio or video alarms more affordable.*
- **Advised people usually ignore vehicle alarms, asked if there was something the city can do to make people better neighbors.** *Captain Hostetter advised Neighborhood Watch is a good program to get your neighborhood involved in. The city can only do so much. If there is anything you see that the city or police can do better please let us know.*
- **Advised we need to know where the crimes are actually occurring.** *Lt. Weissmann advised on the Police Department website there is a link to City Compass which actually maps out all the major crimes so you know exactly where they are occurring.*
- **Advised they moved here three years ago asked if they were better off just getting a German Sheppard, what is the opinion of the police department regarding alarms.** *Captain Hostetter advised alarms are a deterrent and having the signs that say you have an alarm is also a deterrent. Audio alarm systems are good because if the burglar gets into your home he is most likely going to leave quick because the noise is drawing attention to the home.*
- **Asked since the city is already doing the alarm company's work, has the city thought about going into the alarm business.** *Captain. Hostetter advised we are here for public safety not to make revenue and there is too much conflict for the city*

to go into that business. The city is getting involved with fiber optics however we are not making a profit on that.

- **Advised he just signed a year contract with his alarm company, asked if the city was going to pay residents to get out of their contract if the company doesn't offer any of the verified response services?** *Captain Hostetter advised to check your contract. In the contract it might say "armed police will respond" which is against the law. If the contract says something to that effect they should provide the service to you.*
- **Advised in lieu of Neighborhood Watch get to know your neighbors. Call in anything suspicious advised that works well for his group. Advised the best Neighborhood Watch is getting to know your neighbors.**
- **Advised he is not familiar to what make a security guard a security guard and the difference between an armed security guard and a non-armed security guard.** *Captain Hostetter advised security guards are regulated by the Department Of Consumer Affairs. They are all trained however not as trained as officers.*
- **Asked if there have been studies from cities about the proliferation of guns for hire.** *Captain Hostetter advised yes, since the start of Verified Response there has been more and more guard companies popping up.*
- **Asked if it is alarming to the police department that these security guards are not trained to the level of police?** *Captain Hostetter advised they will be trained to the states requirements.*
- **Asked if the police will still respond to the Panic alarms.** *Captain Hostetter advised yes the police will still respond to panic alarms.*
- **Advised the criminal element would love to hear that the police won't show up, we all know that security guards are wanna-be cops. There will be more burglaries.** *Captain Hostetter advised that hasn't happened anywhere in any of the cities which have already implemented Verified Response. If you were a burglar and saw an alarm sign in the front yard of a residence you would pass that residence up and move onto the next easier target. We are going to review this ordinance in 6 months and if it doesn't seem to be working or burglary rates increase we can change the ordinance, however if that was to happen we will be the first city that had ever happened to.*
- **Advised 9 out of 10 times a responsible neighbor who see's something suspicious will call the police so that would be your verified response. Advised everyone needs to be proactive with their neighbors. Neighbors coming together are the best deterrent.**
- **Asked what the money will be spent on that is saved from the officer's not responding to the calls.** *Captain Hostetter advised what it does is free up the officers' time, now that officer can focus on the drug dealers and the parolees.*
- **Asked when burglar alarms generally go off.** *Captain Hostetter advised most go off during the day with the occasional night. Windy days it get to the point when the watch commander says they will not respond to any alarm calls.*
- **Asked if there were more burglaries during that time.** *Captain Hostetter advised the criminals usually stay inside those days.*
- **Advised usually when he goes for his morning walk he sees graffiti "doer" which he has not seen in a while.** *Officer Herreman advised we caught that individual. He*

didn't just graffiti in Fontana but also Rancho and San Bernardino. We do track the graffiti and eventually it catches up to them. There is more of you then there are police officers so if you see someone tagging please give us a call. If the graffiti is already done you can call 350-GONE.

- **Advised she is the Deputy DA and as part of the community you have to do be on the look out. These kids write everywhere so if you have a son or daughter 12 and up look at what they are writing if you see what they have on there person out in the community have a heart to heart with your child.**
- **Along Beech there are broken down trees and on Beech and Walnut there are broken windows.** *Erik Garwick of Parks and Landscape advised the windows are the responsibility of the property owner. A resident advised the broken down trees are the result of a car accident.*
- **Asked if the city can do anything with vehicles parked in driveways that are not registered.** *Code compliance advised if the vehicle is inoperable then we can take care of it, however if they can start it and move it back and forth there is nothing that can be done.*
- **Asked if commercial vehicles are allowed in residential area, advised there have been two tow trucks parked in their neighborhood. Advised she emailed Code Compliance however they told her that they were too busy dealing with weeds to deal with that problem.** *Lt. Weissmann advised to get with him after the meeting so he can get more information.*
- **Asked if they can find out what the ruckus was the other night.** *Lt. Weissmann advised on July 13th there was a party which broke out into a huge fight with approximately 100 people. 4 officers went out and shut the party down. We don't know if it was gang related or not.*
- **Asked if the police department only shut down parties if there are fights.** *Lt. Weissmann advised it depends on the situation. Soon we will have an ordinance where if we have to shut the party down we can cite the owner if the noise can be heard 50 yards from the property line.*
- **Asked if that ordinance includes barking dogs.** *Lt. Weissmann advised there is a separate code of dogs.*
- **Advised Fontana was always not good, it is remarkable to see how it has changed it has really turned around.**
- **Advised she had seen a big cage at Highland and Cherry and wanted to know what we were trying to catch.** *Lt. Weissmann advised the police department don't try to catch animals that's up to animal control.*
- **Is there anything we can do about ice cream truck.** *Lt. Weissmann advised the police can actually cite them for the noise ordinance.*
- **Asked if the police department anticipate a rise in crime with the opening of the 210 freeway.** *Lt. Weissmann advised the police department do not anticipate a rise in crime with the opening of the freeway.*
- **Asked what level of maintenance do homes have to maintain.** *Code Compliance advised the yard must be green to city standards. The city has put liens on houses who have not maintained the yard and the maintenance is done by the city. The lien will not be taken off of the house until it is paid off. Foreclosures are occurring not only in our city but in every city. Between Code Compliance and the Housing*

Department they do a good job of keeping the community maintained however with the level of foreclosures coming up they might not be able to.

THE NEXT MEETING DATE IS OCTOBER 25, 2007. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT SOLORIO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (15172 WALNUT) AT 6:30 PM.

PLEASE SUBMIT ANY ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA BY OCTOBER 24, 2007 TO:

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