

**CITY OF FONTANA
FONTANA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

TO: All attendees of the Walnut Village Community Meeting
FROM: Mark Weissmann, Lieutenant
DATE: August 14, 2007

SUBJECT: Community Meeting Minutes of August 9, 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 Walnut Village is in Beat two and if you have any problems feel free to give him a call or email him at mweissmann@fontana.org.

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 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.

Lieutenant Weissmann

- Latest Calls for Service since May:
 1. Traffic stops
 2. 911 Calls
 3. 415 subjects
 4. Medical Aids
 5. Alarms
 6. Vehicle Checks
 7. Party
 8. Domestic Violence
 9. Fontana City Code Violations
 10. Noise Calls
 11. Follow Ups
 12. Area Checks
 - Number 15 on the list is Graffiti which there was only 3 calls for service. If you see graffiti call 350-GONE and it will be removed.
- 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.

Concerns of Walnut Village resident

THE ITEMS IN BOLD PRINT REFLECT ACTIONS TAKEN

- Asked how long it will take officers to get to their house if someone calls and says they just saw someone climbing out the window. ***Captain Hostetter advised we won't go immediately since the burglar has already left and no one is in danger.***
- Asked if the police department takes fingerprints because he was told his TV was too dusty to get any prints off of it. ***Captain Hostetter advised to get with him after the meeting so he can get more information. Advised Officers love to catch the burglar.***

- Is there anything the police do to notify people of what happens such as they are smashing in the front doors, etc. *A resident advised she lives in a cul-de-sac and they have a Neighborhood Watch and that seems to work for her group. Captain Hostetter advised the police department does try to get that information into the news paper.*
- Advised he knows Neighborhood Watch exchanges phone number and address but in his cell phone he puts all the phone numbers on his block under the address. Also says if you see something suspicious and want to get a good description of what is happening use your cell phone to leave yourself a message so you can remember all the details.
- Asked why there will be no more fireworks allowed in the city after next year. *Lt. Weissmann advised because of all the problems we have with them. Neighboring cities don't allow fireworks so everyone thinks they can come here and light them.*
- Asked who made the decision about the fireworks. *Lt. Weissmann advised the City Council made the decision to ban fireworks.*
- Asked if the City Council asked for a vote of the residents in Fontana. *Lt. Weissmann advised the City Council made the decision on their own. They had a discussion and questions at a City Council meeting.*
- Recommended everyone put the street light phone number and the graffiti phone number in their cell phones.
- Advised once the high school starts kids drive very fast on Mango. It starts from about 7 to about 7:30 in the morning on Mango and Baseline. *Lt. Weissmann advised we can't have an officer at every school, we have 42 schools in the Fontana School District alone plus we have schools from Etiwanda School District and also Colton Unified School District in the City of Fontana. We don't have enough resources to put an officer at each school location. We will notify our traffic unit.*
- Asked after you call in graffiti to 350-GONE how long does it take to be removed. *Dan West advised the graffiti team's goal is 80% done within 24 hours the rest are done within 72 hours.*
- When they start construction on Mango and Baseline do they have to close the street down 5 minutes before school starts. *Dan West advised he will follow up with the construction company to see if they can start the construction a little later.*
- Asked what is going in on the west side of Sierra and Baseline. *It is the Promenade; however there are still a lot of property owners the city has to deal with so it will be a while before it's complete.*
- Advised he lives across from the park and has gone walking and found crack pipes and syringes, and also asked if the city can possibly put up signs saying no urinating because this happens a lot at night when it's dark. *Eric advised he will look into the problems at the park.*
- Asked if there was a code regarding dogs in the park. *Dan West advised there is a parks and recreation code that no dogs are allowed in the park.*
- Asked what the maintenance requirements the banks have on foreclosures. *Lt. Weissmann advised if the property is not maintained the city will put a lien on the property and it has to be paid before the time of sale.*
- Asked if there was anything that can be done with the kids who go around digging through trash cans for recyclables. *Lt. Weissmann advised you can just call us, we'll*

send an officer out. The officer will probably just warn them. Captain Hostetter advised we have been getting more and more calls about this. Advised one of lieutenants will send out an email instructing officers to cite violators.

- *Advised he read in the news paper that Fontana has 50 plus gangs, asked if there were any in this area. Lt. Weissmann advised there use to be a gang called North Fontana who went to Cambria Park and graffiti'd offensive things about our gang officers however most of them have been arrested.*
- *Advised there is a gang at the park called "P" from Pomona, they wear hats that say "P".*
- *Advised he lives next to the park and has noticed there has been a lot of drug use in the park at night. Lt. Weissmann advised no one can be in the park after 10pm. If they are call the police and we'll come out especially if they are using drugs.*
- *Advised last week his wife's car got scratched and he called the police, wanted to know what else can be done. Lt. Weissmann advised nothing can be done, just a report. The district attorney will only prosecute when a finger print is inside the vehicle not on the outside.*
- *Advised there use to be signs for no playing ball in the park but they are not there anymore. Eric Garwick advised he will take a look into that.*
- *Asked if there was a law of semi trucks driving on Sierra. Officer Cafaro advised we have a commercial officer who deals with all commercial related violation, he will have to ask him to be sure, however it's one of those offenses where the officer has to actually see it happen.*
- *Asked if it was possible to get signs posted telling truck drivers not to drive through the residential areas. Officer Cafaro advised we do have assigned truck routes and they can't be on any other street unless making a delivery. It would be impossible to put a sign on every street that trucks can not drive on.*
- *Advised yard sale signs are not permitted however if you do put a yard sign out please be courteous and make them free standing signs and remove them after the yard sale is over. Lt. Weissmann advised you are only allowed to have two yard sales every six months and you must have a permit.*
- *Advised he lives next to palmetto, north of Baseline and there is a lot of racing and people hanging out there. If they are there call the police department.*
- *Advised on Baseline east of Palmetto there is a half way house with 4 child molesters living there, asked if there are a lot of problems there. Lt. Weissmann advised that is Rialto's area.*
- *Asked if signs that the new developments post are allowed by the city. Jose Delatorre of Code Compliance advised it depends sometimes the developer makes an agreement with the city so it's ok unless it's unsafe.*
- *Advised on Cypress there is a house with 10 to 15 dogs and they create a lot of noise. Lt. Weissmann advised him to get with Officer Guith to give him all the information so he can check it out.*

**THE NEXT COMMUNITY MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
NOVEMBER 8, 2007 AT MANGO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (7450**

MANGO AVENUE). THE MEETING WILL START AT 6:30 IN THE CAFETERIA.

PLEASE SUBMIT ANY ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA BY NOVEMBER 7, 2007 TO:

AMBER SMITH
FONTANA POLICE DEPARTMENT
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(909) 350-7710
E-MAIL-asmith@fontana.org

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