

June 2006

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DEPUTY CHIEF MARSHALL LYONS FEATURED SPEAKER AT MAY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

At our annual meeting on May 9 at All Saints Church, the head of the new Western District (formerly the 12th Precinct) of the Detroit Police Department spoke to Sherwood Forest residents about safety in our community. Deputy Chief Marshall Lyons was accompanied by Commander Dwight Hudson and Community Relations Officer Sandra Richardson.

Deputy Chief Lyons stressed that crime has no boundaries, and that Sherwood Forest residents must work daily with the Western District and the residents of surrounding communities to enhance security in the precinct. To this end, there are small things that each of us can do:

- **BE ALERT TO THE WORLD AROUND US** – If something appears suspicious, report it. Look out for your neighbor and his or her property as well as your own.
- **BE AWARE THAT CARS THEFT IS AN INCREASING PROBLEM NATIONWIDE** – Most cars are stolen at night, often from a driveway or the front of a home. Keep your car secure and off the street.
- **MAKE SURE YOUR HOME LOOKS LIVED IN** – Don't leave newspapers or fliers on your porch, let your grass grow tall, or leave your house dark in the

evening. This signals that no one is home.

- **LOOK AT THE CAR BEHIND YOU AS YOU ENTER THE NEIGHBORHOOD** – If it looks like you are being followed, drive directly to the precinct and honk your horn continuously. You also may stop at any fire station and ask for help.
- **DO NOT GO TO GAS STATIONS OR ATM MACHINES AT NIGHT.**

Here are some of the things that the Western District is doing to increase safety:

- It has instituted a policy of overlapping shifts, so there is no “down-time” for officers on the street.
- It is using more unmarked cars in high crime areas.
- It has placed beat officers on Livernois.
- It has increased the response time of units in the area.
- It is making community relations a priority.
- Deputy Chief Lyons and Commander Hudson have instituted an open door policy. They encourage us to call them at 569-1200, 569-1205 or 569-5221. If you are dissatisfied with the treatment you receive from ANYONE in the Western District, get that person's name, and then inform Lyons or Hudson.

- The precinct will provide free steering wheel locks and glass etching on your Chrysler product. This is for Chrysler vehicles **only**. Police report that they are the easiest to break into.

In response to a question from a resident about orange-colored, spray-painted graffiti appearing in the area, Deputy Chief Lyons reported that the graffiti has been examined by gang squad officers, and the spray-paintings are not recognized gang symbols. A graffiti cleaner is widely-available, and residents should feel free to use it in the neighborhood, including on public signs.

Our thanks to board member Ron Kischuk for planning the May meeting and arranging to have Deputy Chief Lyons speak to us; to everyone who contributed to the delicious potluck supper and to neighbors who helped to organize the supper, including Catherine Mayberry, Carrie Simmons and Irma Wise; and to Kim Tandy, who updated us on the Livernois redevelopment project (see next article).

THE BEAUTIFICATION OF LIVERNOIS HAS BEGUN

Work has begun on transforming Livernois between Eight Mile and McNichols Roads into a boulevard. Currently nine lanes wide, the roadbed will be reduced to two lanes of travel and a dedicated parking lane in each direction.

City of Detroit Traffic Engineer Sunny Jacob says that the Livernois beautification project was prompted by a series of “pedestrian crashes in the Livernois area [because of] stores on both sides and people crossing a 90-foot wide roadway.” The addition of a boulevard, construction of which has already started, will give pedestrians a safe haven halfway across the road, and is expected to slow traffic.

Looking to decrease insurance costs in the city, AAA Insurance studied the corridor, with results that backed up the analysis of the Traffic Engineering division of Detroit’s Department of Public Works, which recommended the narrowing of the roadway. The analysis also confirmed that two travel lanes in each direction would be able to handle the traffic that Livernois typically carries.

The project budget is just over \$1.4 million and is being

funded in large part by the Michigan Department of Transportation. Traffic Engineer Jacob notes that “MDOT bought into the project because they also see a benefit in the reduction of crashes.” Construction is expected to be complete by November of this year.

Phase One involves construction of the boulevard between Six and Eight Mile Roads. Phase Two will continue the boulevard south to the Lodge freeway.

Source: Sunny Jacob, City of Detroit Department of Public Works

MICHIGAN STATE FAIR GENERAL MANAGER MEETS WITH NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATIVES

The Michigan State Fair & Exposition Center Authority Board of Directors held its annual meeting with the local advisory council on May 10, 2006. The board, chaired by Mark Gaffney (President Michigan AFL-CIO) stated that the legislation that created the authority also dictated that the authority meet at least annually with a local advisory council. The council is comprised of representatives of surrounding communities and municipalities.

Michigan State Fair General Manager John Hertel gave an overview of the operations of the fair. He detailed the year-round operations including, the Joe Dumars Fieldhouse, Little Caesars and Wayne State University hockey, as well as DaimlerChrysler vehicle storage, which provide a needed revenue source. Hob Nobble Gobble and the Cattle Barons Ball, the largest fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, are held on the grounds.

Mr. Hertel spoke about the infrastructure and visual improvement to the Detroit Department of Transportation depot on the Woodward side. He also provided insight on the future developments on fair property. The board has instituted policy that if the proposal is not “educational, recreational or entertainment” in scope it would not fit in the overall long term plan that is being developed for the property.

There have been rumors regarding the development of the site, but the only proposal that has been approved is a drive-in movie theatre. This project has been tabled for the time being because of the weakness in the movie market.

Mr. Hertel talked about the actual fair that will be held later this summer. The admission will be \$9 for adult and \$4 for children. There will be an emphasis on family entertainment. No rap or hip hop acts will be at the fair and Raven Symone will close the fair in conjunction with Disney Radio.

The General Manager and board have pledged to continue to have dialogue with the surrounding communities before any additional changes are made concerning the Michigan State Fair.

Richard Carson
Sherwood Forest Representative to Annual Meeting of
State Fair Advisory Board

[Editor's Note: Shortly after this meeting, Joseph Nederlander announced preliminary plans to open a major shopping center at the State Fairgrounds. No retail stores had been secured for this project at the time of the announcement.]

NEIGHBORS WORK TOGETHER TO STOP ILLEGAL USE OF SHREWSBURY PROPERTY

In January of 2006, an unlicensed group home began operation in a home on Shrewsbury. As many as 18 disabled men and women were placed in the home without state or city authorization. The Code Enforcement Division of the Building and Safety Engineering Department (B&SE) was asked to conduct an investigation. Neighbors got to work and discovered that the owner of the property was a suburban woman who claimed to have leased the house to a "house manager." As problems mounted at the home, various tickets were issued by B&SE and two hearings were held at the Department of Administrative Hearings. The homeowner failed to appear at both hearings, and she was found to be in default and fined. The neighborhood began to lay the groundwork for legal action.

The homeowner agreed to put the "house manager" and the residents out of the house. New placements were found for the residents and they were removed in an orderly fashion.

The house is now for sale, but all the problems have not been solved. A garage full of debris was left behind

when the house was vacated. We are now seeking the help of various city agencies to get this garbage cleared away.

So many residents spent more hours of their time than we could possibly count trying to solve the problem at this one house. They include members of the Board of Directors of the Sherwood Forest Association, local attorneys who volunteered their expertise, Shrewsbury and Canterbury neighbors who kept us informed about what was going on and who took the time to attend two hearings, the City Law Department, a tenacious inspector at B&SE and everyone at the Department of Administrative Hearings. Thank you one and all.

Although we are pleased that the group home is gone, there is still that garage full of garbage, which the homeowner has not removed. There is much work we still need to do.

The lesson here is that small problems become big problems, and solutions take a lot of time and effort. We have had more complaints this year than every before about property maintenance issues in Sherwood Forest. Part of the problem is that there are several homes for sale that are empty and not being maintained, but even some of our own residents are not doing basic maintenance tasks, like mowing their lawns. The volunteer members of the board cannot deal with every one of these situations. We need help. If you can give some of your time and talent to work with the property maintenance committee, please call Lois E. Primas at 863-0167, Robert Gold at 861-3642, or Gail Rodwan at 342-5827.

CITY TO RESUME BULK PICKUP ON QUARTERLY BASIS

Thank you to the approximately 70 households that responded to the e-mail survey on bulk pickup. Preferences varied widely. We got one vote for weekly bulk pickup, two for twice monthly, 22 for monthly, 28 for quarterly, one for semi-annually, 8 with no preference as to frequency, 5 who wanted no bulk pickup and 3 who thought we should wait to see what the City was going to do. As of this writing, it appears that City will indeed resume bulk pickup beginning in November, but on a quarterly basis. In addition, the City will impose a \$300 annual fee for regular garbage collection. That fee will replace the 3 mills we are currently paying in property taxes for garbage service.

That tax will be rescinded.

In light of these developments, we may want to abandon a neighborhood plan to provide bulk collection through a private provider, especially since so many residents who responded to the survey indicated that a quarterly pickup was sufficient. However, we will be guided by neighbors' views on this question, so please continue to let us know what you think.

We are providing below the names of private companies, including Hill Hauling, the company we had contemplated using if we instituted a neighborhood-wide program. If you have a good or bad experience with any of the companies listed, please use this newsletter to let us know what you think.

1. Bulk Garbage Pickup Service (313) 838-0308
2. Fred's Professional Private Collection (313) 893-7489
3. Hill Hauling (866)345-HAUL or hillhauling@aol.com
4. Independent Haulers and Trash Container Providers Referral Service (313)640-6400. This service connects people with independent haulers and trash container providers.
5. Mr. Hall, (313) 273-6815, will remove appliances and other metals free of charge. Call for estimates on other bulk items.
6. R&R Bulk Trash Removal (313)663-8084.
7. Recycleclean. Call Matt Naimi at (313) 506-7900.

THE PATROL NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

Our new fiscal year began on June 1. If you have not yet joined the Sherwood Forest Patrol, we hope this is an oversight. This notice is intended to remind you to send your check today.

Sherwood Forest continues to be one of the safest neighborhoods in metropolitan Detroit. However crime is increasing. We would like to add more hours of patrol coverage this year, but we need more members to do so.

One of the reasons we have a safe neighborhood is the presence of a private security patrol. Sherwood Forest has had a security service for over 35 years. The entire neighborhood benefits from the presence of a highly visible patrol, so every household should join.

Please do your part in contributing to the safety of Sherwood Forest.

If you have a question about your membership status or have misplaced the patrol application form previously sent to you, please call Gordon Rodwan at 313-342-5827, or email to rodwan@sbcglobal.net.

In an effort to keep all Sherwood Forest residents apprised of what the Board of Directors is doing on behalf of the neighborhood, we reprint below the minutes of the April board meeting:

SHERWOOD FOREST ASSOCIATION MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS April 10, 2006

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lois Primas, Gail Rodwan, Walter Shapero, Sue McMillan, Sandra Ham, Linda Jones, Ron Kischuk, Catherine Mayberry, Robert Gold and Marcia Baum

- I. Call to order at 7:55 p.m. by President Lois Primas at the home of Sandra Ham.
- II. Reading/Distribution of the Minutes of March 10, 2006. It was moved by Walter Shapero and supported by Gail Rodwan that the minutes be approved as presented. Motion passed.
- III. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer, Susan McMillan, presented the monthly treasurer's report. The report was accepted as presented. Sue reported that there are 225 SFA members.
- IV. President's Report/Correspondence:
 - The City Planning Commission will hold a meeting on Thursday, April 20, 2006 at 4:45 p.m. to consider an ordinance to amend Chapter 61 of the Detroit City Code pertaining to zoning.
 - Herbert Hill, Jr. spoke with President Primas and provided photographs of the recent graffiti that has turned up on the

neighborhood signage. Mr. Hill reported the problem to the 12th Precinct. It was suggested that we remove the graffiti on the public signs. Linda Jones volunteered to buy the spray that removes the graffiti and Sandra Ham volunteered to do the work.

- Gail Rodwan reported that the designated officer at the Western District Precinct did not follow up with her request to find the names of the owners of the license plates associated with a Shrewsbury property under investigation (see above article).

V. Committee Reports.

A. Patrol Update. Gail Rodwan reported that there were no new payments this last month. Gordon plans to send out information and statements for the new patrol fiscal year including the same “early bird special” available last year.

B. Block Captains. Sandra Ham reported that there were approximately 20-25 block captains. She will pass the list on to the next chair of the Block Captain Committee. President Primas thanked Sandra for her work reestablishing the block captain committee.

C. Property Restrictions.

- Walter Shapero will meet with Gail Rodwan and Marty Baum regarding matters relating to zoning and the SFA property restrictions and the Shrewsbury property.
- Gail Rodwan reported that an administrative hearing regarding the Shrewsbury property will take place on Tuesday, April 18 at 1:30 p.m. at the Department of Administrative Hearings on Jefferson. Bob Gold will try to attend. Walter Shapero moved that we take steps to provide notice to neighbors of the Shrewsbury property about the

hearing and encourage their attendance. Catherine Mayberry supported the motion. Gail Rodwan will produce the flyer. After discussion, the motion passed. Additional steps including possible legal action will be discussed at the Tuesday neighborhood “attorney” meeting.

D. Detroit Historic Committee.

- Linda Jones reported that she is working with Laura Rodwan to identify public relations opportunities. They are working with a contact at Metro Parent Magazine.

- Linda reported that she received a survey from the Detroit Historic Neighborhood Coalition regarding their services.

E. New Residents. Catherine Mayberry reported that she took welcome trays to two new neighbors. One on Sherbourne (Alice Johnson) and the other to the Carlas family who moved into the Foster house.

VI. Old Business

A. General Membership May 9, Meeting Assignments.

- President Primas reviewed the assignments listed on the meeting agenda.

- Ron Kischuk reported that:

- (1) Commander Freeman is scheduled as the guest speaker.
- (2) The member question forms will be prepared prior to the meeting for distribution.
- (3) He will prepare a bio for Commander Freeman.

B. Bulk Trash Pick Up. Gail reported that she will be meeting with Ron Kischuk and Walter Shapero on Tuesday night to discuss Bulk Pick Up issues. A list of bulk pick up

providers will be available at the May meeting.

VII. New Business

A. SFA Passive Parks.

- There are three small parks, one Sherwood Park and one “pass through” in the neighborhood, which require maintenance services.
- Lois Primas will contact Ernest Thompson regarding coordination of park maintenance including receiving bids from lawn service vendors.

B. Spring and Summer Property Maintenance.

- Robert Gold will speak with Valerie Leigh to locate property restriction form letters and guidebook prepared by Bill Vance. Bob will use the letters as needed when neighbors need to be reminded about yard maintenance.

explanation of the violation(s). The Property Maintenance Division of the Department of Buildings and Safety Engineering Department handles complaints for failure to maintain the exterior of property, rodent infestation, inoperable vehicles left on property, failure to comply with emergency orders (such as snow emergencies). Call the Property Maintenance Division directly at 224-2733.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marcia Baum, Secretary

FRIENDLY REMINDERS

We are all interested making sure that homes in Sherwood Forest are properly maintained. Because we live in an historic neighborhood, improvements to the exterior of properties must be approved and comply with historic guidelines. You can check the guidelines on our Sherwood Forest web page at www.neighborhoodlink.com/detroit/swoodforest. Go to the section called “Community Hotlinks” and click on “Detroit Historic District Commission.” To check our own Sherwood Forest property restrictions, go to “Community Pages,” and click on “Property Restrictions.” If you have a neighbor who is not maintaining his or her property, call 311 and say that you would like an inspector to come out and ticket for a blight violation. Give the exact address and a detailed