

Notes from the BPD/ENA Community Safety Meeting – March 31, 2015 7pm

Several officers and detectives from the Bellevue Police Dept. met with the Enatai community to discuss recent crime concerns. Detective Amanda Jensen (ajensen@bellevuewa.gov or 425-452-6915) and the City's Neighborhood Outreach director, Mike McCormick-Huentelman, gave an informative presentation and also directed a question and answer period. Over 120 Enatai residents attended. Here are some points to note:

The meeting, co-hosted by the ENA and the BPD, was initiated by the Bellevue Police Dept. in recognition of and response to the recent crime activity in the neighborhood.

- Bellevue is a national benchmark city, 1 of 30 cities of about the same size and demographics across the US that is used to track crime rates and statistics.
- According to their data, violent crime in Bellevue is below the benchmark city average for comparable cities with property crime rates about average.
- Bellevue city-wide residential burglaries were down in 2014 compared with 2013 but there has been a spike recently in Enatai and other neighborhoods.
- Property crimes are often drug related and include car prowls and home break-ins.
- There were a total of 8 burglaries (home break-ins) in Enatai in the 1st quarter of 2015
- There were also 7 car prowls. Of those, 5 involved cars where the doors were unlocked. In most cases, locking your car doors and keeping valuables or items that might look interesting to a thief out of sight is the best defense against car prowls.
- There have been no car thefts so far this year in Enatai (aka BPD District 2-1).
- There was discussion of surveillance cameras. These are not being considered by the BPD in part due to the associated limits on what they can do. Cameras can only record car license plates, which is of limited value. Faces cannot be recorded for privacy reasons. However, private cameras inside and outside homes can record anything happening on your property and can be very helpful. Sharing information captured on private surveillance cameras with the police can and has helped solve crimes by identifying criminals through Washington's "Most Wanted" program.
- What can we do as individuals and a community?
 - Get to know our neighbors so we watch out for each other
 - Block watch programs can be very helpful
 - Know your neighborhood outreach Liaison – Mike McCormick-Huentelman (mmhuent@bellevuewa.gov or 425-452-4089)
 - Harden the security in your home using CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) techniques – brochures were available and can be seen online at the following link: http://bellevuewa.gov/pdf/Police/Be_safe_2013_-_Web-ready_PDF.pdf

- There are additional resources on the City’s website at bellevuewa.gov under Police Department.
 - **Recognize and report suspicious activities by calling 911. Don’t hesitate to call!**
 - Help the police by serving as their eyes and ears in the neighborhood.
 - When possible to do so without jeopardizing your safety, take pictures of cars, solicitors at your door and such which seem out of place to document details.
 - Lock your windows and doors when away and lock your vehicles; the majority of car prowls involve vehicles which have been left unlocked.
 - If purchasing an alarm system, monitored ones with cameras and sound are better. The police will put a higher priority on a call when they get direct picture or sound evidence that a crime is happening.
 - Having a record of serial numbers on valuable electronics (and other equipment) can help in the potential recovery of items.
- Engage people you encounter but don’t recognize on your street or nearby. A positive, welcoming approach, not a confrontation, will ensure that those who belong in the area will feel welcome, and those who don’t belong will know they have been “seen”. Engaging helps eliminate the anonymity a possible perpetrator is looking for. Simply asking “Can I help you?” or “Are you looking for something?” can help you determine if there’s a problem.
 - **If you see something that looks wrong – call 911.** 911 Dispatchers are trained to assess the priority of each call for service. They will help you, but only if you pick up the phone.
 - What you can expect from the police:
 - Their intent is to serve the community with respect, integrity and accountability.
 - They use data to focus their patrols where most needed; there are currently extra patrol resources allocated to Enatai.
 - The Special Enforcement Team targets known offenders to make it more difficult for them to offend again.
 - They try to get the community involved in helping reduce crime.
 - Where there is enough evidence to pursue a crime, detectives will review cases and follow-up.
 - There was considerable discussion and some neighbors expressed frustration that BPD did not adequately follow-up after a break-in. Others said they were pleased with the police response.
 - BPD has stepped up patrols in Enatai and is aware of the community’s concerns.

- There was discussion of the effectiveness of alarms, cameras, dogs and other defensive measures.
- There were some who were interested in more street lights on their streets. Please refer to the following link for more information:
http://www.bellevuewa.gov/street_light_requests.htm
- Community members were encouraged to continue the discussion with BPD and officers present stayed after the meeting broke up at 8:15 to have private and small group discussion with those who were interested or had additional questions.