

# Winter Hill East Neighborhood ResiStat Meeting Notes

## Thursday, November 15, 2007

### City Officials Present:

Walter Pero, Alderman, Ward 4

Jack Connolly, Alderman-at Large

Mark Niedergang, Ward 5 School Committee

Sean Murphy, Director of Constituent Services

Officer James Slattery, Somerville Police Department

Ethan Field, ResiStat Analyst

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### Crime:

(See presentation.) Presented about car break-ins which are much more numerous in the neighborhood than house break-ins. Introduced WRAP program for registering personal electronic devices online.

### Resident Comments:

- Residents feel that street crime has become more frequent, and they feel offenders are becoming bold. Residents believe much of the crime involves drugs; either deals, usage, or getting money for drugs. Residents wondered if the crime was gang-related? (Officer: Most of the gang members from a few years ago have been kicked out of the projects, gotten older, and/or been sent to prison.)
- Some resident report being hesitant to call 911 to report crimes in progress, because they believe it could make their own home a target for offenders. Residents also feel that they are seeing the same criminals who have been arrested before come back from jail and committing crimes in the neighborhood. Residents feel that the court system is not addressing the issue, which makes residents feel less inclined to report crimes in progress.
- Officer and City staff advise residents to keep calling 911 or the anonymous tip line: 617-776-7210 when they see or suspect crime in progress. Residents should note and report as much info as possible: car make/model/license, time of day, exact locations, detailed descriptions of specific suspicious activities, etc. Also recommend getting to know your neighbors, and helping each other look after the neighborhood. Do *not* directly confront crime in progress, because of potential danger to self.

### Next Steps for City Staff:

- Request police to step up monitoring for drug-related crime in Foss Park neighborhood.
  - Contact Middlesex County court system and get stats on jail time served by offenders, see if the City can request stiffer penalties for repeat offenders.
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### Traffic & Parking:

(See presentation.) Gave updates on parking enforcement and Truck Restriction on Fellsway West. Gave updates on State Legislature efforts to lower the Citywide speed limit to 25 mph.

### **Resident Comments:**

- Residents report taxis parking overnight on Fellsway West; they feel this has been a long-time problem. Residents believe taxi drivers are using Fellsway West as their parking lot, because they observed an increase in taxis using the street after taxis had been restricted from parking in Assembly Square and in a Foss Park parking lot. Residents believe taxi drivers are using the street for both their taxis and their personal vehicles. Residents theorize that this happens because it's easy access to the taxi stand at the Star Market. (Officer: When enforcement starts in December, we can't *wait* to start ticketing those taxis!)
- Fellsway West Residents circulated a petition to designate the house-side of Fellsway West as Resident-Only parking. They reached 71% of residents on the street; 100% of those they reached said yes to Resident-Only parking. Residents report it's a particular need for the older houses on the street, because those houses have no off-street parking.
- Residents report an auto-body shop on Marshall Street is using that street for parking the cars they're working on, which residents say makes parking on that street difficult for residents. One resident reported a specific car in front of a particular address which has been there for many months and has received many tickets. That resident and other residents wondered if there is any established system for towing such a vehicle, which they feel has become a neighborhood nuisance. Residents also asked about how to apply to make Marshall Street Resident-Only parking? (City Staff advised residents of the process listed at: [http://www.ci.somerville.ma.us/CoS\\_Content/documents/forms/PermitParkingApp.pdf](http://www.ci.somerville.ma.us/CoS_Content/documents/forms/PermitParkingApp.pdf) )
- Residents feel that the time given for the Walk lights crossing the McGrath Highway aren't long enough for school children. (City Staff: The length of a Walk light is set by Federal/State law.) Also, residents say there are no crossing guards at that intersection. Residents also report having frequently observed cars running the red light on Rt. 28 Northbound after the light changes in that intersection.

### **Next Steps for City Staff:**

- Begin planned enforcement of overnight commercial parking restriction in December.
  - Because Fellsway West is a State road, changing parking restrictions will need State approval. The City is working with the State on this change, with the goal of enacting the same night-time parking restrictions found in the nearby parking lot, also on DCR land.
  - Investigate specific reports of possible parking violations on Marshall Street.
  - Investigate the status of crossing guards for McGrath highway, and recommended routes for school children to their schools.
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### **Other Issues:**

- City has confirmed that the Star Market on Broadway on Winter Hill will be closing on Jan. 26. This resident group will be very helpful in determining what kind of businesses residents would like to see move into that space. That will probably be a central topic of discussion at the next Winter Hill East ResiStat meeting.
- Resident who could not attend this meeting submitted a request to follow up on 311 service requests to fix/replace broken street lights at Fellsway West and Broadway.

**Next Meeting Planned for Thursday, January 17 at 7:15 PM**