

February 2, 2006

Licton Springs Community Council Report for February

North Precinct Advisory Council Report for February 1, 2006

At 7:06 p.m., the meeting got underway with the presentation of an "Officer of the Year" award to Sergeant Dianne Newsom. Congratulations and accolades all around!

Since our featured guest of the night (Councilperson Jan Drago) is running a little late, Assistant Chief Metz also had some well deserved awards for three of the North Precinct's finest for their efforts in taking down a rapist working Aurora Avenue. This person had been posing as a police officer in his pursuit of victims. His attacks had been becoming more violent in nature, and the fear was that the attacks would escalate into homicide. Got 'em!

Enter our guest of the night, Jan Drago. Living in the Pioneer Square area, the councilperson was unaware just how long it takes to get to the North End during the evening crush (45 minutes in this case). After the introductions, Council Member Drago acknowledged that the Council was a little slow getting underway due to the time required to find a replacement for the retiring Jim Compton. The President of the City Council is now Nick Licata and he chairs the committee on public safety. Jan is head of the Transportation Committee.

Now this is where things tend to get a little gray for me. It seems that every time a councilperson comes to talk to the North Precinct Advisory Committee, they speak for about a half hour and then take questions for fifteen minutes or so. In the end, I don't know any more than I did when the meeting started! There was reference to something called "geographic based policing," but little in the way of explanation. (It was too complex to explain here.)

A question (concern really) was raised about persons providing "community service" instead of doing jail time. Jan advised that the people that were to be involved in that program were "low risk" and/or homeless. The real problem stems from the fact that King County Jail will no longer accept anything less than felons. (Seattle has no where to keep them....so.....) There was a plan to ship our jail overflow to Yakima and house them in the "new" jail that's just been built there. The problem is, they have a new jail but no money to run it.

Despite the claims that "public safety" is right up there on the priority list, it was also pointed out (after the councilperson left) that the City Council has largely

ignored pleas from community councils and groups like the Advisory Committee. The first shot was fired when Jan stated that the City Council hadn't heard from citizens or groups concerned about public safety issues.

Next month we are to hear from the Chief of Police. (That's not official just yet.)

Ken Thompson