

February 8, 2007

Licton Springs Community Council Report for February

North Precinct Advisory Council Report for February 7, 2007

After a two-month break, the North Precinct Advisory Committee reconvened. Our meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by President Pete Rogerson. The special guest for the evening was City Attorney Tom Carr. Mr. Carr was running a little late so Captain Mike Washburn did a little updating on North Precinct matters for the last few months.

Things have been somewhat traumatic for North Precinct. There have been two officer involved shootings. Both incidents occurred on or near Aurora Avenue. In the first incident only the suspect was shot, but in the second incident both the suspect and an officer were hit. The suspect was killed and the officer sustained potentially life-threatening wounds. That officer is now recovering at home. (Thank-You Harborview ER.)

The North Precinct has seen a spike in assaults and robbery by a group of three individuals that have been active between Lake City and Fremont. All of these individuals have been arrested and then released due to insufficient grounds to hold them or press charges ("sometimes the bad guys win," Grissom, CSI).

In the near future, the big push by the Department is going to be in the area of "Pedestrian Safety." This is an area of law enforcement that has been on the back burner for too long. Jaywalking, failing to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, and other common mistakes are going to get renewed attention. (Watch your step, you've been warned.)

Ah, our evening's guest has arrived. We (NPAC) are all familiar with City Attorney Tom Carr. He has been our guest on more than one occasion. Tonight, Mr. Carr brought us information regarding the Mayor's new proposal dealing with "Night Clubs." As you may know, there has been an ongoing struggle between Law Enforcement and bars (establishments that sell alcoholic beverages). There is stiff competition between bars. The majority of their income is derived from the sale of alcohol. The more they sell, the more they make (simple enough).

Problems arise when patrons become loud, unruly, and spill out into the streets and surrounding communities at closing time. In the past, the focus has been on music related issues and that has proven to be ineffective. The new proposed

regulations (or “to be proposed” regulations) focus more on the areas of litter, noise and patron density (no, not their smarts!). The City will try to limit the number of patrons to no more than one (1) per seven (7) square feet of space. Although there is a cap on the number of establishments that sell alcohol based on population, that cap is a “statewide” number (one per so many thousand of population). Seattle is way over the limit on the number of bars it can have, but places like Omak are not, so it all balances out. Since those establishments tend to be concentrated in certain areas of the City (Pioneer Square, Bell Town, Fremont), we have an increase in potential problems arising from large numbers of patrons (with diverse life styles) exiting those establishments at the same closing time. There is much more to this issue, but since it hasn’t been brought before the City Council as of yet I think I’ll just say “stay tuned.”

Speaking of staying tuned, the NPAC has been asked by the Mayor to take a position on several social issues that are being brought before this State’s governing body this session. These issues are being heavily touted by both the Mayor and his Police Chief. At this time, President Pete Rogerson has asked for input from those serving on this Advisory Committee. Rest assured he’ll hear from me!

Ken Thompson