



Boynton Forum

May 28, 2008

BOYNTON BEACH CRA POLICE UNIT WORKS WITH COMMUNITY TO CURTAIL CRIME

by Mayor Jerry Taylor, Board Chairman
Boynton Beach CRA

“Calling a cop” in the CRA District is now as easy as calling out to a familiar face you see every day on the street.

To enhance law enforcement services to the residents, businesses and visitors of the growing CRA District, the Boynton Beach Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the Boynton Beach Police Department have teamed up to create a special CRA Police Unit. The unit is comprised of a five-member team who specifically service the CRA District by patrol car and bicycle.

Led by Sergeant Joseph DeGiulio, the special CRA-funded patrol unit includes officers William Muhleisen Jr., Philip Antico, Michael Brown, and Daniel Harvey. Operating under a contract approved by the CRA board last December, the unit reinforces the Boynton Beach Police Department’s commitment to foster partnerships with local residents, businesses and houses of worship. It also fortifies the CRA’s campaign to guide commercial and residential growth while addressing quality of life issues to maintain a safe urban environment and close-knit community.

In just a few short months, the unit’s officers have become well-known members of the community, working closely with residents to keep the CRA District a safe and enjoyable place to live, work and play.

“We take a problem-solution approach to community policing,” explained Sergeant DeGiulio. “The CRA police unit patrols are based on crime trends in the area and the complaints we receive from residents, businesses and local agencies and organizations. Everything we do is directed at getting to the root of a problem and bringing about a solution.”

An example of the unit’s proactive focus took place in April during an operation targeting a park in the CRA district with reports of on-going criminal activity. Citizen complaints prompted the three-day undercover operation, which resulted in five arrests and three trespass warnings. Another extension of the unit’s community presence is assigned uniformed officers that ride the trolley routes.

“The officers are having a positive impact on the CRA District,” noted CRA Executive Director Lisa Bright. “Not just as law enforcement professionals, but as crime-conscious neighbors who meet and talk with residents and business owners on a daily basis to avert problems and keep the streets safe.”

Bright cited the unit’s use of bicycle patrols as a critical tool in their crime fighting efforts, making the officers more approachable by the public and increasing their mobility and access to areas that a police car can’t go.

“Police on bike patrol are extremely effective at targeting specific crime problems,” Bright said. “Bikes allow the officers to catch criminals in the act before they are seen or heard.”

Whether riding the trolley, cruising the streets in a squad car, or pedaling a bike, the CRA Police Unit is proving to be a highly effective way to thwart crime, build stronger relationships between officers and citizens, and enhance community safety.

Boynton Beach Mayor Jerry Taylor is Board Chairman of the Boynton Beach Community Redevelopment Agency. The CRA guides redevelopment activities that create a vibrant downtown core and revitalized neighborhoods within the Agency’s district comprised of

1,650 acres along the eastern edge of the City of Boynton Beach. For more CRA information, call 561-737-3256 or log on to www.boyntonbeachcra.com