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Neighborhood Watch

Study Session Meeting-September 27th, 2022

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Purpose:

To provide council with information on neighborhood watch programs; to include the effectiveness of these programs, crime prevention and reduction opportunities, and challenges associated with traditional neighborhood watch groups.



STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA
Safe, Active, and Engaged Community

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What is Neighborhood watch:

- Neighborhood watch is one of the oldest and best known crime prevention concepts in the United States.
- At it's core Neighborhood watch is any group of people living or working in a particular area who desire to decrease crime and improve safety in their neighborhood.
- May be law enforcement or community led.
- Are a partnership with law enforcement. Formal groups are assigned a law enforcement liaison.
- Formal neighborhood watch groups are the most common and recognizable of these initiatives, but informal neighborhood watch groups also exist utilizing word of mouth, social media, and platforms like Next-door and Ring.

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How it works:

Neighborhood watch programs are easy to start and the Brighton Police Department stands ready to assist the community in establishing successful formal or informal programs. The 5 steps listed below outline how to get started:

- Recruit and organize as many neighbors as possible
- Contact Brighton Police and schedule a meeting
- Discuss community concerns and develop an action plan
- Hold regular meetings and train on relevant skills
- Establish communication methods and take action steps




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Research:

- 2008 DOJ study indicated previous reviews of literature yielded mixed results on the effectiveness of neighborhood watch. Earlier studies involved small sample sizes and other limitations that impacted credibility of results. Some programs were effective while others were not. 2008 study ultimately determined that neighborhood watch was ineffective at reducing/preventing crime.
- Study does highlight some instances where significant reduction of crime (16% average) was associated with neighborhood watch program, however the reason why they work remains unclear

Local Challenges

- Previous neighborhood watch programs start strong, but participation and involvement fade quickly and within months are no longer active. Typically preceded by some catalyst event
- New technology provides many of the same advantages of traditional neighborhood watch programs. Younger generation more apt to participate in this manner.
- Neighborhoods most in need are reluctant to organize in this manner

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Advantages

- There is no downside associated with increased collaboration and communication between individual neighborhoods and the police department. BPD remains committed to the concepts of community policing and partnering with the community to address crime and quality of life issues.
- Neighborhood watch is an extension of this philosophy and we seek to be good partners whether there is a formal or informal program present
- BPD recently re-classified an existing position to add a community engagement liaison who facilitates PD's involvement in these programs. Existing goals include making connections with community groups, including HOA associations, neighborhood groups, etc.

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