

Community Board 12, Manhattan
Minutes for the Public Safety Committee Meeting
May 1, 2019 – Large Office Space
530 West 166th Street – 6th Floor
New York, NY 10032

Committee Members Present (4): Noquel Matos (Chair), Gabriella Estrella, Yosef Kalinsky, Graham Ciraulo (Public Member)

Committee Members Absent (4): Francisco Alvarez, Katherine Diaz, Danielle Jettoo, Rud Morales

Board Members Present (1): Richard Lewis (CB12 Chairman)

Staff Present (1): Paola Garcia (Community Associate)

Public Sign-ins (4): NYPD: PO William Batz (NYPD, Transit District 3), Lt. Tancredo Contreras (NYPD, 34th Precinct), Sgt. Brian Shevitz (NYPD, Transit District 3, NCO Supervisor), Joseline Minaya (Manhattan District Attorney)

Absent (2): FDNY, NYPD 33rd Precinct

Welcome, Opening Remarks and the Agenda. Noquel Matos, Public Safety Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:12pm. The meeting was recorded to a digital audio file on an OLYMPUS® handheld device. Those in attendance introduced themselves. Noquel Matos was introduced as the new Chair of the Public Safety Committee. Yosef Kalinsky was introduced as a new committee member and Graham Ciraulo was introduced as a new Public Member. Quorum was established with the addition of Richard Lewis to the meeting.

34th Precinct Update (Lt. Tancredo Contreras)

- Crime stats are down across the board except for grand larceny auto. There were six incidents of grand larceny auto compared to five in the same period in 2018.
 - Grand larceny auto incidents are often the result of car owners leaving their cars on while taking the fob key.
- Index crime down 28%

Discussion

Yosef Kalinsky asked about recent shootings on W. 185th and W. 187th and was told by Lt. Contreras that these were isolated incidents and not part of a pattern. Kalinsky expressed concerns about more firearms being on the street and Richard Lewis noted the prevalence of firearms being trafficked across the George Washington Bridge. Officers present attributed the possible increase in firearms on the street to the restrictions on Stop, Question, and Frisk (SQF) saying offenders are now more brazen. Drug dealers are also holding more product on the street. Policing is less proactive. Committee Chair Noquel Matos asked if the NYPD could produce or develop metrics that would quantifiably demonstrate that offenders have been emboldened by the restrictions on SQF. Officers answered that noise complaints are one potential indicator. Police are hampered from moving noise offenders leading to repeat calls.

Noise violators are more likely to be in possession of something illegal. Officers also cited brazenness of turnstile jumpers.

Transit District 3 Update (PO William Batz)

Incidents

- Woman robbed while sleeping on subway
- Phone snatch incident at 181st 1 Train
- One incident of forceful touching
- Two people arrested for jamming MetroCard machines at 175th St. A Train station
- Arrest of an individual selling K2
- Complaints about fare beating

Discussion

Yosef Kalinsky related a story about a woman approaching him in tears who claimed her phone had been snatched. Officers remarked that while the woman may have been telling the truth, this is also a scam technique in which the scammer claims to have been robbed, asks to use a person's phone, and then runs off with it.

Graham Ciraulo asked if the NYPD is still offering to engrave names on phones and register them. The officers advise doing this and offered to participate in a phone engraving event.

Washington Heights Office of Manhattan District Attorney Update (Joseline Minaya, Director)

Cases related to the Dark Web – anonymous web activity

- Indictment of individuals operating a dark web “storefront” selling Xanax and laundering Cryptocurrency (i.e. Bitcoin), Led to largest pill seizure in New Jersey history. Fentanyl, ketamine, pill pressers were seized. The investigation was triggered by suspicious ATM activity.
- \$2.8 Million internet drug ring selling counterfeit steroids for cryptocurrency though “nextdaygear” domain name.

Discussion

Noquel Matos asked what patterns are being seen in the sale of opiates. Officers replied that pills are hitting the street through drug diversion (people selling or improperly disposing of their own prescriptions) and counterfeit pills produced with ingredients from China. Lt. Contreras said that the 34th Precinct is investigating cases where dealers sell prescriptions then report them stolen. Matos asked if there is an investigative procedure. Lt. Contreras responded that they trace the maker's stamps, which they put on pills.

Matos asked if there are areas of concentrated activity. PO Batz replied that W 181st and St. Nicholas and W 181st and Fort Washington are areas of concern. In one evening, 300 needles were picked off the track at the 181st 1 Train station. Police presence was subsequently increased. PO Batz indicated that this was likely due to the Corner Project van being at that site.

Richard Lewis asked if the 34th Precinct has plans in place for addressing the new shelter being developed on W 181 and Audubon. The officers declined to comment and said no orders have come through.

PO Batz remarked on initiative to raise awareness of the Build a Block, precinct council, and sector meetings.

Richard Lewis asked if pan handling is getting worse. PO Batz responded that the NYPD track pan handling activity and the problem is exacerbated at places where people give the most money.

Richard Lewis asked if the new subway “tapping” system at turnstiles is going to be a problem with regards to fare beating. PO Batz replied that it might.

No updates were given by the FDNY or NYPD 33rd Precinct

Meeting Adjourned at 8:23 PM