

MNA Town Hall Meeting

October 2, 2019

Notetaker: Amie Alscheff

Attendance: 28

Report from the Rochester Police Department, Lake Section

Highlights of local criminal activity in the past month:

- Store robbery
- Prohibited use of a weapon on Selye Terrace/Archer St. There was a large house party on Selye Terrace and that seems to have been the source. RPD located three bullet casings, but it appears nothing was struck by the bullets.
- Reckless endangerment on Adrian Street. Shots were fired. Bullets struck a house, but the residents were asleep and not aware.
- Assault/shooting on Birr Street on Sept 29. (This is the incident everyone saw on the [news](#).) Shots fired at Dewey and Birr. Total of 6 victims, including teenagers riding bikes and people riding in a vehicle, but only one was actually shot. The teen who was shot was located at 262 Birr Street. Casings found in roadway. Video evidence was collected. Not life-threatening injuries.
- Gunpoint robbery happened at 1540 Dewey on September 29 around 10 pm. Officers talked to the victim at Unity Hospital. He was waiting for a ride when he was approached by two black males with beards. One was wearing a red hoodie and jeans, other wearing gray hoodie and jeans. A vehicle was involved: a Chevy sedan with Pennsylvania plates (KYC-7272). They asked the victim what time it was, then displayed a semi-automatic gun. They hit him over the head with the gun. Cameras nearby were checked, but revealed no evidence.
- Burglaries: 7
- Motor Vehicle Thefts: 2

Next PCIC meeting is October 15.

Q&A

Q: Is there an uptick in crime?

A: For the month of September, there is an uptick in some violent crimes. Burglaries are pretty consistent. RPD is now tied into the Ring doorbell system. If the cameras capture important images, RPD can send them out to the neighborhood. The summer was very good in Maplewood in terms of violent crime. We had some grant money we were able to put towards more police resources. In the Lake section, there have been a lot of random acts but "random for a reason." Mostly drug activity or relationship issues.

About the Ring cameras: if you capture something, let the police know first before posting on social media. Give us a chance to investigate before it grows into something with a life of its own online.

Q: Should we call police about suspicious activity that's not specifically a crime? For instance, kids out on bikes late at night.

A: You never know what might turn out to be important, so call to report anything unusual.

Further announcements from Capt. Dearcop:

Raise the Age policy in NYS. Offenders older than 16 but younger than 18 will now be prosecuted in Family Court rather than going to Monroe County Jail.

Bail policy changes: They are trying to get the DA's office to have a representative present at future PCIC meeting.

Q: How old were the kids shooting guns on bikes on Dewey Ave? Can they be arrested?

A: They can be arrested, but the trial process is different now for 17-year olds. Family Court handles non-violent crimes. For a significant violent crime, they would most likely be held at a juvenile facility. But there aren't many in this area: would have to be held in Albany before coming back to Rochester to appear in Family Court. There are issues that have to be worked out.

Q: But how old were the kids from the bike incident?

A: Can't give out information about the victims.

Q: Are police officers currently under contract?

A: No, and we can't strike like the auto workers.

Q: When does the new police recruitment class begin?

A: They are going through training now, next class will start in April.

Q: There was an abandoned house on Hague Street where dead pets were found inside.

A: They are working on that, no information yet.

Introduction of a guest, City Council President Loretta Scott

Report from Molly Clifford (NW City Council Representative)

A few specific things on the upcoming City Council agenda that relate to Maplewood:

- 145 Seneca Parkway is finally being sold. There have been a couple of different processes. It was sold under auction, but development proposals were required with the bids (maybe 6 months ago that auction happened).

Q: Was it made available to the public to bid on?

A: Yes, it was listed on the City website as a "Request for Proposals."

- There is a proposal for CSX to upgrade the street-level rail crossing on Dewey Avenue near Kodak.
- Just received an email from NYS DEC regarding corrective remedies study to cover the river from Driving Park Bridge through the water treatment plant. There will be a public meeting Wednesday October 23, 6-8 pm.
- Zweigles is expanding their location on Lyell Avenue (not Maplewood neighborhood but of interest to NW).

- Pre-Phase 1 proposal for zoning code amendments. City is starting with changes to zoning for entertainment venues (restaurants, bars, etc.) This legislation will make it easier for RPD to enforce violations of entertainment license, noise issues, etc. rather than going through the zoning offices. This has been a source of frustration for neighborhoods with rowdy venues.

Auditors discovered large deficit in the RCSD budget this month. The fact that this came as a surprise to the RCSD and City is a big problem. No word yet on whether the state is going to take up the City's request to oversee the RCSD finances. More to come on this, but it is obviously very troubling.

Q: Does that meeting on October 23 have anything to do with the stench lately?

A: Probably not.

Q: We don't have any say in the RCSD as citizens, and we're paying more per student than many suburban districts. Is the City doing anything to address this?

***City Council President Loretta Scott took over here and addressed questions about the RCSD budget crisis.**

Ms. Scott: Our options are limited. The Mayor suggested that the city take over completely. What they are looking at now is having a financial monitor from the state who would have total control over the finances. Grades are going in the right direction, but if dollars are going in the wrong direction that's a problem. Someone asked tonight if we could just refuse to approve the RCSD budget. That could happen, but school still needs to open in September and students need to go to class.

The City of Rochester has always been very conservative in budgeting. We are fiscal watchdogs and have never been in trouble with our bond issuers. The fact that we are now being warned by Moody's is bad. If our bonds are devalued, it will cost all of us a lot of money as taxpayers.

The direction the city is going in is the only reasonable one right now.

Q: Who is actually responsible for the overspending? What individual?

Ms. Scott: City Council looks over the budget carefully. When they reviewed it just recently, the numbers said everything was good and that was not true. It was a material misrepresentation. I don't know what individual actually caused this. It's something the controller will help to identify and there will have to be a reckoning. In this case, we were presented with documents that were simply incorrect and somebody needs to lose their job.

Q: You're leader of City Council and there's a president of the School Board. Aren't you as elected officials responsible?

Ms. Scott: We definitely are responsible for finding out who caused this.

Q: How much was the loan the City took out recently?

Ms. Scott: I don't recall exactly, maybe \$12 million.

Q: Well, that's part of the problem.

Ms. Scott: No, the exact number is recorded and can be looked up.

Q: [Inaudible]

Ms. Scott: If you can see that your insurance cost is higher significantly than last year, then you know you have to make up that difference in the next year. The dollar amount is something like \$16 million.

Report from Monroe County Legislator Tony Micciche (26th District)

*Cindy Kaleh was not able to come tonight

A few years ago, I called for a return to neighborhood schools which would have saved a lot of money. It's a shame that that's been floating for years and nothing's been done.

Coats for Seniors drive is underway. If you can donate gently-used coats, the drop-off box is located at the Monroe County Office Building. You can also call 753-6380 (Monroe County Office for Aging).

Flooding relief funds are available for lakefront cottage owners. \$50K is max. Application period is Oct 1-Oct 31. Apply online.

Roc the Riverway is coming up October 4-6. Call 753-1940 to get info from his office.

Grease Trap Law was signed by the county. In my opinion, that should always have been part of inspection. But at least it is part of the inspection process now.

Welcome to new legislator Rachel Barnhart. (She was [appointed](#) in September to fill the Monroe County 21st District seat left vacant when Mark Muoio resigned.)

City of Rochester Mayor's Office (Andy Raus)

We now have a traffic court in the city. If you get a traffic violation you can go and plead, maybe get the fines and points on your license reduced. Information has come out in your water bills and tax bills. If you get a traffic ticket, please don't ignore it.

Affordable Care Act is still law: for people who aren't insured, I have information here tonight. There are numerous dates, places, and times where people can sign up for insurance between November and February.

I'm working on a NW Neighborhood Service Center Guide. It will list all the important roles and phone numbers, and also local businesses. It's going into production now and should be out in a couple of months. Following this, in January or February will be a senior citizen services guide. There are a lot of programs out there that people don't know about. Lifespan and the County both do a great job but there's currently not one directory showing everything.

Announcements and discussion

Pat Connor from Rochester Public Library:

- The Assistant Director, Dr. Tolley Reeves, asked me to announce that about 2 years ago the library system began a study to update, renovate, and revamp the branch libraries. They are looking at three branches to start with. Maplewood will be one of them. Dr Reeves is interested in convening a group of Maplewood residents who will look over the plan and

give feedback. Date is not set yet, but will probably happen in October. You can ask staff at the Maplewood Library if you are interested.

- TABE tutoring at the Maplewood Library: this is a new program to tutor for this test. It will help people bridge between learning English language and getting High School equivalency. Class will be 3-4:30 Monday and Wednesday afternoons.
- Also, starting Oct 21 at 10:30 am they will be offering a Spanish language study group. People will get together to learn Spanish from a native Spanish-speaker.

Enrica Fleming:

- Saturday is Maplewood's part of the Roc the Riverway Weekend activities. Will be Gorge Tours from 11-2
- October 19 (Saturday) from 11:30-2 is the Sacred Heart Harvest Festival with "trunk or treating" in the parking lot. Hot dogs, arts and crafts. Free event.

Devon Bey (Brothers & Sisters Unisex Salon):

- Another Trunk or Treat event on Halloween from 5-7 at 1174 Dewey Ave. There will be story telling, pumpking painting.
- Thanksgiving Dinner, 12-4 on Thanksgiving at New Beginnings Church on Dewey Avenue.
- Food drive, today through Thanksgiving. Please donate non-perishable items now and perishable items (turkeys, vegetables) starting November 15.
- Also collecting coats, boots, hats, socks and gloves through the New Year. We have plenty of other clothes, but those items are needed.

Wayne Williams, MNA President, on Dewey Avenue Challenges

We're revisiting the list of challenges identified at our Town Hall Meeting in May. Which topics that were identified at the first meeting are top priority? Which do you want to work on?

A vote was held by show of hands. Results below:

Topics:

- *Too many stores: 1 vote*
- *Open air drug trade on Dewey Avenue: 16 votes*
- *Not enough programs for youth: 2*
- *Traffic flows in the two plazas off Dewey: 0*
- *Litter: 0*
- *Lack of community participation: 5*
- *Lack of block parties: (decided to lump this one in with community participation)*
- *People driving crazy: 0*
- *Absentee landlords: 2*
- *Vacant store fronts: 0*

It's my intent and responsibility as your leader to engage with other organizations on these issues. I will continue to brief you on what I learn from these organizations with more experience over these issues.