

RIVERSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

45 Hayes Street, Cambridge 02139

RNA

President RNA
Lawrence J. Adkins

Vice-president
Martha Eddison

Secretary/member
Pat Hills

Treasure
Laura Nichols

RNA Editor
Martha Werman

August 4, 2003

Commissioner Ronnie Watson
Cambridge Police Dept.
5 Western Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

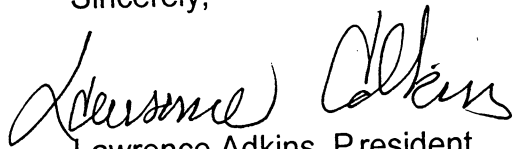
Dear Commissioner Watson:

As you know, the Riverside Neighborhood Association (RNA) held a community meeting (Community Policing, part II) on July 22, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. in response to the recent activities of violent crimes in the Riverside area.

At that meeting, with over 50 residents in attendance, there was much discussion of the lack of police visibility (and specifically the lack of walking foot patrol officers) in our community even following those incidences.

Therefore, the RNA membership voted to request that you immediately assign additional walking foot patrol officers in the Riverside area and specifically assign them to more visible locations such as Western Avenue.

Sincerely,



Lawrence Adkins, President
Riverside Neighborhood Assoc.



Ronnie Watson
Police Commissioner

City of Cambridge Police Department

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Aide to the Commissioner

July 18, 2003

Mr. Lawrence J. Adkins
President, Riverside Neighborhood Association
45 Hayes Street
Cambridge, MA. 02139

Dear Mr. Atkins:

I received your invitation to attend your next meeting on July 22, 2003. Unfortunately, I will be on a scheduled vacation and will be unable to attend. However, representatives from this department will attend on my behalf. I hope that my responses to your questions will assist you in better understanding our strategy for policing in the City of Cambridge.

The Cambridge Police Department's, Community Policing Strategy is rooted in having officers assigned to a given area, work in "partnership" with the community to identify crime and, if possible, its root causes, quality of life concerns and to address each of these areas using a problem solving model. Our Neighborhood Sergeants and Sector Lieutenants lead these efforts in each neighborhood. Community Policing in every neighborhood involves not just the police working together with community members, but all of city government working closely with residents to discuss issues, identify problems, and assist to tailor appropriate solutions. The most important aspect of this process is the ability of this larger group to solve the problems that are identified. There have been a number of sustained activities in Riverside that demonstrate this type of partnership and have helped impact crime in this area

1 - Training - Officers in the recruit academy receive training in Racial Profiling, Ethics, Understanding Cultural Diversity, and the SARA Problem Solving Model. In addition, our in-service training has included many similar classes with topics such as Ethical Problem Solving, Enhanced Communications, Ethical Decision Making, Diffusing Aggressive Behavior and Verbal Self

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Defense. Each one of these subjects focuses on the officers' ability to identify various conditions such as cultural differences, socio-economic impacts, and religious and ethnic diversity within our population. Most officers have advanced degrees that include studies in psychology and sociology, as well. Officers from this department, as well as members of other city departments, attended Diversity Training sponsored by the City Manager's Office, a mandatory training for all city employees.

Your question, numbered 1. (a) asks for an update or description of the department's effort in preventing and proactively engaging the community to address the root causes of crime, disorder, reducing victimization and fear of crime. I believe the following activities contribute to the prevention of crime and the attendant fear and victimization.

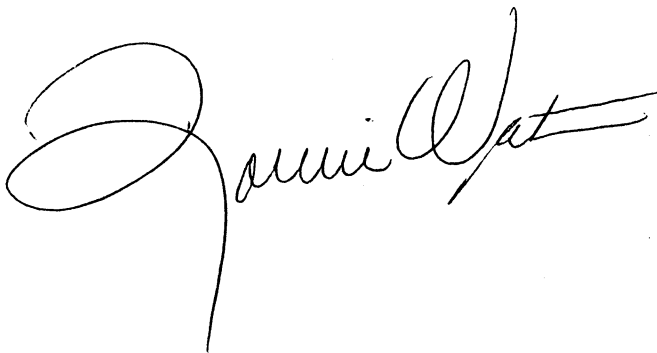
- Neighborhood Sergeants meetings with Sergeant Gardner and Lieutenant Ames. These meetings regularly include Animal Control Representatives, Traffic and Parking Department, Emergency Communications Center, and Department of Public Works personnel. Sergeant Gardner has been a leader in this program, meeting with residents on Charles River boat rides during summer months, conducting neighborhood walks and was instrumental in forming the Annual Family/Safety Day at the Galleria Mall that benefits residents of five neighborhoods including Riverside.
- Many Community Grants awarded in Riverside from neighborhood block parties to 808 Memorial Drive and National Night Out, which is co-sponsored by the police department.
- Athletic Programs at the YMCA, which is heavily utilized by youth from Riverside. Each year, three basketball programs are funded and run by members of this department. These programs are designed to improve relations between officers, who serve as coaches and the hundreds of Cambridge youth, who attend each year. This has been our most successful community activity to date.
- POP Projects, which most recently included a response to a number of robberies in the Cambridge Port/Riverside neighborhood. In this case an early response included issuing a Community Alert notifying the residents of the crimes, scheduling several community meetings to discuss issues and provide details and updates, utilizing undercover officers to conduct surveillance, utilizing additional foot officers on Directed Patrols to deter criminal activity and utilizing Bike Patrols in parks and other frequented areas.
- School Resource Officers in all public schools to assist when issues are identified and to provide guidance and education to students.

There are many other initiatives throughout the year, such as the RAD Program, the Auxiliary Police and the Citizens Police Academy that include residents of Riverside, but are offered also to other residents of the city.

2. Community Policing philosophies have been evolving for the past ten years. These philosophies include a number of strategies that never come to a conclusion, but are often replaced by newer and better strategies.

- A) For example, the police department plays an important role in the Kids Council and Agenda for Children. These partnerships involve members of city government, school officials, health department officials and community-based organizations throughout the city, who meet regularly to develop strategies to improve reading literacy levels and out of school activities within the City of Cambridge. Improving literacy levels within our youth community and keeping their out of school activities diverse, constructive and interesting will theoretically help kids make better choices keeping them in school and out of jail as a worse case example. At what stage do you stop a program like that? The obvious answer is that you don't. You look for ways to improve and sustain it.
- B) You measure community-policing effectiveness by measuring the overall health of the community. Crime statistics are always an indicator of how things are progressing, but one or two serious crimes in any given period should not be used as a barometer to evaluate the health of a community. A better indicator is how well a community responds to these anomalies. Emphasis should be put on how well groups communicate and work together to address problems. As we now know, identifying and addressing quality of life issues can be just as important as any other work that takes place once something serious happens. The Neighborhood Sergeants Program has allowed first line supervisors to meet regularly with resident and citizen groups to discuss these types of issues. Graffiti, barking dogs, traffic problems, etc. are usually at the forefront of many meetings unless something unusual is happening. Residents get updates on recent crime, discuss what is important to them, and get to know the officers that are responsible for those areas.
- C) Its difficult to measure how various cities compare. What do you gauge? Crime rates? Quality of life issues? Calls for service? Cultural, economic and ethnic diversity within the community? Cambridge is without question one of the safest and most vibrant cities in the State if not the entire country, in comparison to other major cities. As a community member, just think of a few local cities and towns of similar size and decide who has more to offer and which is a better place to live.

3 - Geographical Accountability is being addressed through the Neighborhood Sergeants Program. The assigned supervisors coordinate the department's response to any issue identified by members of the community. Accountability is also addressed by the Operations Superintendent in his monthly staff meetings with his Deputy Superintendents, where significant issues throughout the city are identified, insuring that supervisory personnel are both alert to hot spots and are directing their subordinates' activities to address these concerns.



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Greetings:

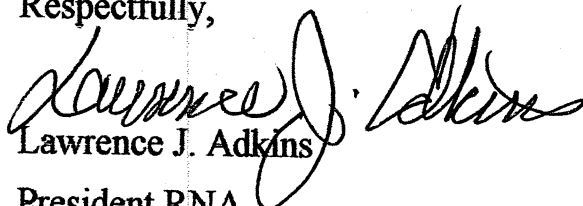
Mayor Michael A. Sullivan and Cambridge City Councilors,

We the officers and members of the Riverside Neighborhood Association had an emergence meeting on July 22, 2003, Community Policing Part 2. It was unfortunate that the police commissioner could not him been there himself but we moved on.

After lengthy discussion and heartfelt testimony the following motions were made and unanimously voted in the affirmative:

- 1) The Riverside Neighborhood Association calls on the Police Department to provide foot patrols in Riverside.
- 2) The Riverside Neighborhood Association calls for accountability by the Police Department and that a deadline be set to fill the four (4) vacancies on the Cambridge Police Review and Advisory Board.

Respectfully,



Lawrence J. Adkins

President RNA
Riverside Neighborhood Association

cc: All Cambridge City Councilors
Robert W. Healy, City Manager
D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk
Ronnie Watson, Police Commissioner
Malvina Monteiro, PRAB Director

5258

Communication #23

A communication was received from
Lawrence J. Adkins, President,
Riverside Neighborhood Association,
regarding their meeting of July 22,
2003, Community Policing Part 2.

In City Council August 4, 2003

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