



FOREST ACRES NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Quarterly Meeting: September 22, 2009

St. Michael and All Angels' Episcopal Church (Sturtevant Hall)

MEETING MINUTES

 Forest Acres Neighborhood Association
www.FANeighbors.org

Presenters: Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott; Sgt. Lori Tumlin, FAPD; James Manning Richland County School District #2; Jerry Stevenson, Columbia Children's Theatre

Father Paul Stricklin of St. Michael's Church welcomed everyone to the new venue.

Business spotlights: Brian Thomas recognized Village Idiot (Forest Dr.) and Chick-Fil-A for providing free food for the meeting. Kelly Glynn of Village Idiot informed the group that they have been in business since 1990 with their 5 Pts. location and that they cater office lunches and social occasions.

Crime Report – Officer Tumlin

- Gold's Gym – unsecured items are being stolen from unsecured lockers and unlocked cars.
- Lawn equipment – stolen by men driving a white, full-size van. Black males, 40-50 years of age. A witness got their tag number, and the police are investigating.
- Monterey Ct. -- \$800 bike taken from a garage that had a broken lock.
- White Hall Drive – someone used a “hidden” key to burglarize the house while the owner was in the hospital.
- Forest Trace – owner has been moving out so house has been vacant a lot. Someone stole a Play Station (probably juveniles).
- Shallow Pond Dr. (off Decker) – back door broken in.
- Richland Mall – purse snatching. Non-violent. Officer Tumlin reminded women to keep their purse close to their body but not around their neck. (Sheriff Leon Lott interjected that if two women are walking together, they should keep their purses on the shoulder closest to the other woman to avoid having them snatched off their outer shoulder.)
- Pinestraw Road – attempted break in. Dog inside scared them off.
- Meadowood Road – attempted break in. Couldn't get in but took equipment from a crawl space.
- Formosa Road – alarm system scared off the perp(s).

Crime Report – Sheriff Lott

- Fourteen residential break-ins and one commercial break-in (Roof Jewelers) in the past month. Two perps have confessed to 14 burglaries and two more are on the loose. All are in their twenties. They look for houses that appear unoccupied.
- Sheriff Lott reminded people that neighborhood crime watches are one of the best deterrents. He highly encouraged residents to call their local law enforcement ANY time they observe something that doesn't seem right (unusual cars, people, activities, etc.) Don't wait until after the fact to call!
- Thanked the Forest Acres Police Department for how well they work with the Richland County Sheriff's office.
- Sheriff's office has everything you see on “CSI” – quick turnaround time when testing/comparing DNA.
- Home invasions – usually the criminals and victims know each other; mostly drug deals and/or gangs.
- Gangs – Sheriff Lott feels that two education programs in place are helping to “turn the corner” on gangs. One program involves having youth spend the night in jail for a dose of reality. Both programs include a “buddy system” where a deputy is assigned to follow up with the youth for 18 months.
- Two years ago, there were 9 gang-related killings. So far in 2009, there have been none.
- Speeding – number one complaint his office receives. Urged people to slow down.

Crime Tips– Sheriff Lott

- If someone breaks in your home, don't touch anything! Call law enforcement immediately so that they can collect possible DNA to catch criminals.
- Don't leave anything in plain sight in your car.
- Close and lock garage doors.
- If someone rings your doorbell, take your cell/house phone with you to the door. Do NOT open the door. If the person claims to be in distress, tell them you're calling 911 immediately. If it's legit, they'll wait for help. Otherwise, it could be a ruse to get into your home.
- Pay attention at all times when you are out; make sure no one follows your car. If so, do not go home. Drive to the police department, sheriff's office, or other safe place.
- Alarm systems that make a loud noise (not a silent alarm) and a barking dog are great deterrents to break-ins.
- Don't make it easy for the criminals! Leave outside lights on all night. If you wake up during the night, make it a point to look outside and immediately report anything unusual.

James Manning

- The non-profit fund raising arm of Richland County School District #2 will hold a literature and arts festival on October 17 from 9-4 at Dent Middle School
- Hill Harper from "CSI: NY" (who has written two books aimed at keeping kids out of gangs) will be on hand for signing books and photo ops. Many more authors will be on hand as well, along with Clifford the Big Red Dog and Cocky's Reading Express.
- Check out their website at www.richland2.org/bookfair for more information and/or to volunteer.

Columbia Children's Theatre

- Has recently moved to Richland Mall (upstairs in the former Limited Express area). Park on 2L (near the former Parisian building).
- Current show is "Go, Dog, Go!". This is their 5th season.
- Starting afterschool classes for creative expressions. Parents can pay for their children to attend while they shop at the mall.
- Visit their website at www.columbiachildrenstheatre.com.

Conclusion

- Brian Thomas recognized Forest Acres City Councilman Charlie Fetner and Forest Acres Finance Director Bob Massa as being in attendance.
- FANA will hold a contest for a design logo (details will be forthcoming on the FANA website).
- Reminder that membership dues are payable now: \$5 per family from September to August. Also, we now have business/organization memberships available. Visit www.FANeighbors.org for information and forms.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned

Respectfully submitted,
Holly F. Shuffler
FANA Secretary

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