

East Montclair Neighborhood Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2014
6:00 PM

Present:

Denver Police Department:

Mike Calo, Commander District 2
Sgt. Reyes Trujillo
Lt. Ron McDaniel
Lt. Ernie Martinez
Sgt. Mickey Horton
Lt. Matt Canino
Lt. Kathy Bancroft
Sgt. Fuller

City Attorney's Office:

Chris Gaddis

Denver Parks & Recreation:

Mark Upshaw

City Councilwoman Mary Beth Susman's Office

Luke Palmisano

74 Residents of East Montclair

Resident Manager of Regis Motel:

Tommy

Owner of Orlando Apts., Shepherds Motel & O's Pipe & Tobacco:

Orlando Martinez

Owner of Sand & Sage Motel & 7-Star Motel:

Myong Ju Lee

Owner of Driftwood Motel:

Jean Han

Meeting Agenda:

- City Officials will discuss efforts within their city agencies/departments
- City Officials will discuss ideas on what "WE" can do to help improve "OUR" neighborhood
- Community discussion on problem areas
- Plan of action based on discussion with city agencies
- Ideas/solutions that "WE" as a community can implement

Meeting Intro:

- Please attend the monthly Denver Police District 2 Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) meetings at District 2 HQ located at 39th & Holly Street. More information can be found on the District 2 Denver Police Facebook Page. <https://www.facebook.com/DenverPoliceDistrict2>
- Sign up on the <https://eastmontclair.nextdoor.com> website where fellow neighbors and the EMNA post items
- Please attend the East Montclair Neighborhood Association (EMNA) meetings! The next meeting will be at the Montclair Community Center (E. Colfax & Newport) September 17th, 2014 at 6:00 PM
- Please Attend City Councilwoman Mary Beth Susman's open "district hours" on Thursday mornings from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM at locations throughout the district. Contact Councilwoman Susman via email at marybeth.susman@denvergov.org or via telephone at (720) 337-5555
- Do not hesitate to call the Denver Police Department at anytime! In case of an emergency call 911, The Denver Police Non-Emergency Number is (720) 913-2000. Contact District 2 HQ front desk officer at (720) 913-1000

Denver Police Department: Commander Mike Calo

- Commander Calo has lived in our neighborhood, works in our neighborhood and he understands our neighborhood!
- The biggest problems in the East Montclair neighborhood are, drugs, prostitution and property crimes followed by quality of life issues that affect our community, from litter, speeding to problems in Verbena Park
- District 2 Officers handle between 4,000 – 4,200 calls for service in District 2 per month
- Urged neighbors to attend the District 2 Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) meetings
- Residents can go for a Ride-a-Long with a District 2 East Colfax Officer by contacting Commander Calo at 2.Dist@Denvergov.org or via phone at (720) 913-1000
- District 2 just received 7 new officers from the last hiring. It will be 6 to 10 months before they are “on the street”
- Attrition numbers are very high for the Denver Police due to retirements. For every hire they lose 1 to 2 officers
- Lt. Bancroft urged residents to call the non-emergency number even after the fact because the crime analyst in District 2 uses that information to track crime movements & neighborhood problems so the police department knows where to concentrate their patrols. If you don’t call they won’t know!
- Collaborate with other neighborhood groups to learn what they are doing to combat crime and other problems
- The Combined Communications Center (911) comes to the District 2 CAB meetings about twice per year and it is a great way to learn about how your calls are handled, prioritized and dispatched. Commander Calo is going to suggest that they come out to a EMNA meeting
- The number of self-initiated calls by officers has increased which has reduced crime
- Since Commander Calo joined District 2 as Commander the crime in D2 has dropped by 18.3%
- Commander Calo wants officers out “on foot” when possible because he believes in Community Policing. An increase in foot patrols and bike patrols have made a difference in countering crime in the District
- Commander Calo and his officers are aware of the problems at the East Colfax motels
- Commander Calo has met with the Colorado State Parole Board to help stop the actual or perceived large number of parolees being given vouchers/referrals to Denver’s East Colfax motels
- The District 2 officers have been performing grid checks at motels. DPD will check the names and information on hotel rosters against criminal and parole databases to look for sexual offender registry and warrant information. DPD will then send the information they find to the Colorado State Parole Board
- District 2 is working with parolees to help them battle social issues such as homelessness, drug addiction, etc.
- If you see door to door solicitors in your area please call the DPD non-emergency number with a description of the individual if things don’t feel right even if they have already left. There have been a number of home robberies/invasions that have been associated with people soliciting door to door to see if anyone is home at a residence
- Do not hesitate to take a suspicious persons photo with your smart phone if safely possible and send it to District 2. DPD Crime Analysts use this information to potentially solve crimes

City of Denver Attorney's Office: Chris Gaddis, Assistant City Attorney (Prosecution & Code Enforcement)

- Chris deals as a City Prosecutor with violations of City Ordinances, Code Enforcement and “quality of life” issues in the City of Denver
- Chris has worked with the Motel Task Force with East Colfax motels to ensure they are up to code. The city’s Environmental Health Department, Fire Department, Denver Police Department and Building Inspectors work together on motel issues in the city
- The task force will do a “mass” inspection of a different hotel in each district each month to ensure compliance with city laws and regulations that impact the health & safety of the surrounding neighborhoods and residents of the motels as well
- If you see something in our neighborhood call it in to the Denver Police

Denver Parks and Recreation: Mark Upshaw, East Side Parks Planner

- The East Side of Denver encompasses 120 city parks
- Mark attended the District 2 CAB meeting in July and has visited Verbena Park 3 times since then to look at the park’s layout, facilities and to see firsthand what can be improved
- Drugs, prostitution and guns are 3 problems prevalent in the park. Mark stated that he was surprised to find out that criminals have left guns in the trash receptacles at the park
- The Parks and recreation department are concerned about the apartment residents to the west of Verbena Park not having access to bus routes except for having to go out of the complex to E. 12th Avenue and walk through the park to access RTD stops on E. 11th Ave per there are no other easements out of the complex
- The Parks Dept. have cut down a couple of trees and limbed up others to allow more visibility by the police to the west side of the park and the pavilion area
- The city has removed one picnic table and concrete pad just south of the pavilion
- The Denver Park Rangers work from the hours of 7:00 AM – 9:00 PM and can be contacted via Denver’s 311. Rangers can issue citations at City Parks
- The lighting in the park is maintained by Excel Energy through a City contract. The Parks Department checks on light outages once every quarter per year and will have non-operational lights repaired. Citizens can contact excel energy directly as well on light outages via email, phone and internet at outdoorlighting@xcelenergy.com, 1-800-895-4999 and http://www.xcelenergy.com/xe-en/Outages/Report_a_Problem/Street_Light_Outages/ODL_or_via_Denver's_311. Please have the location along with the “pole” number ready when reporting an outage.
- Denver Police Commander Calo recommended to Mr. Upshaw that a reinforced cage be placed around the light fixture under the pavilion to protect it from any further vandalism per the fixture since installed has been broken out several times
- Mark stated that he is aware that many residents want the park pavilion removed completely due to crime but he wants to ensure that everyone wants it removed before proceeding

Denver Councilwoman Mary Beth Susman's Office: Councilwoman Susman's Aide, Luke Palmisano

- City Council District 5 encompasses the East Montclair Neighborhood
- Whatever Luke can do to help us he is ready to assist via Councilwoman Susman's Office
- Councilwoman Susman has rotating open "district hours" on Thursday mornings from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM at locations throughout the district. Contact Councilwoman Susman via email at marybeth.susman@denvergov.org or via telephone at (720) 337-5555
- Residents would like the Councilwoman's meetings to be held at night per many of us work during the day. Aide Palmisano said he would tell Councilwoman Susman
- The Fax/Mayfair Improvement District along Easy Colfax currently only goes to Monaco. The councilwoman would like to see it eventually go to the Denver Boarder at Yosemite

Neighborhood Round Table:

- Larry Drees stated that even though invited, no one from the Advenir Apartments that are on the western border of Verbena Park at 8000 E. 12th Avenue came to the meeting. It is believed that much of the crime in Verbena Park originates from these apartments
- Larry did speak to the Assistant Manager at Advenir and they had stated they were looking to upgrade the apartments in the near future and hopefully this may reduce problems in the complex and adjoining park
- There is currently 57 signatures on a petition for removal of the Verbena Park pavilion and installation of a new reinforced fence between the Advenir Apartments and Verbena Park
- Many believe we should add to the park not take away from it; including, planting gardens, flower beds. Someone suggested contacting Denver Urban Gardens for assistance
- Mark Upshaw from Parks & Recreation said he needs to go out to Verbena Park and take a look at the physical shape and stability of the pavilion before looking further at having it moved elsewhere in the park or removed permanently. He also stated that the city does not have money in their budget for a new fence to be installed on the west side of the park. The current wooden fence does not belong to the city but rather the Advenir Apartments
- Todd McGuire from Curtis Park Neighbors suggested that neighbors create a "Friends of Verbena Park" alliance separate from EMNA to focus on the park itself and allowing residents to "Take Back Our Park". Todd also suggested working with "The Trust with Public Land" at <http://www.tpl.org/> for assistance creating a better park for all. Lastly he stated it is up to we as neighbors to get the word out within our neighborhoods about meetings, concerns, etc.
- It was recommended that the next EMNA meeting be held in Verbena Park in the pavilion area in order to "take back our park"
- Residents expressed concern about the crime in areas near to the East Colfax motels. The question was asked to Assistant City Attorney Chris Gaddis if loitering is considered a crime since many loiter on the sidewalks in front of the Orlando Apartments and Regis Motel. Mr. Gaddis stated that loitering is not considered a crime if it is on public property such as a sidewalk on East Colfax.
- Tommy, the Resident Manager of the Regis Motel located at 8282 E. Colfax stated that he welcomed the concern about the East Colfax motels, including the Regis. He stated that there are families that live there and not all the residents are who you would expect them to be. He contacts the Denver Police when trespassers are on his hotel property and runs others off himself.

- Myong Ju Lee, owner of the Sand & Sage Motel, 8415 E. Colfax & 7-Star Motel, 8400 E. Colfax stated that she requires all check-ins, visitors and guests to show a photo I.D. before coming onto her properties and has a strict policy of no visitors after 10:00 PM. The owner of the Driftwood Motel located at 1443 Oneida stated she has the same policy.
- Orlando Martinez, owner of the Orlando Apts., Shepherds Motel & O's Pipe & Tobacco located at 8300 E. Colfax and 1525 Valentia St. stated that he has put \$1 million dollars into the Orlando Apartment renovations and that he has the area around the apartments cleaned every day. He was asked about his arrest in 2013 for selling illegal "spice" products and said that he did not know that it was illegal at the time. The person he bought it from said it was legal. He stated even though he sells pipes, cigarettes and other items in his store he is just running a business like any other.
- The Assistant City Attorney Chris Gaddis educated the motel owners/managers that were present that it is their responsibility to have clear and visible rules for their properties in order convey the message to those that do not live on the property what the rules are and for the motel owners to take responsibility to call the police in necessary to remove trespassers and those committing criminal acts.
- Sgt. Reyes Trujillo educated us that there are undercover operations that occur along our area of East Colfax Ave, 2 to 3 times per week in order to check for warrants, illegal substances and weapons of individuals congregating o East Colfax near these motels.
- Residents expressed concern that alley's, parks and vacant homes need to be dealt with whether it is because they are littered, abandoned or not kept up. They also expressed interest in installing new lighting along East Colfax in East Montclair, installing flowered medians and other beautifications as neighbors have seen in other parts of the city and in Aurora just to the east.
- It was recommended that neighbors and business owners create an East Colfax advocacy group as well to focus on the problems and renewal of East Colfax in East Montclair in particular.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM