Safety committee meeting, 4/27/21

1. Introductions
2. Resident: what’s the day for trash pick up? Answer: new solid waste company at the beginning of the month. New company is supposed to use the same schedule as the old company. Let CRHA know if trash isn’t picked up so they can figure it out with the new company
3. Resident: Buck Squad had an event in Westhaven on Sunday and they were out on Monday. See them more than in the past. Event on Sunday was really nice. Don’t see interactions with the Buck Squad on a daily basis. They walk around but don’t necessarily interact in their daily walks.
4. When asked, lots of residents said they didn’t think Buck Squad and Peace in the Streets can take the place of security. PHAR did some door knocking to ask. Residents are supportive of these initiatives, but residents are alarmed about the lack of security. Residents want violence interrupters. There’s some support of neighborhood watch. But don’t view this as a substitution for security.
5. Resident: lots of residents did not realize that the security contract was being terminated.
6. Mr. Sales: some consensus that the security that we had was not working and was not sufficient because it was not deterring crime or helping to solve crimes after they occurred. Met with police chief, mayor, and assistant police chief to ask for more police presence on the sites—not a drive though. Want police to walk the site and to have a continuous presence, getting to know residents. Police chief was hesitant because there was pressure to get rid of police on sites and wants a clear front to be in public housing. Mr. Sales also asked for help with the neighborhood watch process. Last, want police reports when the police are on the site. CRHA needs to know when police are on the site. Try to work this out. Mayor wants CRHA to get this information. There were some tensions during the meeting but Mayor helped get through those tensions. Police chief wants community to support police if they’re in neighborhoods.
7. Resident: sorry chief feels unsupported. Some residents don’t want police and some do and so there needs to be some middle ground. Some people felt they were being overpoliced and others wanted the police. Police treat neighborhoods differently in the day time as in the evening and night police do. There was supposed to be another meeting, but it never happened.
8. Residents: when there were block captains, the beautification committee and the block captains worked hand in hand. Wanted to share concerns and to welcome people. People got welcome baskets—information about resources, housing authority, and residents’ rights. Block captains took care of their blocks. Appreciation dinner every other month for the block captains. Karen Waters-Wicks worked on this and so a good contact for more information. Block captains got to know their neighbors and helping form communities. Block captain volunteers came up with what their responsibilities would be. Even had lawnmowers that people could sign out to mow their lawns.
9. Resident: How would this work? Answer: 6th street, westhaven, Michie drive, and most sites were doing it.
10. Mr. Sales: started talking to residents about beautification. Michie, Madison, and Riverside have residents who are ready to start (3 people)—picking up trash on the sites. Have residents as part of a stipend program be part of beautification.
11. Resident: we have a problem with security and it’s getting warm
12. Mr. Sales: residents say that want an increased police presence and want security cameras. Want police to get out of the cars and interact with residents. Security cameras are moving forward—hopefully up and running by July 1. Trying to do a variety of things to increase security. The security company was not working and so trying to do more now through a variety of initiatives.
13. Resident: residents said security wasn’t working, but police weren’t working either. Just having police isn’t always working. Some residents complaining about residents who are having mental health issues, police show up, but there’s nothing the police can do. What is general protocol? What about de-escalation? Makes kids and families scared. Police just walk away.
14. Mr. Sales: trying to get mental health counseling into the communities. Need the services but who should provide it? May 1st is the last day of security. At crescent halls, will have door greeter checking IDs. At other sites, will have an increased police presence, but police want community support.
15. Resident: not acceptable that residents have to defend the police. She has heard residents say that they need help and she hasn’t listened. Thinks we should go to City Hall to speak up. Residents don’t dislike the police, they don’t like certain police behaviors.
16. Resident: Housing authority and Region 10 need to meet to find out what Region 10 can provide and what they can’t provide. Maybe use Region 10 as de-escalation. Have this conversation and make this ask. Need to bring in people who work in the community. Need those who work in the community at the table.
17. Mr. Sales will reach out to Region 10
18. Mr. Collins: who is making all this work happen? We’ve had a lot of great meetings over a long period of time. Can we outline who’s doing what really quickly?
19. Mr. Sales: get another meeting scheduled with the police department. Chief connected Mr. Sales with a person on their staff who focuses on security in general. Did a night watch at 6th st., south first, and westhaven. Looked at opportunities to do some environmental things to increase safety: lighting, fencing, improving wiring, closing off some spaces, preventing wires from being cut, dark spots to add lighting. He’s getting a full report of recommendations: long term and short term and pricing. Then add these things to the capital budget to get these things funded. Mr. Sales will also reach out to region 10. Also working on the security camera aspect. The RFP is being reviewed and we should know soon who will get the contract. Also putting together an RFP to community based approach to security. Last, Mr. Sales will reach out to Karen Waters-Wicks.
20. Resident: can we see if residents can attend de-escalation trainings though Region 10. Mr. Sales thinks that’s a great idea.
21. Brandon Collins: what needs to happen to get a camera policy in front of the board. Mr. Sales: will probably go in front of the Board in May. Mr. Collins: Let’s get looking at the committee to place cameras. Mr. Sales would love PHAR’s help to finding people who will help decide where cameras go.
22. Resident: In Westhaven, a lady who was trying to protect her children was mauled by a pitbull and had to have surgery to her hands and knees. Residents are talking, but not reporting to CRHA. This dog had apparently been a problem in the past. Need to get a handle on the dog situation. Lots of residents are afraid of dogs. Need to have dogs on a leash for these residents.
23. Mr. Sales: fully agrees and will be enforcing the pet policy.
24. Resident: in safety survey, many residents said that they did not feel safe in their neighborhood. Older generation was afraid to voice their opinion out of fear of having their property vandalized or of being assaulted. Sad to see people afraid to ask for help.
25. Resident: many residents are right to be afraid given what’s going on. Need to continue to come together.
26. Ms. Wandae Johnson: compiling a list of areas of need to give to the housing authority to get the addressed.
27. Resident: Mail is an issue, only one box for return mail. If there are people who can’t cut their grass (seniors and others), help them with the grass. Identify and compile a list of those people to make sure their grass gets cut.
28. Ms. W. Johnson: want services and activities and engagement particularly for youth.
29. Any more vaccinations planned at Westhaven or Crescent halls? Mr. Sales: Looking at other options at other sites because of redevelopment at Crescent Halls. Ms. Glenn-Matthews: Talking about this issue at a meeting that’s coming up.