**East Allentown Rittersville**

**Neighborhood Association**

**MINUTES**

Vice-president Robert Pandaleon called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. on March 20, 2017 at St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Present: Three officers (Vice-president Robert Pandaleon, Treasurer Bob Jacoby and Secretary Dave Schell) and nine other neighbors were present at the meeting, as were Captain James Keiser and Officer Mike Beidelman of the Allentown Police Department. In addition, the group was addressed by Courtney Robinson, candidate for Allentown City Council, as will be detailed later in these minutes. President Dennis Pearson was absent as he was on his way to Ireland with his new bride.

Secretary Dave Schell handed out copies of the minutes of the meeting of February 20, 2017. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes as distributed. The motion carried.

Schell also handed out a copy of the February Police Service Area 1 report (which covers the East Side) and a report on our various science fair awards.

Treasurer Bob Jacoby gave his report. The current balance is $569.53. The $7.50 fee mentioned in last month’s minutes still needs to be corrected. He also announced that we have rented a storage area for $31.79/month. The winter decorations have been packed up with the assistance of the Dieruff JROTC. It was moved and seconded to approve the report as read. The motion carried.

Captain Keiser noted that Pearson had asked him for the PSA 1 report, which is generated by the police crime analyst. The report lists many minor events such as noise and suspicious vehicles. We have relatively few serious Part 1 crimes in this PSA. Part 1 crimes are serious crimes such as burglary. Over the past two weeks there were only eight Part 1 crimes in this part of town. Sometimes the downtown gets ten such crimes daily. Among those reported in the past two weeks were a burglary involving building supplies, a stolen snowplow (not attached to a vehicle), attempted theft in which the thief was scared off, and a stolen license plate.

Secretary Schell asked for guidance from both the police and neighbors present about sending the monthly PSA crime reports to the email list. After discussion, it was decided that the report will be made available to any who request it but will not be sent to the list. Schell will make a copy and bring it to the monthly meeting.

Vice-president Pandaleon asked why we have less serious crime in this part of the city. Some of the reasons is that in this part of town we often have sufficient officers that one is patrolling constantly, and that officer does not keep to the same routine. Captain Keiser also noted that the assistance of the neighborhood groups on the east side help, whereas some other areas of the city do not have active neighborhood groups.

Other issues brought to the attention of Officers Keiser and Beidelman included the following:

* Overloaded pickup trucks: Presently they have to be cited for over-height because police do not have the equipment for checking overweight.
* Continued speeding on Jerome Street: Police have targeted this area and recently got five speeders on the same day who averaged 50 mph. It was noted that when the temporary radar is set up on Jerome Street (for traffic heading uphill), motorists slow down until they are past the device and then speed up the rest of the hill. Sometimes speeding is worse coming downhill on Jerome.
* Businesses plowing snow into the street or onto a neighbor’s property when clearing their parking areas: This should be reported while it is happening.

It was questioned whether speed bumps can be put in the downhill side of the street. We understand the problem (as previously explained) that they cannot be installed uphill due to vehicles not being able to get up the street in winter weather. The downhill side would also be difficult, even beyond the cost of the bumps. Due to the slope, water would puddle behind the bump and freeze in winter.

Captain Keiser reported that the city is rolling out a new APP—Allentown PD Tip 411—for smartphones to allow tips to be texted to the police department anonymously. Tips can currently be submitted as well but this system will be more interactive in real time and will allow users to not only report tips but also get reports on other crime information. Eventually the system will allow the user to specify the neighborhood. The app is free, and available for both iPhone and Samsung. [It can be found as Allentown PD on the Apple App Store.]

Courtney Robinson, candidate for Allentown City Council spoke to the group. He had also attended last month’s meeting. He noted that besides knowing who on the city staff to contact for neighborhood problems, such as a runoff issue that a neighbor had mentioned, Council representatives should also be responsive. He suggested that neighbors attend City Council meetings, which are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month and use the “courtesy of the floor” to report issues that need to be addressed. Citizens should go back until someone gets embarrassed enough about the matter to act.

In response to a question about blighted properties, he noted that this can be very time-consuming since if a property owner starts acting on a complaint it “restarts the clock.” Something like the runoff problem, however, should be dealt with—or at a minimum, answered—more quickly.

On another matter, a neighbor mentioned that he had a female relative who has started college in a bad neighborhood in Philadelphia and he had purchased her a set of pepper spray that also marks the assailant. Captain Keiser cautioned that one needs to be careful in such a case that the assailant does not manage to take the spray away from you. If used, one should hit the person and then run. Another neighbor also noted that one needs to be aware of wind direction when using such a device.

There being no further business, adjournment was moved and seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 8:01p.m.

Respectfully,

*David A. Schell, Secretary*