



Notes of the third meeting of the Midtown Museum District Neighborhood Association held on Wednesday 19th November 2008 at the Radisson Hotel, 3600 N 2nd Avenue from 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

1. Introduction and welcome to the event

Margaret Dietrich welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the Midtown Museum District Neighborhood Association (MMDNA). She thanked the Radisson Hotel for allowing the Association to use the facility free of charge for the evening.

2. Keynote presentation from Commander Jeri Williams, Phoenix Police Department

Commander Williams is the Commander for the Central City (500) Precinct. Most of the MMDNA is in this precinct (Sections 512 and 514), and a small part is in the Squaw Peak Precinct (Section 700). A map of the police precincts in Phoenix was circulated, together with a copy of the command structure for the Central City Precinct. Approximately 250 employees work in the Precinct, and around 3,800 people work in the Phoenix Police Department.

Commander Williams emphasized the importance of community groups and neighborhood associations in helping to minimize crime and blight in neighborhoods. Her aim is to inform and empower residents so they know where to call for support and to report unusual and suspicious activity. The annual G.A.I.N event for example, is one way where the Department can provide information to let people know what's available and to get to know their local police and emergency service people.

The MMDNA has a lower crime rate than many parts of Phoenix, however, there was always a need for residents to be vigilant and be proactive in taking measures to reduce and prevent crime.

In response to a resident's question about security on the Metro Light Rail, Commander Williams advised that the Transit Security Bureau had assigned staff to every part of the line. Some staff would be law enforcement officers (gun carrying). It was anticipated that all the required staff would be recruited by the end of November.

A resident asked about funding for the Police Department. Commander Williams thanked all residents for supporting Proposition 100 in 2007, which provided additional Police Officers in Phoenix. The ratio of police officers per head of population is slightly lower than other major cities, however, the Phoenix Police Department is very efficient and effective in tackling crime across the City.

Commander Williams was warmly thanked for her lively and interesting presentation. She encouraged residents to contact her with concerns about crime and crime prevention or to let her know when things are working well. Commander Williams can be emailed on: jeri.Williams@phoenix.gov or telephone (602) 495 7887

3. Report from Community Action Officer Scott Melander

Officer Melander gave a brief overview of his role as a Community Action Officer and summarized his extensive experience in the Phoenix Police Force. He addressed a number of concerns in the neighborhood and these are summarized below:

3.1 Neglected property and out of town landlords

If a property has long-standing problems such as graffiti that is not removed promptly, or neglect, the Police work closely with Neighborhood Services to resolve the problem. Neighborhood Services work to prevent all types of blight happening in neighborhoods. They will investigate the problem and can send out a Notice of Violation to the landlord. The Landlord has 30 days to remedy the problem.

Neighborhood Preservation can be contacted on (602) 262 7844.

3.2 Graffiti

It was important to remove graffiti as quickly as possible. It is the responsibility of the property owner to remove the graffiti. Graffiti Busters will remove the graffiti for free but need a written signed Graffiti Busters permission slip from the property owner or other responsible third party.

Graffiti Busters can be contacted at:

Phoenix Neighborhood Services Department

200 W. Washington St., 4th Floor

Phoenix, AZ 85003-1611

(602) 495-0323

E-mail: graffiti.busters.nsd@phoenix.gov

24-Hour Graffiti Removal Hotline (602) 495-7014

Officer Melander informed residents about the arrest of a prolific graffiti person who had caused in excess of \$60,000 damage. The police were alerted to this person by a resident who had witnessed a “tagging”. The person was successfully prosecuted for several felonies and was required to make financial restitution for the damage.

3.3 Transients and vacant property

If residents have concerns about vacant property being occupied by transients they should contact Officer Melander. In commercial areas, he can arrange for signs to be placed on the property and can get an “Authority to Arrest” form from the owner. This will allow the police to arrest trespassers without the owner being present.

3.4 Theft

All residents were urged to report theft from properties, by contacting Crime Stop at 602-262-6151 (24 hours a day, seven days a week). It was important to report all crime so that the Police can see whether there is a pattern of activity and assign resources to deal with the problem. Crime Stop should be used to report any situation not requiring an emergency response.

Residents should call 911 to report a serious crime, crime in progress, fire or any serious medical condition.

3.5 Traffic issues on Central and Vernon and Central and Encanto

A resident from Tapestry raised a number of concerns about traffic flows and parking. Officer Melander recommended a meeting of the Homeowners Board with representatives from Councilman Nowakowski’s office and representatives from Street Transportation to discuss specific issues.

3.6 Blockwatch

A number of residents expressed an interest in developing Block Watch in their area. Margaret agreed to get interested parties together to see how this can be taken forward. Bids for Block Watch funding can be made in January 2009, but the group would need to have specific proposals to put forward to get money.

3.7 Police response times

In response to a resident’s question, Officer Melander explained that the response times by the Police to an incident, varied according to a number of factors. These include: -

- Nature of the crime (danger);

- Time of day;
- Proximity of patrol vehicles/Officers.

Emergency calls on 911 were prioritized and dealt with as quickly as possible.

Officer Melander was thanked for his advice and all his help and support to the MMDNA.

Officer Melander can be contacted on (602) 534-0718, or by email on scott.melander@phoenix.gov.

4. Metro Light Rail

4.1 Update on safety issues

Amy Bratt was welcomed to the meeting and summarized three key safety messages for residents:

- Always use the crosswalks (as trains are fast and quiet!);
- Pay attention to new signals and signs;
- Don not stand on the tactile strips on the edge of the platform. Move back onto the platform – if you are on the strip you are too close to the edge and could get hit by a train.

A number of information leaflets were available to residents. These can also be found at www.valleymetro.org

Light Rail trains were now in the neighborhood on a regular basis. Horns and bells were being tested. The horns will only be used for emergency warning soon. The bell will be the normal signal when leaving a station. The train announcements were also being tested and it was noted that some of these could be clearly heard away from the station. Amy would raise this issue with Metro Light Rail.

Residents asked Amy to investigate traffic signal problems at Vernon Ave (Pedestrian lights) and at Camelback.

Amy can be contacted on (602) 495 8217, Cell (602) 446 5811 or by Email: abratt@MetroLightRail.org

4.1 RailLife

Nick Bastian from RailLife.com was welcomed to the meeting and gave an overview of the RailLife website. Nick and a friend created RailLife about two years ago because they felt it was important to let people know what is happening along the Light Rail route, and how to find and use local services. Light Rail has the potential to have a significant positive impact on neighborhoods and people should have access to information to make the most of facilities in the area.

Nick has developed the **RailLife.com** website and blog. RailLife provides a range of information on the Light Rail, bus links, Park and Ride, in addition to detail about local businesses such as, hotels, restaurants, entertainment, sporting events, etc. At present there is no cost for businesses to be listed on RailLife.com, however, there may be a charge in the future for more detailed listings and advertising.

Nick has links with the Tempe Chamber of Commerce and other business owners along the Light Rail route. At present, the map of local businesses extends out to about 7th Street/7th Avenue (walking/cycling distance from the Light Rail station), but this varies by area.

It was suggested that RailLife should provide information on how MMDNA residents can get to Sky Harbor and Nick felt this would be useful especially for business travelers and visitors to Phoenix.

RailLife and the MMDNA have complementary aims of promoting local businesses and to help people enjoy the facilities in the neighborhood. Both organizations plan to work together to develop a comprehensive database for the area and to have reciprocal links on their web sites.

Nick can be contacted on (602) 527 6425, e-fax 866 326 7245 or by email nick@raillife.com
Or visit the website at www.raillife.com

5. Light Rail party 27th December and MMDNA Grand Stuffing Party!

Margaret reported that the MMDNA were very likely to have a booth at Central and Encanto station on 27th December. This would provide a good opportunity to promote local businesses. Fast Signs on Central have generously donated a sign for the MMDNA booth at this event.

The MMDNA has offered to distribute promotional materials from local businesses, to let people know what is available in the area. The businesses can also be listed on the MMDNA website and will also be shown on a map of the neighborhood that is being created by two ASU students. Businesses will be asked to contribute \$25 for the service.

10,000 carrier bags will be compiled and there will be a **Grand Stuffing Party on Saturday 13th December 2008** at the Arizona Department of Education Building on Central and Palm Lane, from 7.00am to 5.00pm. Volunteers are asked to contact Margaret or Julia on midtownmuseumdistrict@gmail.com. The bag stuffing will take place all day and refreshments will be provided for volunteers.

On 27th December volunteers will be needed for the booth, probably on two-hour shifts and those interested were asked to contact Margaret or Julia.

6. Financial report

Margaret reported that the MMDNA has a bank account at Chase Bank at Central and Columbus, and a tax I.D. for banking purposes only. Heath Clinger and his staff were thanked for their assistance in getting the account established.

The MMDNA has had \$125 in donations to date, with more funds anticipated from the Light Rail Business Literature event.

7. Social Events

The Heard Museum Guild have generously invited MMDNA members to a Cheese and Wine evening at the Heard Museum on Tuesday 13th January 2009 from 6.00pm to 8.00pm. The event will be in the Berlin Gallery and will be strictly limited to 50 people on a first come first served basis.

Post meeting notes:

*MMDNA members wishing to have a social event at the **Phoenix Suns** for around 10 people in January, should contact Jay Sterling Sales Consultant at the Phoenix Suns on (602) 379 7856.*

***Third Street Promenade Stakeholder's meeting.** Tuesday November 25th 6.00pm to 8.00pm Phoenix City Hall, Assembly Room A 200, Washington Street. Contribute to the pedestrian improvements plan for 3rd Street between McDowell and Indian School For more information contact Gail Brinkman, Street Transportation (602) 495 3670*

These should have been mentioned at the meeting but could not because of time constraints

8. Date, time and venue of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday December 17th from 6.30pm to 8.30pm – venue to follow.