

West Galveston Island Property Owners Association

Meeting with Police Chief

August 16, 2001

City Officials Present: Chief Robert Pierce; Captain Brian Riedel; Lt. John Mitchell; Sergeant Tim Galvan; and, Council Member Dianna Puccetti

WGIPOA Board Members present: Marty Baker (Pirates), Sharon Turnley (Sea Isle), Kathy Love (Bermuda Beach), Wanda Greer (Terramar), Debbie Wright (Spanish Grant Bay), and Jerry Mohn

Meeting began at 9:30 a.m. and ended at 11:45 a.m.

Purpose of meeting: Establish a police substation on the West End

Chief Pierce had a chart of the entire police department, shifts, hours, and names. The Chief expressed his desire to place a substation in the West End but it cannot be accomplished due to budget constraints and overall costs. Jamaica Beach offered housing. The Chief even considered a direct television line in a room on the West End such as in Jamaica Beach. This would allow an individual with a police problem to go into a room with a TV monitor and be in direct communication with the downtown police department. The cost is high, \$23,000 to install the system with a T1 line (no DSL at this time) or \$365/month minimum 5 years or \$600/month minimum 3 years.

The main goal of the WGIPOA is to establish a police substation on the West End as soon as practical. In the interim, the Board endorsed the Chief's recommendation that each association or subdivision on the West End consider developing a "Neighborhood Crime Watch" program with the assistance of the police department. The volunteers for this program would be trained to take reports, report suspicious actions, maintain a log of license numbers of late night slow driving vehicles, etc. Once the program is complete, the volunteer(s) would set up a neighborhood watch program. The program is very proactive where it is placing the community on watch as a deterrent to crime. It was suggested that Sea Isle be the first to develop a program and to be the basis for other subdivisions to follow.

In addition the Chief also offered another program where volunteers from a subdivision would go through a special training course at a "Citizens Police Academy". These volunteers would become familiar with the operations of the police department. The course is 16 weeks and involves 1 – 2.5 hour sessions each week, usually on a Wednesday and Friday.

The Chief will have Officer Joe Giusti (Tel: 797-3830) contact everyone for a meeting to develop the above programs. We would then take the information back to the members associations of the WGIPOA to ask volunteers to participate.

Current situation for the West End: 10% of the Galveston Police Department or 8 officers are assigned to the West End, which is designated West of 103rd street. There are 2 officers during the day shift (6:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.) Officers Armando Torres and William "Buddy" Jackson; 4 officers assigned to the evening shift (2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) Officers Don Lounds, Jerimi Smart, Ken Weems, and John Estilette; and, 2 officers during the night shift (10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.) Officer Javier Rosa and Sergeant Tim Galvan. This is ideal if all are serving when required but vacation schedules, court calls, police reports, etc., do not allow full coverage of the West End.

Jamaica Beach has a separate Police Department that will assist Galveston when requested. The cooperation is great but the Jamaica Beach residents prefer the JB policemen to concentrate in their area. The Galveston Police Department also has a great working relationship with the Sheriff's Department but the management system is not compatible.

Other problems include refueling of police cars. The police officer currently brings the car into a designated city refueling area at 53rd street or downtown and this takes at least an hour and longer and as a result there is not any back up coverage in the West End. The Chief plans to install a refueling area at the fire station on 12 mile road, which he expects to be in place the end of November.

Currently, 3 Sergeants and 9 Officers now man the jail. When the new proposed jail is completed possibly in 2004, these Officers will be freed up to work the beat again. Approximately 34 to 40 policemen go to Municipal Court everyday, which again takes the officer off the beat. The Chief plans to hire 14 new officers but after field training, etc., it will take another six months before they hit the street. Chief Pierce hopes to have three additional officers for the West End, one on each shift,

when the training is complete.

Again, the WGIPOA desires a police substation on the West End and we will continue to work with the City to achieve this goal.