 Waco Community Watch Meeting

Thursday April 6, 2023

6:30 pm

Minutes:

* J. Barrett opened the meeting at 6:30 pm and welcomed all members present. Meeting turnout was light. We will continue to encourage members to attend the meetings via Facebook and email.
* Window stickers remain available to members of the community at no cost.
* Please continue to pay attention to the Neighborhood Watch signs throughout town and to notify a Watch Captain if any are found to be missing or damaged. Signs were placed on all town streets and there are still a few available. We currently do not have any additional signs but we have funds available to order if needed.
* The Waco Community Watch Facebook Group page membership continues to grow and is currently has over 152 participants. Participation in sharing of news and crime stories is active on the page. Stories and other information are being shared on the page on a regular basis. The page continues to get several request to join the page from people from the Waco Texas area. Those request are being referred to a community watch group in Texas. Group members are encouraged to continue to post to the page.
* The email chain group also continues to grow and remains active in sharing of information. Information shared on the Facebook page is also being shared via email. Anyone interested in taking over the email notifications, please let us know.
* The financial statements for the Community Watch program was presented. To date donations have been received totaling $1,250.15. Expenses (window stickers, signs, the logo, postage supplies, the brochure, etc.) total $1,046.07. The current balance is $204.08. The Town of Waco did pick up the cost of the hardware to install the Community Watch signs.
* We still haven’t set up a meeting with the Washington Elementary staff to discuss their participation in the program has not been set up to date. Flavio Hallais has expressed interest in speaking with the Washington Elementary staff. Barrett will also ask Tracy Chichester to join them. Need to schedule.
* The meeting with Burns Middle and Burns High School is still pending.
* Community Watch brochures remain available and members are encouraged to hand out brochures to others in their neighborhoods. Brochures have been placed at the Waco Post office and in other establishments in the community.
* Watch Captains for the program are currently Tracy Chichester who volunteered to serve as the South Main St. Captain. Flavio Hallais volunteered to serve as the North Main St. Captain. The names of members in the other parts of town were mentioned for other positions. We will continue to discuss this issue at the next meeting. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact John Barrett, Tracy Chichester or Flavio Hallais.
* Specific Community Watch issues that have been discussed include:
* Identifying street lights that are blocked or partially blocked by tree limbs. This has been taken to the Town Board to be addressed*.* ***(Duke Energy has completed cutting trees off power lines in Waco. We still need to watch for issues with tree limbs obstructing street lights.)***
* Illegal dumping of construction waste on Moss St. ***(We are continuing to watch this issue. It hasn’t happened but could be an issues on Devenny Rd. at the Duke Energy power station.)***
* Speeding continues to be a problem on Cherryville Rd., North and South Main St., and on Jess Hord Rd. This is a continuing problem. ***(Will see about getting the speed trailer from the Sheriff’s Department).***
* There have been some post on the Facebook page about loose dogs and cats in town and in the community. ***(The Town Board met with the Director of Cleveland County Animal Services at their last meeting about the pack of dogs, chicken issues and stray cat issues:***
* ***. 1. Animal services will continue to address the pack of dogs that have been seen on South Main St., Stony Point Rd. and Capernuium Rd. Animal Services will place traps on property if requested to do so. There have been less reports on the Community Watch page about the dogs. Will continue to evaluate. If members see the dogs, please report them to Cleveland County Communications 704-476-7800 or to Animal Services at 704-481-9884 ext # 5)***
* ***2. Animal Services states that property owners could report damage by any animal’s including chickens and the issue would be evaluated. There is no specific county ordinance for loose fowl.***
* ***3. The county does offer spay and neuter clinics for cats. Citizens can contact them for more details.***
* Suspicious vehicles have been reported on the page and members are encouraged to contact the Sheriff’s Department to report these**. *(The non-emergency Sheriff’s Department number is 704-484-4822 or 704-476-7800)***
* It has been reported that there are possibly a homeless man and woman sleeping in the Waco Post Office lobby at night after dark. The Post Master has seen evidence of people being in there at night. (***This concern was passed on to the Sheriff’s Department and they have been doing spot checks at the Post office. This seems to have gotten better.)***
* The other concern is cars pulling to the back of the Post Office at night and possibly doing some illegal activities. (***This was also passed along to the Sheriff’s Department. Watch members are asked to pay attention to any suspicious activity around the Post Office and to notify the police is they see anything that is out of place.)***
* There were 2 homeless men knocking on the door of Waco Baptist Church and asking for food. This has scared the church secretary and she is no longer opening the door if they knock. The men are also using an electrical outlet behind the church to charge their phones. ***(This was passed along to the Sheriff’s Department and the men haven’t been see around lately. If they are seen, members are encouraged to call the Sheriff’s Department non-emergency line and report them.)***
* There have been other possibly homeless individuals in the area of Bingham Rd in the past few weeks. ***(Need to continue to watch this area and report suspicious activity.)***
* It was discussed that any vacant home in the area needs to be boarded up and the power disconnected. ***(If members area aware of any homes that fit this category, please report it back to a Watch Captain and they will try to contact the owners.)***
* The group discussed there have been several drug raids in the community and went on record in support of the Sheriff’s Department’s continued crack-down on drug activity***.***
* Also several thefts of trailers in and around the community have been posted on the page***. (Please continue to watch the page for relevant information.)***
* The “Neighborhood Book Library” and “Neighborhood Blessing Box” projects with Burns High School Woodworking class are on track. Barrett spoke with the shop teacher and the projects are very close to being finished. Macedonia Baptist Church has erected a Book Library just on the other side of the fence at the playground. The library is stocked with children’s books. We need to thank Macedonia for adding this to the community.

We will still plan to have the Book Library that Burns High School is building installed at the Playground and will stock it with all types of books. Members agreed that we will need to monitor what people put in there to alleviate some “un-wanted” material to be placed in the library.

Members discussed the Blessing Box placement. Both the Town Board and the Community Watch group agree that the Blessing box doesn’t need to be placed at the playground. Discussion on where to place it was held and members agreed on one of two places. The first is at the front right corner of the Community Center against the building. The second option would be to ask Waco Baptist if we could place it on the church property on North Main St. The issue will be brought to the Town Board for further a final decision.

* Crime Stoppers Program update information was shared with the group. Tracy has turned in her paperwork to be a members of the Crime Stoppers Board. This program is based out of the Shelby Police Department. The program is up and running and the Crime Stoppers number is 704-481-(TIPS) 8477 or email wray.hamrick@cityofshelby.com For more information go to [Crime Stoppers | City of Shelby](https://www.cityofshelby.com/departments/police/community-initiatives/crime-stoppers)
* The “Waco Light’s Up for Christmas” home decorating contest was a huge hit. 52 homes participated in the contest. The group agreed it would be a good for the town to hold the contest again this year and maybe even expand the activities. More discussion at future meetings.
* The group discussed hosting our second “Community Watch Block Party” and picked Saturday August 26th as the date. Times will be 11:00 am – 3:00 pm. The food menu will stay the same and remain free to all that attend. Activities discussed were to ask for an inflatable and snow cone maker from All American Bounce House Rentals, to invite the Waco Community Vol. Fire Department, bring back lawn games, popcorn maker and possibly find some type Beach Music group to perform. Also to find a way to include a water games for the kids. We can re-use the banners from last year with just a change of the date. Additional planning to be held at the next meeting.
* Minutes of the meeting will be completed and shared via Facebook and email to members.
* The next meeting is Thursday May 4th at 6:30 pm. Please attend and bring a friend.
* Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.