

ECCO Monthly Meeting March 17, 2011

Virginia Bedford presided over the The 6 p.m. Police Report.

A Facebook Group has been created called "NOMA Community Watch," to share crime information in area neighborhoods, including Earlewood, Cotton Town and Elmwood Park.

Area crime reports include copper theft valued at \$10,000 at Classical Glass, and a stolen dog.

A list of city lights that are out in Earlewood and Earlewood Park has been compiled to deliver to the city and SCE&G for replacement.

Earlewood has been divided into six sections with safety captains.

Future efforts will push for needed stop signs and speed bumps, especially at Lakewood at Northwood.

Officer Walker presented his report. He appreciates phone calls and emails to notify him of criminal activity/safety issues. Someone has been popping tires with an ice pick; he hasn't been caught yet and is suspected to live on River Drive. A car break-in occurred at 3113 Clark Street. The car was unlocked and a GPS was stolen. A car window was broken at 41 River Drive, and a purse on the front seat was stolen. The back window of a car was broken at 2930 Park St., and a laptop was stolen.

Air conditioning units are being hit to steal copper. New units have a fusebox next to it, and the thief can get electrified. Masterlock the keylock stick that is on these so thieves have trouble disconnecting from the power. Copper thefts are a city-wide problem, especially at abandoned houses.

Earlewood residents can make sure criminals receive stiffer fines and are not out on a PR bond by showing up at the bond hearing. The solicitor is letting victims know when the case comes up. Criminals will be less likely to target Earlewood if the neighborhood has a reputation for dogging bond hearings and pushing for maximum penalties.

The 6:30 Regular ECCO Meeting began with Susan Lourie presiding in the absence of President Fred Monk.

The minutes of the February meeting have been delayed until March.

Greg Hilton, chair of the Quality of Life Committee, said the committee is focusing on Earlewood Park and how to connect people with the park as a way to promote our neighborhood and the North Main Area (NOMA). Landon is suggesting an Easter Egg Hunt at the Park, 2-4 p.m. Saturday, April 23. He needs some volunteers.

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Virginia Bedford said the Earlewood Park building has been demolished. The City Parks and Recreation Administrative offices will be housed in the new building. A new playground will be built below the ball fields and will include a canopy, bocce ball court, horseshoes, swings and metal exercise equipment. One area will be designed for children up to 5 years and another for older children. Virginia said the park will be an even better attraction.

The Dog Park already has 180 members.

Virginia also reported on Zoning. A house on the 3100-block of River Drive, second house from the corner, was a duplex. The owner was trying to turn it back into a duplex. Earlewood stopped this change, holding to single family zoning.

NOMA Community Gardens near River Drive and North Main Street include 40 beds, 5x20 feet each. Water is provided. Rental is \$20 each per year, including water. City is providing dirt, but renters have to fill their own bed. All beds have been rented through the City Parks and Recreation Department. Virginia said this is another asset to our community in addition to the Dog Park and Nature Trail.

The featured speaker was Coroner Gary Watts, who has overseen 35,000 death investigations. Richland County has case loads are 8-10 cases per day, which is why the county has the largest coroner's office in the state, including eight full-time staff. Three are on call 24 hours, two are investigators and one is a supervisor. The coroner's office budget is \$1.4 million, including toxicology, autopsies and burials. The office includes three facilities: the administration office on Pineview, the morgue at Palmetto Health Richland, and long-term storage freezer at the Richland County Courthouse.

The coroner is charged by statute to determine the cause and matter of death. A forensic pathologist determines the cause of death. The matter of death can be suicide, homicide, accidental or undetermined. Cases can have the same cause of death, but several manners of death. The Coroner's Office treats a case as a homicide until proven otherwise. Investigators are trained to look at the scene and to "expect the unexpected."

There has been an increase in the number of accidental and overdose deaths. This can happen when someone experiences an adverse drug reaction because he didn't tell the doctor all the

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medications he was taking. Adverse reactions can happen with over-the-counter cold medications and alcohol.

We handle anything unattended outside a medical facility. If someone dies within 24 hours of an invasive medical procedure, it becomes a coroner's case. The same is true if someone dies in a hospital of any suspicious activity. Autopsies are performed on 35% of the cases. Medical research is based on death certificates.

The coroner's office is responsible to bury those who can't care for themselves. Funeral services are conducted one time per quarter. Unfortunately, some families won't pay for the funeral but want the death certificate to file and collect on insurance. Mr. Watts would like Richland County to have an ordinance to charge families for the funeral service instead of taxpayers.

The Richland County Coroner's Office has a "Care Team" of 60 volunteers who notify the family of a dead person.

Respectfully submitted by Cynthia South.