

Minutes (To be approved at March Meeting)  
Meeting of the Shandon Neighborhood Council  
January 25, 2011 at 6:15 p.m. (Sims Park)

I. Welcome and Introduction of Council Members

Those in attendance: Edward Bender, Tushar Chikhliker, Caroline Clarkson, Tina Cundari, Jane Key, Tracy McKelvey, Carla Moore, John Myrick, Ed Pope, and Julie Ruff

Those absent: Jessie Burke, Mary Greene, Jennifer O'Neil, Emerson Smith, and Terry Sharpe.

II. Recognition of Guest Speakers

Chief Scott

Chief Scott knows there has been much concern about burglaries since mid-December. There were 17 burglaries the second week of December in downtown area. In the police department, there are daily discussions about current trends. The police are increasing patrols in Shandon. Several people who have been committing break-ins have been identified. He said that Officer Santiago will assist in setting up a neighborhood crime watch. The police feel neighbors are the best at watching the homes in the area and need the help of citizens. The police are trying to improve response to victims. Once burglars are identified and arrested, the prosecution is important. Shandon neighbor Dolly Garfield, who works in the Solicitors Office, was in attendance.

City Councilwoman Belinda Gergel

Dr. Gergel met with Chief Scott two weeks ago. She asked Chief Scott if information they discussed 2 weeks ago could be shared.

Chief Scott

There have been a large number of burglaries not only in downtown neighborhoods, but also in Blythewood and Pontiac. Chief Scott has been working with Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott on the problem. They believe it is a ring of about 20 young people. The group does not seem to be an organized criminal gang. They do think three of the group have been identified. A tip came from a citizen calling identifying a van that did not fit in the area. Chief Scott emphasized the need to have more lighting in the yards.

A woman said that recently she noticed a person in a grey hooded sweatshirt. She said she contacted a police officer who took notes. She wanted to know what happened with the notes. Officer Scott said that all notes are shared among officers.

Officer Santiago

Officer Santiago said if neighbors think anything is suspicious, contact the police. He said don't be hesitant and encouraged everyone to call. He said there are plenty of dispatchers to handle a lot of phone calls. They receive over 400,000 a year. Officer

Santiago said he would take the name of a woman who said she was treated rudely by a 911 operator.

Officer Santiago said the burglaries are typically occurring on weekdays. The burglars are knocking on front doors, and if no one answers, they are going around to the back or side doors and breaking in. In December, power meters were being pulled off homes. As a result, the police asked SCANA to have more trucks in the area so that if power was cut to a home, it could be turned back on quickly. He said the burglars are primarily looking for flat screen TVs. The 3000 block of Heyward was hit hard at the beginning.

A neighbor said all his TVs, computers ,and jewelry stolen were from his home 11:09 am.

A woman asked about communication. She would like a total picture of what the crime stats are and would like more transmission of data to the public.

Chief Scott said that communication is an area the department is working on. Scott wants to send out information to citizens, not to alarm, but to inform. They are working on a computer system for data collection and distribution.

A neighbor acknowledged the quick response time of officers at his house last week.

Chief Scott said that every officer on the force is aware of what is going on in Shandon and is working to help.

It was asked if security alarms seemed to be a deterrent. In the beginning, there did not seem to be a difference in the number of homes burglarized.

It was asked if people were home during the break-ins. To date, there has been a break-in in a home that was occupied. A gentleman was alone in his home on the 100 block of Waccamaw when his home was invaded.

Officer Baire

Officer Baire was the first on scene after the Waccamaw break-in. The only lights on in the house were in the room in the back where the resident was reading. It is believed the burglars thought the home was unoccupied. Officer Baire suggested that when you leave your home, make it seem occupied.

A single stay at home mother who said that her home was broken into 2 weeks ago complimented the police. She said that since the break in the police have come to her house and pointed out ways to make her house safer. She encouraged people to spread the word of the service.

Officer Mahon said this service is available to anyone.

Officer Scott confirmed that dogs are a deterrent. He also said that the burglars do seem to have a watcher. Often the burglars are approaching home owners asking if yard work is needed. Some of the items have been found. The police go to the pawn shops. Burglars are now using the barter system.

Officer Santiago encouraged the neighborhood to start a Crime Watch. He asked for concerned citizens willing to meet once a month for about an hour. It was mentioned that some information is available on the Columbia Police website with the address [www.Columpiapd.net](http://www.Columpiapd.net).

Another site, [www.Nixle.com](http://www.Nixle.com), was also discussed.

Belinda Gergel asked everyone to give e-mail addresses to council. She encouraged people to talk with everyone on their block and invite people over and to share the news. When you are out of town – you can be on a 545-3500 special property alert. The police will provide special patrol while residents are out of town. When you return to town, you can check with the police to get a summary of the home visits made to your home.

#### Solicitor Dan Johnson

Dan Johnson gave his phone number – 576-1800

Solicitor Johnson talked about what will happen when the burglars are caught. Dolly Justice Garfield will be in charge of this area. She will be the head of a team with 4 attorneys working under her. The Solicitor's office is considering using Nixle to let people know what happens on the back end of cases.

Mr. Johnson said don't go in a house if you think an intruder is inside, or if you think something is amiss. Don't alter things and compromise the scene if possible.

According to Solicitor Johnson, new attorneys in the Solicitor's Office will be spending time in the neighborhood. They will be working in and riding with law enforcement for their first 30 days so they know the area. Then for 45 days they will go to Lexington to defend. This will give them strategies. This will allow them to know the police officers in the area. It should help in knowing what evidence to collect.

Chief Scott thanked the Solicitor's Office for being here and working with law enforcement officers.

A gentleman asked if there is anything can be done to help the backlog of cases go down. He said while he was in the Army and they could help push things through. Mr. Johnson said there are roughly 11,000 cases right now being handled by 27 lawyers. There are one or two judges hearing these cases. In the Army – they don't have the volume that Columbia has. The County and the City fund the different positions.

Carlton Bagby a City Court Judge spoke about bond hearings. He said if you have been victimized, go to the bond hearing and speak your peace so the judge will hear you. Burglary victims are contacted with booking information.

An officer reminded people to take things out of their vehicles.

The police are trying to improve customer service – if you have bad service, let the police know.

Officer Baire – phone number 509-0454 e-mail [trbaire@columbiasc.net](mailto:trbaire@columbiasc.net) – he works in South Region and has for four years.

Sergeant Morgan in this area. [ejmorgan@columbiasc.net](mailto:ejmorgan@columbiasc.net). 920-8061.

A neighbor on the 2700 block of Burney said that a stay at home mother on their block collected everyone's home and cell phone numbers. During the day if she notices anything out of the ordinary, she contacts the homeowners.

#### Tina Cundari

Tina said that Shandon formed a safety committee last year but it has not been as active as it should. She appointed Edward Bender to chair the committee. Ed Pope and Tracy McKelvey also serve on the committee. Tina Cundari invited neighbors to join the committee too. She said that the neighborhood council is working on compiling a mass email list to communicate with neighbors. She also said that the Shandon Neighborhood website needs to be redesigned. She encouraged people to know their neighbors and to call them if anything is amiss.

### III. Reports

A. Safety – City of Columbia Police Officers + SNC safety committee  
See Above

B. Minutes – Caroline Clarkson

Jane made a motion to accept the minutes; Tushar seconded; the minutes were approved unanimously.

C. Treasurer's Report – Jane Key  
Cash on hand is \$8,982.06

D. Newsletter – Julie Ruff

If you are not getting it, let Julie know. Send articles to Julie if you would like to submit.

E. Website/Communication – Tina Cundari

Carla Moore encouraged people to use the Shandon Facebook page to share information quickly. The Shandon Neighborhood website takes days to update. Terry Sharpe sent word the fee is \$600 a year. Futuretech is working out a proposal for a more interactive site.

F. Turkey Trot – Tushar Chikhliker and Edward Bender

Participation in the race increased about 30% this year. Expenses and profits went up as well. He thanked Council members for assisting with the race.

G. Homes for the Holidays Tour – Caroline Clarkson

A wrap-up meeting will be held next week. The tour was successful.

IV. Old Business

V. New Business

A. Meeting dates in 2011 – Tina Cundari

Last year SNC changed its meetings to Tuesday nights. This year, City and County Council meetings will be held on Tuesdays. Because of this, the Neighborhood Council will change our meetings to the second Mondays of the month. Edward proposed the meeting day change; Jane seconded; Council approved the change unanimously.

B. Seats available on council/term limits – Tina Cundari

Recommendations for open spots on Council are encouraged. Charles Appleby and Derrick Gruner are currently candidates. It is possible a by-law will be added concerning meeting attendance requirements for Council members.

C. Revision of bylaws – Tina Cundari

This year the By-laws will be reviewed and revised.

D. Easter Egg Hunt -- Shannon Bobertz, [Sbobertz@turnerpadget.com](mailto:Sbobertz@turnerpadget.com)

Last year, on the Saturday before Easter, 200 eggs, and one golden egg were hidden. Shannon's husband dressed in an Easter Bunny costume. Last year they received \$243. Shannon would like more money to buy more eggs. She would like \$450 or \$500. Last year they charged \$3.00 per child and the funds went to the Park Playground equipment. Edward moved that we give \$500. Julie seconded. Whatever money is collected at the hunt will be returned to the council. Tina will reserve the park. Carla will put the event on Facebook.

E. Boy Scouts Project in Sims Park -- Connor Paschal

Connor Paschal is the Senior Patrol leader in Troup 8. He is proposing to do his an Eagle Scout Project at Sims Park. He will move the picnic tables from the corner. The tables would be moved, re-boarded and repainted. They will be moved to an area more out in the open. He will move some trashcans as well. He will get permission from the parks and recreation department before doing any work. He is asking for our support not approval. He asked for our opinion. His project has not been approved yet by the Boy Scouts. He is not asking council for money. It was suggested that before and after pictures should be taken. SNC unanimously supported the project.

VI. Open Discussion and Announcements

A. Richland County Grant – Tina Cundari (training session: 1/27 at 6:00)

Thursday night training meeting. Contact Tina if you can go. Jane will write the grant, but can't go to the meeting.

B. St. Patrick's Day celebration in Five Points – Tina Cundari  
St. Patrick's Day event in Five Points. If you see any troubles with barricades contact 429-9147.

C. Light bulb recycling program - Carla Moore  
Richland County has a lightbulb exchange. You can get up to 4 bulbs – have up to a year to do this – possibly at Neighborhood Night Out. Bring new burned out bulbs to Lowe's or Home Depot

D. Tree Project – Tina Cundari  
John Cooper, a neighbor, is planning on mapping interesting trees in Shandon.

E. Baskin Robbins – Spears Westbrook  
Mr. Westbrook owns and operates the Baskin Robbins on Forrest Drive. This year there will be a \$.31 scoop night on Wednesday, April 27, from 4-10. He invited the SNC to have a presence at the event.

Gerry Lynn Hall – from the City 545-3381  
There is a new Bark Park in Earlwood. Sheriff Lott has a group of Young Explorers open to males and females age 14 – 20. Richland County Neighborhood Matching Grant – must have someone go to grants workshop this week to apply.

#### Announcements

Columbia Council of Neighborhoods Meeting, this Thursday at 5:30.

A gentleman thanked the council for helping the neighbors.

It was brought up the possible expansion of downtown airport. A gentleman expressed his concern with the expansion.

VII. Adjourn 8:18.

#### **Future meetings:**

Annual meeting, Monday, March 14, at 6:15 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall at Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church  
May 9 (Emily Douglas Park)  
July 11 (Sims Park)  
September 12 (Emily Douglas Park)  
November 14 (Sims Park)