

Date: September 13, 2024

To: **Standing Committee on Public Safety**

Name and title: Eric Depenau, Director of Administrative Services.

Subject: Community Policing/ Block Watch Supplemental Report

Attachment(s): None

That the Standing Committee on Public Safety RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report titled “Community Policing / Block Watch Supplemental Report”, from the Director of Administrative Services, dated September 13, 2024.

Purpose:

The Committee, through its work plan, has directed Administration to provide a report detailing background information, options for grants and training opportunities for Neighbourhood Watches. This report offers initial background on these topics and is a vehicle for further conversation.

Background:

As a proactive approach to reduce crime throughout city neighbourhoods, Seattle community policing efforts developed a model using education in conjunction with community support. This led to the development of the ‘block watch’ concept. In British Columbia, the Block Watch Society of BC officially governs neighbourhood watch activities under the Block Watch program.

The Block Watch program seeks to provide communication, advocacy, resilience and education by streamlining communication between neighbours, providing a platform for neighbourhood advocacy; and, by providing resources and awareness which leverage resilience throughout communities.

In Prince George, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) began to partner with the Block Watch Society of BC in the late 1980’s/ early 90’s. Over the duration, Prince George has hosted up to 88 local crime watch areas (eg. Douglas Street, Chief Lake Area, Upper Mud River etc.). Currently, Prince George has 44 active block watch neighbourhoods, that are divided into two veins: rural and urban regions; with 19 crime watch areas within the Prince George’s rural areas and 25 within the City’s urban areas.

Table 1.1 Active Prince George Block Watch Areas:

Rural Block Watch Neighbourhoods	Urban Block Watch Neighbourhoods
Ferguson Lake	Carney Street 02
Chief Lake Area	Carr Road
Lower Mud River	Cranbook Hill Road
Johnson Road	Campbell Avenue
Upper Mud River	Edelweiss Avenue
McBride Timber Road S.	Fir Street/ Ash Street
McBride Timber Road N.	Foot Street
Sweden Creek Road	Freeman 122/ Harper Street
Pilot Mountain	Gillett Street
Salmon Valley	Imperial Place
Bear Lake	King Drive
Beaverly	Lilac Crescent
Beaverly West Watch	Laurier Cres.
Red Rock	Millar Addition
Shell Glen	McGregor Avenue
West Lake – Nadsilnich LK Rd.	Newlands
Black Water	Richet Street
Old Summit Lake Road	South Kelly Gardens
Sintich Trailer Park	St. John Crescent
	St. Lawrence Crescent
	Tamarack Street
	Toombs Drive
	Ogilvie Street South
	Tulip Road
	Valley View
19	25

In addition, Prince George Community Policing has been contacted from the Pine Street, Lombardy and Shell Glenn neighbourhoods to either start or enhance their existing neighbourhood watch.

Training and Resources

To assist in establishing neighbourhood watch groups the Block Watch Society of BC provides training for captains and co-captains on: how to maintain a Block Watch map, privacy considerations, guidance in planning Block Parties, and methods on reporting incidents of crime. Block Watch also provides general security and theft prevention tips for homes and vehicles. Such as:

- **Lighting** – Visibility is seen as a deterrent for criminal activity, installing a LED or motion sensor light in dark corners can assist as a deterrent. We also encourage smart lights that turn on with a timer.
- **Visibility** – Good surveillance includes having clear sight lines from inside you house to the curb or edge of your property.
- **Locks** – Keeping doors and windows locked is a good practice with deadbolts locks recommended.

The Nextdoor Application (App) was also used previously by crime watch groups as a platform for communication amongst neighbours. More recently Facebook groups seems to be the most favourable communication platform among the crime watch groups.

Further, in the past Prince George has endeavoured to host three regional meetings as a resources to crimewatch groups and fellow neighbourhood residents. Each Crime Watch group was invited as well as an RCMP/ community policing representative, a conservation officer, a fire department representative and a Regional District/ City of Prince George parks representative. The meetings were designed to disseminate information and awareness over a few hours, and to address any questions or concerns of neighbourhood residents.

Grants and Funding

While there are several community safety grants available for municipalities wishing to further their prevention, the Block Watch Society of BC only provides a Safe Communities Celebration Grant, this is to aid an annual meeting or barbeque. It is in the amount of \$300.00 for eligible crime watch groups.

Block Watch Reporting

As a requirement of the Block Watch program, the Prince George Community Policing unit is required to report 'break and enter' statistics on a bimonthly or monthly bases. Below is the reported data for the year of 2023 and the year-to-date for 2024. (*Please note these statistics do not reflect unfounded reports or any other criminal activity other than break and entry.)

Table 2.1 Break and Entry Logs Over 2023

January 2023	38	July 2023	44
February 2023	33	August 2023	46
March 2023	21	September 2023	45
April 2023	64	October 2023	72
May 2023	43	November 2023	53
June 2023	63	December 2023	43
		Total	565

Table 2.2 Break and Entry Logs Over 2024

January 2024	35	July 2024	31
February 2024	39	August 2024	47
March 2024	41	September	-
April 2024	50	October	-
May 2024	60	November	-
June 2024	70	December	-
		Total	373

Summary and conclusion:

This report is presented to detail background information as well as options for grants and training opportunities for Neighbourhood Watches. This report offers initial background on these topics and is a vehicle for further conversation. Should additional questions arise a motion for further targeted research or follow up would be recommended.

Respectfully submitted:

Eric Depenau, Director Administrative Services

Prepared By: Krystal Devauld. Assistant Manager of Police Support services/ Administration

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: 2024/09/24

Document Number: 732744