



April 29, 2024

TO: Garden District Members

FROM: Marie Gross Fitzgerald, Co-Chair
Melissa Engdahl, Co-Chair

RE: Neighborhood Watch Group

On April 7, 2024, we launched our Neighborhood Watch group with a presentation from Sargent Polite and Sargent Carter of the Charleston Police Department.

Lessons Learned

- Most crimes are “crimes of opportunity,” which we can avoid by securing our homes and vehicles and limiting temptations for thieves. Lock all doors, remove items of value from view within the car and remove packages from your front step or ask that they be delivered behind the privacy door/gate.
- Excellent communication and awareness among neighbors will significantly improve the safety of our neighborhood. When departing town for extended periods of time, let your neighbors know who, if anyone, will be visiting your home and share the make and model of their vehicle. If any unidentified person appears, your neighbors should alert the police. This method is the best defense against “squatters.”
- If you see something suspicious, call the Non-Emergency Dispatch: (843) 743-7200. Be prepared to share, in detail, why the activity is suspicious, a description of the individuals involved – particularly, the color and make of their shoes. (Thieves may change their clothing but they typically do not have a change of shoes.)
- Ring cameras and other safety systems are of great assistance to the police when investigating crimes. Neighbors may register their video cameras with the police department which enables the police to improve their investigations of crimes. If you would like to register your camera, please go to this website: [Security Camera Registration \(charleston-sc.gov\)](https://charleston-sc.gov/security-camera-registration). Additionally, the Ring system has a feature which allows fellow Ring customers to receive an alert to suspicious activity recorded or occurring at a nearby Ring camera. The user must opt in for this function.
- You can improve your awareness of crime in our neighborhood by enrolling in Spot Crime. <https://spotcrime.com/alerts/new>. This website allows you to customize your reports to your home location, the distance around your home and the frequency of reports. It is a valuable information tool.

- Homeless people may not trespass on private property. However, if a property lacks a “No Trespassing” sign, the police department will initially give the person a warning. Should there be a repeat of trespassing, the police will arrest the person. Postage signs are available on Etsy and at some hardware stores: [Private Property Sign No Trespassing Wall Plaque - Etsy](#). The city permits homeless people in the city parks; however, they must refrain from illegal behavior. To report inappropriate behavior, please call the Non-Emergency Dispatch (843) 743-7200.

Next Steps

- We developed a Neighborhood Watch communication tree. Each block will have one/two Block Captain(s). If you see -
 - Suspicious behavior – contact the Non-Emergency Dispatch (843) 743-7200.
 - Criminal behavior - call 911.
 - Then contact your Block Captain. Your Block Captain will send an email/text to your neighbors alerting them to the activity. **If you would like to receive alerts from your Block Captain, please share your email address and phone number at the May 20, 2024, 6:00PM Neighborhood Association meeting/ “Kick-off” of The Garden District’s Neighborhood Watch program.**
- At the May 20th Association meeting, the Neighborhood Watch program will “Kick-off” and will be officially appointed as a Neighborhood Watch Group by the Charleston Police Department. The Police will then provide our group with Neighborhood Watch signs which will be installed by the city.

Mark Your Calendar

- Thursday, May 30, 2024, from 5:00PM to 8:00PM the Charleston Police Department will be holding an Open House for the community. The family event will feature department tours, vehicle displays, interactive activities, bicycle giveaway, face painting, corn hole, a live DJ, and the opportunity to interact with police officers. There will also be free hot dogs, chips, and drinks.
- Reserve Tickets Here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/863959444957?aff=oddtcreator>

Thank you for your interest and participation.