

Supervisor Principi's Marumsco Community Town Hall Meeting

Wednesday, April 28, 2010

Police

Question	Answer	Follow-up
<p>How does the Police Department prioritize calls? When should a resident call the Non-Emergency number (703-792-4646) and when should one call 911?</p>	<p>Police calls are screened and categorized as emergency, high priority, and two levels of routine. Emergency calls are dispatched immediately. This includes any fire, need for an ambulance, or other life-threatening situation, or serious crimes that are in-progress. Priority calls include alarms, domestic disturbances, traffic crashes with injuries or the road is blocked, traffic obstructions on major routes, and serious crimes that have just occurred. Any of these should be made using 9-1-1.</p> <p>We ask that non-emergency calls be made to (703) 792-6500. Calls such as parking violations, past occurrence thefts, burglaries where the suspects are no longer there, would generally be classified as routine. If an area officer is free, a routine call will get dispatched immediately. If he is on an emergency or high priority call, it will take longer.</p>	<p>During peak periods, when calls exceed the number of available officers, Communications staff and the Patrol Supervisors constantly review the pending calls and shift resources as needed. Calling 9-1-1 for non-emergencies does not speed up response time and could delay a 9-1-1 call involving a life-threatening emergency.</p>
<p>How long are vehicles allowed to stay in PWC without a state license plate on the vehicle?</p>	<p>The vehicle owner has 30 days to register their vehicle in Virginia.</p>	<p>A specific complaint was made at the Town Hall Meeting and a Police Officer made contact with the resident and followed-up on the situation.</p>
<p>What can be done about dogs off leash that roam the neighborhood? Are there different rules for Pit Bulls?</p>	<p>Call the police non-emergency number (703.792.6500) and an Animal Control Officer will be dispatched. It helps if you can provide the address where the dog belongs. There are no specific laws in Prince William County addressing Pit Bulls.</p>	<p>None required unless a specific instance (address) is provided.</p>

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Why not use undercover cars instead of squad cars to find out what is really happening in a neighborhood?	The police use a variety of unmarked cars for traffic enforcement and routine patrol. This includes motorcycles, half-marked cruisers (no overhead lights), plain sedans, and a few sports cars. There are even a few pick-up trucks and SUVs seized from drug dealers that help with traffic work.	
What can be done about speeding on Florida Avenue and Kentucky Avenue?	Supervisor Principi has initiated a speed assessment request with the Prince William Department of Transportation. The objective is to assess the feasibility of whether and to what extent additional signage, speed calming devices, increased enforcement, and increased fines and penalties will address the on-going problems.	Since the Town Hall Meeting, the Police Department has been onsite for seven hours at these locations and issued 14 summonses. The Police Department will continue periodic checks on Florida, Kentucky, Alaska and Alabama streets in this area.
There is poor visibility on Franklin (hill). Someone has to physically go to the top of the hill and direct individuals out of their driveways.	Captain Smith was unable to identify area	Please call Captain Smith (703)792.6764 with specific details.
The intersection of Melborne Avenue and Longview Drive has a stop sign that many drivers disregard. What can be done to improve compliance with the stop sign?	The Police Department has assigned officers to ensure additional enforcement.	Police Officers spent 5 hours at this intersection at different times of the day and issued no violations. They will continue to monitor on a routine basis.

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<p>What is being done about the loitering at the 7-11 (Route 1 and Longview)? Residents had concerns about the safety of children, trash, and varmints at this location.</p>	<p>The loitering ordinance is difficult to enforce. However, Police have been focusing on other violations such as disorderly conduct, trespassing, and public intoxication. The Church next door now prohibits trespassing on their property and No Trespassing signs have been posted.</p>	<p>Since March 2010, the Police Department has made 14 arrests for various charges. Police will continue to patrol the area and make arrest as needed. The State Health Department was dispatched to the location and was unable to find specific code violations. The State Health Department will revisit this location periodically.</p>
<p>Why don't we enforce the county ordinances?</p>	<p>The Police Department routinely enforces County ordinances. The Police however must balance priority issues and reasonable discretion. If there are specific issues you feel are not being addressed by the Police Department, please contact Captain Smith at (703) 792-6764</p>	<p>Residents should call the Captain Smith with specific complaints.</p>
<p>Is there a leash law for cats or are they allowed to roam free in the neighborhood?</p>	<p>There is no ordinance in the County governing cats being leashed or allowed to roam. Owners of specific pets, including cats, may be cited for allowing their pets to trespasses on your property. More information is available in the County Code (Section 4-4).</p>	<p>Residents should call the the non-emergency number (703)792-6500 with specific details.</p>

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What can you do about dogs barking all night?	Residents may call the Police Non-Emergency telephone number to dispatch an Animal Control Officer. Chapter 4 of the County Code governs animals http://www.pwcgov.org/default.aspx?topic=040056000700003853 . Animal are not allowed to bark incessantly. After 10:00 p.m. the barking falls under the noise ordinance and a Police Officer will be dispatched.	Call non-emergency number (703) 792-6500 with specific details.
There are cars parking on the corner of the street and they are obstructing my view of oncoming traffic. Can anything be done to resolve this issue?	Contact Virginia Department of Transportation at 703-383-8368 or traffic engineer Steve Stevens, Prince William Department of Transportation at (703) 792-6817.	
How do I get speed humps, additional speeding fines, and multi-way stop signs on my street to stop excessive speeding?	Contact Supervisor Principi or traffic engineer Steve Stevens, Prince William Department of Transportation at 703-792-6817. Traffic calming devices require VDOT approval in addition to a petition of the majority of residents living on the street.	

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Fire and Rescue

Question	Answer	Follow-up
Why don't Emergency Vehicles turn off their sirens and lights after 10:00 p.m.	The Code of Virginia (46.2-920) provides the guidance for emergency responders in these circumstances. Fire and Rescue spoke to the officers in that area identifying the citizen's questions and comments regarding the use of audible warning devices. Additionally, during the informal comment time provided after the formal meeting, several of the citizens voiced the opposing stance and indicated that emergency vehicles should be using the devices. An excerpt in the Code of Virginia (46.2-290) states: ...The exemptions granted to emergency vehicles...shall apply only when the operator...displays a flashing, blinking, or alternating emergency light...and sounds a siren, exhaust whistle, or air horn designed to give automatically intermittent signals, as may be reasonably necessary.	None Required

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Neighborhood Services

Question	Answer	Follow-up
<p>Why isn't the County's Neighborhood Services Division proactive rather than reactive in enforcing County Codes?</p>	<p>Due to year after year budget cuts, the Division is without the necessary resources (funding and staff) to be proactive and must react to the complaints of County residents. A small degree of proactive efforts is used when possible, e.g., sweeps, resident training.</p>	<p>Residents may file a complaint with the Neighborhood Services Division by calling (703) 792-7018. Residents may also email complaints to NSD@pwcgov.org. Residents may also complete an online form at: www.pwcgov.org/PCEComplaint.</p>
<p>What can the County do to remove (and prevent) signs from being nailed to utility poles in the neighborhoods?</p>	<p>Residents may file a complaint with the utility pole owner, Dominion Power, at 1-800-DOM-HELP. Dominion crews will respond faster if the resident provides the pole number.</p>	<p>It seems illegal advertisements on utility poles are increasingly more frequent as advertisers are fined \$100 per popsicle sign when signs are placed in highway medians. Supervisor Principi will request legislation be passed in Richmond if there are no existing penalties to advertise on utility poles.</p>
<p>Popsicle signs in this community are unsightly! What can the County do to prevent them from being used to advertise? The worst offender in the Marumsco Area is a company called "We Buy and Sell Houses."</p>	<p>Illegal signs in the ground along our roads are like other community maintenance problems. Residents may contact the Neighborhood Services Division at (703) 792-7018. The County conducts sweeps across the area once a week and the Litter Crew picks up signs on their regular litter collection routes. Inspectors document illegal signs and the owner of the sign is subject to a \$100 per sign fine.</p>	<p>Approximately 6,000 signs were removed by the County in the Woodbridge District in 2009. Roads that are regularly inspected and cleaned include: Route 1, Dale, Rippon, Blackburn, Featherstone, Opitz, Occoquan, Neabsco Mills, Annapolis, Gordon, Dawson Beach, Horner, Longview, Telegraph, and Farm Creek.</p>

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What counts as a family? Father – Mother – Child	Anyone related by blood, marriage or adoption is considered "family."	There are other conditions that are considered "over occupancy." Please see the next question.
What can be done about several families living in one house?	Citizens can report suspicions of separate families living in one house or over crowding to Neighborhood Services at 703-792-7018. Our investigation includes asking about the relationships of the people living in the house but also about the number of people over 18 years of age. There are limits on the number of adults, based on "total finished square footage" as known by the Real Estate Assessment Office: up to 1,000 sq.ft - 3 adults; 1001 to 1500 sq.ft. - 4 adults; 1501 to 2000 sq.ft. - 5 adults; 2001 - 2500 sq.ft. - 6 adults; 2501 - 3000 sq.ft. - 7 adults; 3001 - 3500 sq.ft - 8 adults; 3501 - 4000 sq.ft. - 9 adults and over 4000 sq.ft.- 10 adults.	Over 20 cases were reported to Neighborhood Services after the town hall meeting. When you report a suspected over occupancy situation, you receive information about the case from the inspector assigned to investigate it. A lot of research goes into these cases and any information you can provide helps. These cases take longer to investigate but the inspector will tell you what the findings are.
What more can the County do to increase litter pick-up on Blackburn Road?	Litter is a neighborhood problem and is best solved by community action. Supervisor Principi has several scheduled clean-ups during the course of the year and encourages all residents to volunteer. Additionally, the Prince William Clean Community Council, a non-profit, also schedules clean-up events and recruits residents to volunteer. The County Litter Crew, paid staff, also picks up litter and illegal signs around the County.	The County Litter Crew picked up 26 tons of trash in the Woodbridge District in 2009. Volunteer residents picked-up 4-5 tons in 2009. Groups of neighbors can "Adopt-A-Spot" by contacting the Clean Community Council at (571) 285-3272.

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Verizon has installed utility boxes and lines that are low on the utility poles and invite graffiti. Can the County request that these boxes be installed higher up on the utility pole to avoid them from being defaced by graffiti?	Supervisor Principi will request Verizon to install their boxes higher up on the utility poles to prevent graffiti. When residents see this situation, they are encouraged to report this to Mike Gillette, County Cable Coordinator at (703) 792-7448.	Our Neighborhood Services Division would also like to be contacted at (703) 792-7018.
Why are some residents/property owners allowed to do things to their property and others are not? This appears to be inconsistent enforcement of existing Zoning laws.	If a resident suspects a zoning violation, they should report it to the Neighborhood Services Division at (703) 792-7018. Zoning laws change over time and some property owners may be grandfathered (allowed to co-exist with new requirements next door).	
Who owns the property between Vaugh Elementary School and Lancaster Apartments? The property is not being maintained. Some believe that the County owns this land.	Supervisor Principi has researched the land parcel and determined that a portion of the land is owned by the Park Authority and another by Prince William Public Schools. The Park Authority owns the land on both sides of Pop Moudry Lane (up to Longwood Manor Court). The school system owns from that point up to where the road bends to go to the parking area by the tennis courts.	Residents are encouraged to report tall grass to the Neighborhood Services Division at (703) 792-7018.

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Does the County offer its residents any translation services to better communicate with non-English speaking residents?	No, however, if this situation exists, please request the Police Department and Neighborhood Services Division to dispatch staff that speak the native language of the property owner.	Many communities work with Neighborhood Services on sweeps. Volunteers in the communities deliver letters about the sweep and brochures that explain the most common violations, and inspectors follow up with violation notices on the properties that don't clean up. Contact Supervisor Principi if you would like to volunteer to do this in your neighborhood. Together we can improve your community.
Neighborhood sweeps are an effective means to informing property owners of non-compliance related matters. Why can't the County do more of these (day and night)?	The Neighborhood Services Division processes 8,000 complaints annually. Neighborhood Sweeps are done where compliance problems are severe and resources available. Investigations take place seven days a week and morning, noon, and night. Please include this type of information when reporting complaints.	