

Public Safety & Health Committee End of the Year Report for 2020.

Health: As the early stages of the pandemic hit hard & with little known about it, the goal was to keep the HHIA Board, members, & community informed about the data, rising infection rates/location, recommendations & resources of all kinds available from the local, state & federal agencies.

Links to a variety of official agencies were made available on the HHIA website for official recommendations and easy access. The decision was made not to include links to the many changing resources on the HHIA website, but those resource & benefit links were made available to the community through partnership with the HHIA Community Relations chair who posted the resources on a variety of social media sites and were shared with various other organizations in the community area to share with their members. We heard from so many who appreciated the help and regularly asked for more assistance. When the community sought specific resources, the resources were identified made available to the requester. Both individual, family and business needs/resources were made available.

Public Safety: Property crimes went down due to Covid since many people were working from home. As people went back to work, numbers began to rise.

Fireworks and fires were the most critical issues this past year. There were many fires in the hill areas this years & many were caused by fireworks. HHIA Public Safety & Community Relations Chairs partnered with the LASD, Fire Department and residents working together tackled those issues by identifying & tracking the areas of greatest violation of the fireworks laws. Using social media sources & email, neighborhood watch groups & residents reported their locations and/or suspected fireworks violators. Violators/locations were reported to LASD, who visited the locations & explained the law which usually resulted in compliance. The Fire Department, CHP, Park Rangers joined with LASD to position their vehicles to block trailheads into the hills on the 3rd & 4th to try & prevent fires. As complaints came in through social media & email, locations were relayed to LASD who used every available vehicle including sergeants & Lieutenants responding to those complaints. As appropriate, citations were issued.

Neighborhood watch group establishment is a priority to empower local neighborhoods to develop relationships with their neighbors & LASD both to prevent & report crime or suspicious activities. Hill/housing interface areas & those locations most active for fireworks violations were made a priority for establishing their neighborhood watch groups. The pandemic initially stopped the in-person meetings that is most helpful for establishing a NWG, but now some have chosen to proceed without a face-to-face meeting and others have chosen to wait to meet in-person. HHIA Public Safety & Social Media Chairs & LASD are accommodating to what the particular neighborhood wants.

Especially in hill/housing interface areas NWG establishment also includes information on wildfire protection & evacuation preparation. Our work with one group was delayed early in the pandemic, but attempts were made to meet their needs via email & text. Needs were identified, priorities developed, neighbors consulted and reporting mechanisms established. All done by email before any group meeting. The result is the NWG was established, they are reporting & interacting with each other and various county departments. The County has agreed to add red curb/signage to ban parking in one area, approved to proceed to design & implement an effective fence/locked gate system into the trailhead area. LASD has added patrols to the area that includes checking parked cars with people inside, citing illegally parked cars. These efforts even resulted in the arrest of two homeless individuals camped in a parked vehicle that was stolen & they were under the influence of and they possessed meth. The vehicle was returned to the owner.

Approximately 25 NWGs are in various stages of implementation.

Andrea Gordon, Chair
Public Safety & Health Committee
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