

**MINUTES  
OCTOBER 4, 2018  
PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE  
SPECIAL MEETING**

Chair John Hirokawa called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. in the Joan Pisani Community Center.

**ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Chair John Hirokawa, Vice Chair Chuck Page, Members Ray Cosyn, Rebecca Jepsen, Arun Venkatachar  
ABSENT: None  
ALSO PRESENT: Crystal Bothelio, Deputy City Manager  
Lieutenant Mark Roggia, Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office  
Lakhinder Walia

**REPORT ON POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

Deputy City Manager Crystal Bothelio reported that the agenda for this meeting was properly posted on September 28, 2018.

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

1. Public Safety Task Force Minutes

**Recommended Action:**

Review and approve draft minutes from the August 23, 2018 meeting.

PAGE/COSYN MOVED TO **APPROVE DRAFT MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 23, 2018 MEETING.** MOTION PASSED. AYES: COSYN, HIROKAWA, PAGE, VENKATACHAR. NOES: NONE. ABSTAIN: NONE. ABSENT: JEPSEN.

2. Public Safety Task Force Transition Plan

**Recommended Action:**

Finalize the transition plan and final recommendations to the City Council, as directed by the City Council at the March 2018 Work Plan Study Session.

The Task Force agreed to change the letter from the Mayor to a letter from the City to Neighborhood Watch leads that expresses appreciation for their service to the community.

Vice Chair Page suggested that the City post a weekly public safety tip on Nextdoor. The Task Force concurred on including this as recommendation #2.

Member Venkatachar suggested changing “Establish the City as the only source of Neighborhood Watch messaging” to “Establish the City as the official source of Neighborhood Watch messaging.” The Task Force agreed.

Vice Chair Page requested an additional recommendation to have City email accounts issued to each Neighborhood Watch group and program the email accounts to redirect to the lead(s) for each group. The Task Force agreed.

Member Venkatachar proposed that the City issue cameras to each Neighborhood Watch group. The Task Force considered the idea and declined it.

The Task Force revised the wording of “Create guidelines for Neighborhood Watch leads regarding sharing and distributing information to their neighbors” to “Create guidelines for Neighborhood Watch leads who are sharing and distributing information to their neighbors, such as what to share, when to share, and how to share.”

Lakhinder Walia provided input on the final list of recommendations.

The Task Force agreed on the following list of recommendations to be presented to the City Council at the November 7, 2018 City Council Meeting:

1. Extend the term of the Task Force beyond November 2018 with new members.
2. Post a weekly public safety tip on Nextdoor.
3. Create a formalized Neighborhood Watch Orientation, which is required as part of the registration process, that is led by a member of trained team of individuals that could include staff, volunteers, or Task Force Members.
4. Conduct the Safety Fair annually.
5. Conduct biannual Neighborhood Watch lead gatherings.
6. Continue mailing quarterly public safety postcards to all households in Saratoga.
7. Send a letter from the City to Neighborhood Watch leads to express appreciation for their service to the community.
8. Use the City seal or clear branding for Neighborhood Watch messages from the City.
9. Establish the City as the only source of Neighborhood Watch messaging.
10. Create guidelines for Neighborhood Watch leads who are sharing and distributing information to their neighbors, such as what to share, when to share, and how to share.
11. Create City issued email accounts for all Neighborhood Watch groups that can be setup to automatically redirect emails to Neighborhood Watch lead(s).

### 3. Public Safety Postcard

**Recommended Action:**

Provide feedback on the November public safety postcard.

The Task Force requested the following changes:

- Remove the words “Help holiday gifts arrive on time” from the first tip, add “Check USPS tracking services that are available.”
- Replace the word “Never” with “Don’t” in bold, caps in tip 3.
- Revise tip 4 to read “If you go on holiday” instead of “If you plan to leave town for winter break.”
- Change tip 5 to “Online shopping is a great way to beat the crowds” instead of “Online shopping is a great way to beat mall crowds.”
- Change tip 6 to “Prepare for stormy weather and surprises” instead of “Prepare for winter storms and any surprise Mother Nature may throw at you.”
- Change the last Tip from Captain Rich to, “If you start to go into a skid” instead of “If you feel your car starting to skid.”

Lakhinder Walia provided input on the postcard.

#### 4. Neighborhood Watch Lead Gathering

##### **Recommended Action:**

Conduct a gathering of Neighborhood Watch leaders and the City of Saratoga Neighborhood Watch program.

At 6:00 p.m., the Task Force conducted the Neighborhood Watch Lead Gathering.

Chair John Hirokawa and Mayor Mary-Lynne Bernald provided welcoming remarks.

Santa Clara County Fire Chief Tony Bowden and Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Office Lieutenant Mark Roggia gave presentations.

Participants then engaged in small group discussions. After small group discussions concluded, each table was invited to share their key findings, which included:

- It would be helpful for the City to provide more money for cameras and Neighborhood Watch gatherings
- Very large groups can be difficult to administer and can be divided into smaller groups
- It is challenging to collect personal contact information, small group gatherings are a good way to collect this information
- After the group launched, maybe neighbors became apathetic and disengaged
- Groups should focus on creating a happy neighborhood as a goal
- It is helpful to create a group text or email to share information
- It is important to keep the group active outside of block parties
- Another way to overcome the reluctance to share contact information was to go door to door
- If someone isn’t home or doesn’t want to share their contact information, always leave a flyer with information

- Monthly emails and emergency updates are good pieces of information to share with your neighborhood
- Groups should communicate at least once a month
- Leads should remind people what they can do and what to look out for
- Gatherings don't have to be a large annual barbeque. Groups should just get together.
- Not everyone is required to attend gatherings.
- It's important for groups to get together in person.
- Encourage residents to request patrol checks from the Sheriff's Office when they are out of town
- Residents should find out where their gas meter is and where their neighbor's meter is, in case they need to be shut off
- Thursday is a good day for lead gatherings

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted:

Crystal Bothelio, Deputy City Manager  
City of Saratoga