



COA Contact Us: Don't Take Away Our Community Officers

william.euille, frank.fannon, kerry.donley,

Nicholas Partee to: alicia.hughes, council, delpepper, paulcsmedberg,
rose.boyd, jackie.henderson, elaine.scott

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Please respond to Nicholas Partee

Time: [Mon Mar 01, 2010 15:47:35] Message ID: [19606]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Nicholas
Last Name: Partee
Street Address: 54 Dale St
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22305
Phone: 571-239-6793
Email Address: nicholas.partee@gmail.com
Subject: Don't Take Away Our Community Officers

Dear Mayor Euille and Council Members,

I recently heard that the

community officer position for several neighborhoods is on the chopping block due to budget cuts. I would be extremely disappointed were this to go forward. I have worked side-by-side with the Hume Springs/Lynhaven community officers over the past 5 years. Early on in my time in the neighborhood, I was subjected to threats by former neighbors, had property stolen, my car broken into, my fence graffitied and have even had to "hit the deck" during a starter pistol drive-by (someone's idea of a joke). That said, year by year, problems have been fewer and farther between. Groups of teens and 20-somethings that used to fight and hurl epithets back and forth on the playground have been replaced with kids playing for the most part, and Type 1 crime is definitely down. This all provides evidence that our community officers are making a huge difference.

Furthermore, I don't fully understand how this "cut" would

save the City the \$200K it purports. Moving our community officers to patrol would only slightly alter their job function. They already spend much of their time on patrol, primarily located in/near the community they serve.

Comments:

These officers act as the point men for the area and help prevent many crimes before they happen. Moving them exclusively to patrol would cut them off from the communities where they've invested time on neighborhood contacts, learning the lay of the land, and learning names, faces, and probation officers for many offenders. When we found hundreds of malt liquor bottles where Four Mile Run Park meets the neighborhood, our community officer lead other Sector 2 patrol officers to the location. They busted numerous offenders at that location and the public drinking and trash problems have been driven down, but without follow-through, the fairer weather could bring the same problems back to the area.

Hume

Springs and Lynhaven have undoubtedly cleaned up their acts over the years, but that improvement is the result of our Community Officers and not in spite of them. You can look at Crime Reports and see that many of the crimes are displaced out of the residential neighborhoods, but still take place nearby. The extreme crackdown on the neighborhoods by our community officers makes our streets an undesirable place to attempt to commit crimes. We are not yet locked in as a low-crime, safe neighborhoods. Removing our conduit to the police force now could set us back years on our efforts to eradicate crime from our streets.

The Hume Springs Citizens

Association feels this is a real threat to all the progress that has been made over the years. Please don't cut the program we consider to be among the most important to our community. Our safety, whether real or perceived, should not be a line item that can be struck from the budget.

Thank You,
Nick Partee

VP, Hume Springs Citizens Association