

Area residents request more police protection

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By TERRY LEVIN

Mutual pleas for aid and information characterized a meeting last Thursday evening between the McDrake Concerned Citizens and three representatives of the Chicago Police Department.

More than 70 local residents crowded in the basement of Kedzie Methodist Church, 3545 W. McLean Ave., to talk with Deputy Chief William Mooney of Area 5 Patrol, Lt. Edward Pleines of the city's Gang Crimes Unit and Shakespeare (14th) District Sgt. William Howe about street gang activities in the neighborhood.

"There is a concern in this neighborhood about protection. There are kids with pipes waiting for the school bus. If there is no law and order, people will take the law in their own hands and we will have chaos," Douglas Lagerquist, moderator at the meeting, told the police representatives.

One resident begged the police not to remove the extra patrol cars assigned to the area since the murder of Tactical Ofc. Terrence Loftus on Oct. 10 on the 3500 block of West Fullerton Avenue.

"Please keep them on, especially when the kids are coming home from school. My daughter is terrified," the resident said.

The complaints voiced at the meeting concerned the violent activities of two street gangs, the Gaylords and the Imperial Gangsters. Residents spoke of youths riding on bicycles with guns, throwing rocks at cars on Fullerton and firing shots after dark.

Mooney told the crowd that 80 per cent of the calls received by police were not reports of crime and that all too often patrol cars are tied up with accidents and other duties. He promised to patrol the neighborhood as thoroughly as possible, within manpower limits.

Pleines spent some time describing the typical street gang. There are 29 gangs or factions of gangs in the district, but most have only 20 to 30 hard-core members.

"Sure, a gang can intimidate an individual but not if they see you aren't standing alone, that your neighbors will support you and come to court with you. There are thousands of you against 20 or 30. When you have finally had enough and stand up together as a group, the gang will not survive," Pleines said.

Howe discussed the unwillingness of many witnesses to sign complaints for fear of retaliation by gang members. "Citizens take the first step by calling the police but don't follow through," Howe said.

Many gang members are arrested for disorderly conduct but released by the judge when the complaint is not signed by a citizen, Howe said.

Several residents responded that they had never been asked to sign a complaint. Mooney pledged this would henceforth be changed.

"But don't stand alone. Get group support," Mooney cautioned.

Most gang members operate in their own neighborhoods, Howe said, and will band together "wherever the residents and police allow. The idea is to keep them moving."

Residents should organize their

blocks to keep strangers away, Pleines said. He also advised that people take careful notes of everything they see relating to gang activities. Descriptions, license plate numbers, even the badge numbers of police responding to calls should be collected and reported to the Gang Crimes Unit at 744-5409. Residents who see criminal activity in progress should, of course, dial the 911 emergency number.

"Give me any information you have," Pleines told the group. "I can't promise success but I'll give it 100 per cent effort."

Howe complimented the McDrake community organization as "a good feedback mechanism." He suggested residents involve themselves in legislation.

"We'd love to work in the manner you are suggesting. Get the laws changed to open the handcuffs on us," Howe said.

When residents asked why parents could not be held responsible for their children, Howe explained that the only law on the books is a civil law permitting victims to sue for up to \$1,000 if a minor causes injuries or damage to property.

"I'd like to lock up the parents of

these punks," Howe added. "I honestly believe that if the parent of a gang member is locked up, he would begin to take more responsibility for his kids. But I've talked with legislators and they have told me there will never be a law in the State of Illinois holding a person responsible for the criminal act of another person."

The group also discussed the problem of minors drinking liquor in public but one resident spoke angrily that narcotics were the real problem in the area.

"The problem is drugs. Kilos of pure marijuana and heroin being sold on the street. I called the FBI. Nothing. I called Drug Enforcement. Nothing. I called the Chicago Police Department. Nothing," the resident said.

"There's going to be violence when parents get tired of seeing their children beaten up. I'm scared that my son will be beaten, my daughter raped. The first time one of my kids gets hurt by a hopped-up junkie, the police will have a homicide in this neighborhood. I'll do the job myself and go to jail with a smile on my face," the resident warned.

Unemployment rises in Northwest Side

By MARTIN FISCHER

Unemployment rates increased slightly during September in Northwest Side communities, according to estimates released by the Mayor's Office of Manpower.

A citywide increase in unemployment of from 8.8 per cent during August to 9.3 per cent during September was reflected in similar increases in estimated unemployment rates for Austin, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, Avondale, Hermosa, Belmont-Cragin and Mont Clare.

Despite the increases locally between August and September, the figures for last month were still lower than the unemployment rates of last January and February. But the September figures were higher than those of last March.

Between August and September, the estimated rate of unemployment increased from 6.9 to 7.3 per cent in Mont Clare; 6.1 to 6.4 per cent in Belmont-Cragin; 6.6 to 7.0 per cent in Hermosa; 6.2 to 6.6 per cent in Avondale; 9.8 to 10.4 per cent in Logan Square; 9.6 to 10.2 per cent in Humboldt Park; and 8.3 to 8.8 per cent in Austin.

These figures may be compared to the citywide increase of from 8.8 to 9.1 per cent. The unemployment estimates for local communities are averaged in the mid-range of Chicago's 76 community areas.

Last month, the community with the highest unemployment rate in the city was Oakland with 25.8 per cent. Other areas plagued with very high unemployment are Riverdale, Fuller Park, Grand Boulevard and North Lawndale.

The area with the lowest unemployment rate was O'Hare with 3.5 per cent. Other communities with very low unemployment rates are Edison Park, Forest Glen, Mount Greenwood and Jefferson Park.

The Mayor's Office of Manpower's unemployment figures are based on Chicago unemployment rates which are estimated monthly by the Illinois Bureau of Employment Security. Chicago's total figures are derived from Standard Metropolitan Statistical (SMSA) estimates for the city and six county area.

Community area percentages are based on the relationship of community populations to the Chicago total population as established by the 1970 U.S. Census. The Office of Manpower explained that the accuracy of the figures is limited since much of the unemployment information and census data is imprecise.

The unemployment percentages that the Office of Manpower has released represent the estimated ratio between the number of persons in Chicago who have made unemployment claims and the number of persons in the labor force in the city.

The Mayor's Office of Manpower emphasized that these estimates should not be taken as precise figures, but merely as indicative ones.

The office calculates and releases these monthly unemployment estimates in order to pinpoint the communities most in need of services to improve employment opportunities. The office first provided these figures late in 1975.