

# CLIFTONDALE COMMUNITY CLUB, INC.

Draft Minutes  
October 8, 2007

The Cliftondale Community Club, Inc. met October 8, 2007 at the Cliftondale Community House. About 48 members and guests were present. Special invited guests included Fulton County Police Department Chief Cassandra Jones, Captain Tookes, and Corporal T. Blackmon. The evening's program focused on local crime and law enforcement.

President Ben Dye opened the meeting, and Harold Reid provided the invocation.

The minutes were accepted as read. The Treasurer's report was not given. [The Treasurer provided a report by telephone: beginning balance, \$3,283.54; deposits, \$227.56 (dues and interest); one payout of \$75.00 (lunch for the community clean-up); ending balance, \$3,436.10.]

Cpl. Blackmon provided a report on crime statistics in Cliftondale for the past month. There were 24 burglaries, of which 8 were attempted burglaries and 10 were for empty houses or houses under construction; five open door reports; one rape; 5 calls for shots being fired; 1 child molestation; 2 motor vehicle thefts and 2 recovered stolen vehicles; 3 thefts from vehicles. There were 2 aggravated assaults -- one being a home invasion where the resident was robbed at gunpoint, the other a fight between two construction workers. There were 14 arrests, 9 miscellaneous arrests, 5 burglary arrests, and leads for several crimes.

Cpl. Blackmon said the majority of the break-ins appear to be committed by juveniles. He explained the "point system" for juvenile offenders. The individual has to accumulate 12 points before being taken into custody. For a given arrest, the youth is released to his (or her) parents, gets a court date, and the judge decides the number of points to assign to the offense and whether any intervention (DFACS, counseling, etc.) is advisable. The youth is released back to his parents until 12 points are accumulated, at which time he is taken into custody (jailed).

Chief Jones introduced herself and described her long experience with law enforcement and her service in Fulton County and Cliftondale. Her goal

as chief is to make the Police Department accessible. She wants to communicate that the public and the police need to work in partnership.

She emphasized that juvenile crime is growing in Atlanta and nationwide. The local increase in juvenile burglaries is so striking that she is asking Fulton County to change its “point system” for this crime so that the perpetrators can be arrested and held immediately.

Chief Jones said that a crime suppression team has been formed, which involves both overt and covert activities, for example, frequent roadblocks and unmarked cars. The objective is to move against crime in Fulton County so aggressively that criminals will be driven out to other jurisdictions. The Department is also working with the resource officers in the schools. Also, as a community outreach the Department’s command vehicles (large vans with elaborate equipment) will be posted in accessible locations (major intersections, shopping centers, subdivision entrances, etc.) every Thursday from 6:00-8:00 pm for residents to visit, ask questions, report incidents or concerns, etc.

Members of the audience asked the following questions.

Question: At what level of government is the “point system” set?

Answer: At the state level, but local jurisdictions have some discretion in administration.

Question: What rights of self-protection does a homeowner have?

Answer: You are allowed to protect your property, but you can only use “deadly force” if you are in fear of your life.

Question: How are response priorities set for 911 calls? Answer: Go ahead and call and let 911 prioritize, which will be based on the urgency of your situation and the other calls and situations the officers are dealing with.

Question: What proactive measures are being taken with regard to youth, such as a police athletic league? Answer: The department cannot do as much in this line as it would like to because it is short-handed, but officers do youth contact when possible.

Question: What is the County doing to get more qualified police officers? Answer: We are never going to have enough officers to be as

quick in responding as we want to be. Unfortunately, our hiring is keyed to population based on the US Census, and its statistics for South Fulton do not reflect the tens of thousands who are employed in the Fulton Industrial District and the residents in the new subdivisions.

Question: What is being done for Halloween safety in terms of sex offenders in the community? Answer: The sheriff's office, not the police department, is charge with tracking sex offenders, and they will be dealing with the matter. They also make speeches in the schools about being careful.

Question: What can we as a community do? Answer: Identify neighborhood children to DFACS, report truancy to the schools. Tell the school boards to make their policies on truancy stricter. Support youth and sports and after-school programs in the parks.

Captain Tookes then spoke on the Neighborhood Watch program and other crime prevention measures.

A Neighborhood Watch is an organization for a defined neighborhood or area. It is based on the principles of protecting, communicating with, and knowing your neighbors. The organization will have a president, coordinators, block captains, and senior captains (who check on elderly residents). The organization should have an email tree; and those who do not have computers need to be identified so they can be telephoned with urgent information, such as about a car casing the neighborhood. More detailed information about setting up a program is available.

Mr. Dye thanked the public safety representatives for their valuable information.

He announced that there will be a meeting on October 11 to meet with developers for proposals on Miles Road and Demooney Road.

Stanley Knowles of Southern K Ranch on Demooney Road invited community members to become involved as volunteers for his spring rodeo. This will be the eighth year for the non-profit, family-oriented event, which is a Cliftondale community tradition. Planning will begin in November for the spring event.

Vice President Teiola Porch announced two upcoming public meetings on school matters: a meeting on October 15 about the new school planned for West Stubbs Road; and a state-level speaker at Creekside High School on October 27. (Details are provided on the Club's website.).

Mr. Dye said that he was considering inviting a representative from the Sheriff's Department or Code Enforcement to speak at the November meeting. By a show of hands, the audience indicated a preference for a Code Enforcement speaker.

Director Jack Liles related a tragic story about a four-year-old boy who was shot to death earlier this year in Douglas County. A nine-year-old neighbor knew that the teenage perpetrator planned to commit a burglary, but the youngster did not tell an adult because he thought that would be "snitching." Mr. Liles urged teaching children that telling about activities involving guns or knives is not "snitching."

The meeting was adjourned.

Gayle Lesser, Secretary