

On Tuesday, July 1, 2025, over 50 residents attended a community meeting to discuss and receive answers to the Memorial Weekend events that occurred within the Scarboro community.



On Memorial Weekend 2025 in the historic Scarboro Community there were two events which are being called “block parties.” Event #1, occurred on Friday, and there were no incidents requiring Oak Ridge police intervention. However, the next evening at Event #2 – several hundred people showed up. Neighbors called police seeking relief from the overpopulation of cars, people and noise. Event #2 resulted in 9 people reportedly shot, and one stabbed.

Due to three important factors, Police did not respond to initial phone calls from residents requesting Police intervention. First, it was alleged that Police were concerned about Law Enforcement's presence escalating the “party.” Second, Police chose to stay on the perimeter of the “block party.” Finally, Police were short staffed leaving them unable to operate at full capacity that evening.

Lessons Learned

- Police did not have an effective &/or alternative plan for mobilizing the limited number of officers for this outnumbered event.
- Standing by on the perimeter and staging personnel in the vicinity, while hoping for a peaceful resolution, in retrospect was not the most effective strategy.

Going Forward

- Technology will be used to contact officers to make sure officers are available and safe.
- Police will continue to monitor social media, and per intel, Officers will be dispatched and present in advance of any problems. This strategy is intended to disrupt criminal activities and to make potential troublemakers uncomfortable.
- Foot patrol has been increased. Police are also checking in on residents.
- Will respond to resident calls even if their presence has the potential of being misunderstood by some.

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- Will forge, utilize and sustain alliances with neighboring law enforcement entities and share resources when law enforcement support is needed.



Community Residents expressed concerns, were visibly upset and exhibited palpable stress over perceived policing methods. At the same time, residents expressed a lack of confidence based on their experiences with low to below average police protection.

With respect to over policing, several residents shared examples of being pulled over for traffic violations, and one resident felt “harassed” by a particular officer.

In some cases, there is the perception of “under policing,” examples include not enforcing speeding limits, not responding to resident calls on Memorial Weekend, leading to concern regarding the impending July 4th fireworks.

With respect to the Memorial holiday weekend, one community member asked, “Why wasn’t a tow truck on hand?” – presumably to tow illegally parked cars.

Residents want to enjoy living in their community, they want relief from perceived excessive traffic stops and want enforcement of the Offenses Against Peace and Quiet ordinance.

Residents collectively agreed that police and residents must work together to achieve the desired goal of a thriving and safe community.

The investigation is ongoing by Tennessee Bureau of Investigations. The completed report will be given to the District Attorney General. It is unknown when the investigation will be completed.

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The future requires collaboration. Residents and police will work together to find the balance that provides community safety and community enjoyment. This was the first of a series of engaging & productive meetings convened to address matters of concern in the Scarborough Community.

[A web page](#) will be established for the Scarborough Community. Information requested during the meeting, including data, and videos will be uploaded to the page.



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Notes

Information requested:

- Data on traffic stops
- Demographic data on who is being stopped
- Chief's statement at city council
- Web page with all info requested uploaded
- Community wide crime map
- Several residents plan to meet with the Chief and appropriate officers to review traffic stop events.

Comments

- Residents “feel” over policed, no matter what the data shows
- Residents are experiencing different treatment because of the race of the residents – that is the underlying issue
- Being over policed is depressing
- The community needs a place to congregate
- The increased police presence seems performative – the police officers are engaging with each other and not the residents.
- Attending to the upset &/or concerns of individual residents does not necessarily lead to a community-wide solution.
- Education on various city ordinances is needed.
- In a different, better and more effective manner need to think about how to engage youth, including the youth that held the “block party”
- Police have an attitude
- Community safety requires a partnership between the residents and police.
- What is occurring within Scarborough reveals the illness within the larger community.
- “You’re either a part of the solution or a part of the problem!”

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- Future meetings need to be regular with predictable dates, known and scheduled.
- Juneteenth celebration was successful
- July 4th – if there are violations, people will be arrested.
- A resident, who lives in a different Oak Ridge neighborhood, shared that when he and his son were lighting fireworks one year, police arrived and gave them a warning vs. residents of the Scarborough community - same situation, who were forced to get on the ground with tasers drawn.
- One Scarborough resident suggested closing Benedict Street during the July 4th holiday to reduce firework activity from people outside of the community.
- We have the resources to solve the problem if we get out of our own way.
- We need healing
- Meetings with police should be where the residents are comfortable/where it is convenient for residents.
- Individual meetings with police seem disingenuous

Questions

- How can the police increase their presence to ensure protection without creating a sense of intimidation?
- Why are residents being pulled over for a full search to include a canine search for a traffic violation?
- Over policing vs. unsafety... What is the balance?
- How will the community know the “fix?” (of individual complaints and community requests)

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- How do we support strategic relationship building between police & residents?
- A City Ordinance: Offenses Against the Peace and Quiet, is already on the books, why wasn't it enforced?
- Have the officers received implicit bias training? If so, when did it occur? (Next Scheduled Training?)
- A question about examples of Police Officers being held accountable.
- What are the consequences for not enforcing existing ordinances?
- A question about the use of cameras in the community and a question about police officer body cameras.

Recommendations & Requests from The Community

- Create an action plan to include necessary training and relationship building strategies.
- Develop and advance youth/police relationship building strategies.
- Develop culturally competent programs.
- Hear from the “rank and file.”



Recommendations from the Moderator

- Develop Committees and recruit two leaders for each committee. Perhaps one leader from the community and one leader from the panel. Committee recommendations include:
 - **Police/Resident Community Safety** – Determine and recommend the balance between policing, and neighborhood safety and neighborhood enjoyment.
 - **Resident/Police Relationship Building**
 - **Youth/Police Relationship Building**
 - **Neighborhood Community Standards/Values**- Residents will determine community standards, and how to encourage compliance, and enforcement of said standards. Residents will also determine how to communicate the agreed upon community standards.
 - **Community Voices** - To welcome all voices and understand all perspectives, feedback will be solicited from the “rank and file,” youth, and other community members that are not often asked to share their opinion.
- Recommend the next community-wide meeting focus on creating the committees.