



Agenda Item No. 13.

Staff Report

Date: February 11, 2016
To: Mayor Hoertkorn and Council Members
From: Erik Masterson, Chief of Police
Subject: Update on research on crime prevention strategies to address recent crimes

Recommendation

Staff recommends implementing a voluntary citizen's registration of home video security systems through the Police Department. In addition, staff will assist residents in forming Neighborhood Watch Programs in Town.

Staff recommends additional research into video surveillance systems, both automated license plate readers and overt video monitoring. The results from the research can be presented to the Community Protection Committee for discussion and further recommendations.

Background and discussion

At the January Town Council meeting various crime prevention strategies were discussed and staff began research into several of these programs. Mentioned were the following:

- Registration of home security video systems
- Neighborhood Watch Programs
- Video surveillance systems

Registration of home security video systems: These programs have gained interest in many communities, as a tool for law enforcement in investigation of home burglaries. The Ross Police Department will offer residents the opportunity to register their home security video system, specifically noting if systems monitor areas outside the residence (driveway, street). The registration is voluntary.

Neighborhood Watch Program: This is a community based program that works with assistance and collaboration of law enforcement. The Ross Police Department will assist any neighborhood groups wishing to establish a program and work with them to enhance the program's effectiveness.

The Police Chief will put out communication to residents offering assistance in forming a Neighborhood Watch Program in their area. The Police Department will work with that group to aid in the program planning and development.

Video Systems: The Police Department has done some preliminary research into video surveillance systems. There are two primary types of video systems in use for crime reduction and investigative leads.

The first type system is Automated License Plate Readers. These systems are mobile or fixed locations. The mobile systems are mounted on police cars and “read” license plates as the cars patrol. The system checks the license plates through law enforcement data systems to see if they have been reported stolen.

Fixed location systems must be mounted where power is available. These cameras “read” and capture images of the vehicle and license plate. They also check the plates to see if they have been reported stolen. Video images can be reviewed.

The second type of system is Video Surveillance systems. These systems capture images and store the data for a determined time frame. The data can be later reviewed for investigative purposes. It can also be viewed in real time for monitoring.

Both of these systems would require some significant funding. I have made some preliminary inquiries to agencies using these systems. There are both mobile and fixed ALPS (license readers) in use by Central Marin Police and we may be able to jointly use their system. We are checking with their vendor to see if this can work.

I have talked with two vendors about overt video surveillance systems and how these systems may be workable for Ross.

Fiscal, resource and timeline impacts

There is no cost for registration of home security video systems and Neighborhood Watch Programs. There will be some significant funding needed should the Council choose to move forward with a video system of some kind. More research is necessary to determine those costs and benefits of those systems, which should take a couple of months to complete.

Alternative actions

None

Environmental review (if applicable)

None

Attachments

None