

BLACKBURN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH MEETING  
COMMUNITY CENTRE, FEBRUARY 24, 2025

IN ATTENDANCE

Constable Mike Gatti - Ottawa Police and Community Police Officer for Blackburn Hamlet.  
Constable Marc Leroux - Ottawa Police and a Special Advisor on the Neighborhood Watch Program.  
Brad Hampson - Retired Police Officer, Block Captain for Parklane Court in Blackburn and a Special Advisor for the Blackburn Hamlet Neighborhood Watch Program.  
Special Guest - Lainie Towell ( Neighborhood Watch Coordinator for College Circle).  
Blackburn Hamlet residents.

OVERVIEW

The event was primarily intended for Block Captains, or those interested in being Block Captains. The general public was also invited. The event was a joint presentation by the Ottawa Police and the Blackburn Hamlet Community Association's Neighborhood Watch.

The event's Theme was:

Why the Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP) is successful in Crime Prevention and how the Neighborhood Watch Block Captains acts as an integral part in that mission.

The main topics of the evening were:

- (1) Role & responsibility of the Block Captain;
- (2) When to call the Police;
- (3) How the OPS Crime App provides an overview of all crime in Ottawa;
- (4) Other law enforcement agencies supporting Crime Prevention;
- (5) The future plans for the Blackburn Neighborhood Watch.

The following provides a brief summary of the salient issues discussed at each main topic.

Item 1 - Role of Block Captain

Constable Gatti provided an outline of the primary duties of the Block Captain and how a well-structured network of Block Captains can be an effective means to crime prevention. Mike explained that it is the Block Captain who can engage his neighbors to be the ears and eyes of what is happening in the community. Mike further went on to say that that a key role of the Block Captain is to disseminate information, crime stats, and crime prevention tips to the Watch Members. This is one of the key objectives of the Blackburn Neighborhood Watch – share pertinent crime information with its residents towards a goal of crime reduction.

There was an also a discussion on how many homes each Block Captain should manage. It was generally agreed that 10-15 is manageable.

## Item 2 - Make the Right Call

Constable Gatti provided a detailed look at when you should call the Police. Mike emphasized that every call is important, but not all calls are life-threatening, and not all calls are police emergencies. Mike highlighted the importance to Make the Right Call because it greatly affects police response. Mike reviewed each specific number, such as 911, that is intended for life-threatening emergencies or a crime in progress whereas 613 236-1222 ext. 7300 was for non-emergency reports. Mike listed some examples of some non-emergency situations.

There were many questions from the audience regarding the reporting of incidents, or just suspicion of crime. It was agreed that there is no wrong time to call police but using good judgement will help the police respond more effectively. For example, a coyote running through your backyard is not a police emergency, but if there were children in the yard then it would be of higher concern. Constable Leroux noted that the Neighborhood Watch literature has good information to help you understand when to Make the Right Call

## Item - Crime Reporting

Brad Hampson provided the rationale why ALL crimes should be reported by outlining how the report of a crime works its way through the police structure. Brad noted that a call is first reported to the Reporting Centre where a trained person determines if a police response is needed, the same report goes to Analysis that may detect crime trends, and then to Intelligence where police assets are often assigned. Brad noted it was through this process why some areas get more police focus than others, often because of more effective crime reporting. This highlights why all crimes need to be reported.

Our special Guest, Lainie Towell, who is a NW Coordinator from Vanier, noted that she was aware of 6 vehicles that had been recently broken into on one of her streets, but only two of the residents have reported the incidents to the police. She asked if the OPS would accept a report of crime from someone not personally involved. A discussion ensued looking at some options, such as reporting it at the OPS online, or sending the information to Crime Stoppers.

## Item 3 - Ottawa Crime Mapping Tool

On the large screen Brad Hampson provided the audience with a look on how the Ottawa Police Crime Mapping Tool allows everyone to see crime information on their street, in their neighborhood and across the City. Brad highlighted how the crime map identifies community safety trends, and offers both current and historical crime information that can enhance our spatial awareness to crime in our area. Brad's presentation and explanations of the various icons showed how the App can provide residents with an understanding on what crime is happening in their community, and the types of crime being committed. The Crime mapping Tool is one of the primary tools used by the Police in the development of effective crime prevention strategies. Constable Leroux noted that the manipulation of the various icons and filter systems can require some Trial & Error. Marc stated that the Ottawa Police are working towards enhancing the learning experience.

#### Item 4 - Support from other Law enforcement Agencies

Another key aspect of the Neighborhood Watch Program is its affiliation with other law enforcement agencies. These sources help provide awareness and knowledge of other types of criminal activity while offering strategies that can be useful to mitigate their impact.

#### CANADIAN ANTI-FRAUD CENTRE

Brad Hampson outlined the role of the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC). The CAFC is a national police service, managed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Ontario Provincial Police, that gathers intelligence on fraud across Canada and assists Police with enforcement and prevention efforts. It helps citizens and businesses on how to report fraud, learn about different types of fraud, recognize the warning signs of fraud, and protect themselves from fraud

Brad displayed some alarming trends on fraud activity in Canada and highlighted how frauds and scams are of equal concern to law enforcement agencies as are vehicle theft and assaults. Brad provided some tactics on how you can better protect yourself from fraudsters. Brad encouraged everyone to visit the CAFC website – [www.antifraudcentre.ca](http://www.antifraudcentre.ca) and read about the various scams and the strategies to minimize yourself being a victim.

Constable Gatti noted that March is Fraud Prevention Month in Canada. Mike noted that each year, Canadians lose millions of dollars to fraud. Educating yourself on common scams is the easiest way to prevent becoming a victim of one. Following these simple steps will help:

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Don't fall for high pressure sales tactics that don't allow you to think over a decision or that require you to provide personal, banking or credit card information before you have even accepted an offer. Any reputable company will put the offer in writing and give you time to think it over.

Do your due diligence. Check companies with the Better Business Bureau, ask for references and visit the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre to find out about the latest scams and where they are active. Taking a little time is worth the effort if it avoids you becoming a victim.

#### CRIME STOPPERS

Constable Leroux provided a look at what is Crime Stoppers, and How it works. Crime Stoppers is a non-profit organization that encourages people to anonymously report crimes to the police. Crime Stoppers works with the police and media to help solve crimes and improve community safety.

Anyone with the knowledge of a crime can call Crime Stoppers to relay clues or other information. The person providing the information may remain anonymous if they wish and the information is identified only by a specific code. You may be eligible for a cash reward if your information leads to an arrest. Crime Stoppers has been successful in reducing the crime rate.

NOTE: the BCA has invited Crime Stoppers for a presentation to our community in June, 2025. We are awaiting confirmation.

## Item 5 - The Road Ahead for the Blackburn Neighborhood Watch

One of the primary objectives of the Blackburn Neighborhood Watch Program will be to increase the number of Block Captains. The BCA is asking anyone interested to consider becoming a Block Captain, be part of a crime prevention program and further the concept of Neighbors helping Neighbors.

There are still a large number of streets in the Hamlet without representation, even though some of these streets have large numbers of Neighborhood Watch Members. Information sessions, such as this one, and articles in the Banar, will form some of the strategies for the days ahead. On some streets we have more than one Block Captain. The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator will work with these members to determine if one of these people would assist with a neighboring street.

The BCA is working towards having the Neighborhood Watch have a dedicated portal on the BCA website. This site would allow us to regularly update residents on crime activity in the community while providing effective strategies to combat them. The Neighborhood Watch Coordinator will also develop a network for the Neighborhood Watch Block Captains so that Police Bulletins, announcements, etc., can be readily disseminated to them and for furtherance to their street Members.

Another objective over the coming months will be to present the Neighborhood Watch Program to the Board of Directors of Condo Associations & High-Rise Units. It is hoped that forming a partnership with the Boards will result in a larger participation of their members.

The BCA is very appreciative of the Ottawa Police Officers and Brad Hampson for sharing their knowledge and expertise.

Don Kelly  
NW Coordinator

***Through the Community Safety Data portal [data.ottawapolice.ca](http://data.ottawapolice.ca), members of the public can view, download, and interact with data released by Ottawa Police Service.***

