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Brookline residents ask town police

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to send crime alerts faster

Posted by Matt Rocheles on February 12, 2012 at 12:25 PM

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By Matt Rocheles, Town Correspondent

Brookline residents, concerned over a recent string of street crimes in a part of
town near Boston University, will sit in solidarity Monday they would like to see
their town's police department find ways to more quickly notify the community
about crimes and emergency alerts.

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REAL ESTATE

BROOKLINE

90 Rentals available

66 Open houses this week

3 New listings this week

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Brookline University Police Chief Thomas Robbitts described the recent string of robberies as "a lot of highly possible crimes that people would not see as such."

"Crimes, overall, is increasing across the city," he said. "What we're dealing with is the perception of crime."

While crime in Brookline is up 1.3 percent so far this year compared to last year, crime rates during the past four years are at their lowest, levels that have been seen since the mid-1990s, officials said.


251 Homes for sale

51 Rentals available

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and Evening Police Chief Peter ...

"We're trying to be as proactive as we can," said Chief ...

Brookline Police Chief Thomas Robbitts said the department is looking for ways to improve public safety and reduce crime in the area. He said the department is looking for ways to improve public safety and reduce crime in the area.

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In addition to the department's **Twitter page**, Brookline police suggested residents follow their **blog** and sign up for local alerts via **crimereports.com**.

Some asked if residents could also sign up for the EOC alerts, but Robbitts said the e-mail and text systems are only available to the EOC community, but suggested residents follow the department on **Twitter** and **Facebook**.

Some also asked about ways to improve outdoor lighting in the area. A town public works official said Brookline has a plan, pending further town approval, to retrofit 9,600 street lights town-wide with LED bulbs, which can cover a larger area with light. If approved, the project would upgrade about 900 street lights per year over a four-year span starting this summer.

Leary also suggested residents and business owners install motion-activated

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The meeting drew about 100 people and was called to respond to a recent string of robberies in the area, the most recent of which resulted in a non-fatal stabbing.

Since late September, 10 robberies or attempted robberies, most at gunpoint, have been reported in a concentrated area around BU's campus, according to police. Seven people have been arrested. Their charges connect them to a total of four incidents.

Three of the reported incidents happened in Boston; seven in North Brookline.

But, two of the seven reported incidents that occurred in Brookline have only been disclosed by town police within the past week, even though both incidents reportedly happened in the fall.

One was revealed during a presentation town police gave at Monday's meeting: a reported attempted robbery of a person's purse occurred at about 10:40 p.m. on Nov. 8 in the area of 25 Gibbs St. No arrests have been made in connection with that incident.

"I just found out tonight that there was a robbery right next door to me," one resident of Gibbs Street stood up and said during Monday's meeting. "It's really disturbing to find out two months later."

The other previously-undisclosed robbery, which was reportedly occurred on Oct. 7, went unmentioned at Monday's meeting, but has been confirmed by Brookline police who provided the information to the Globe after residents contacted the Globe recently to say they had heard about the incident second-hand, but no direct word have ever come to police.

Brookline Police explained they had not mentioned the incident previously because a subsequent investigation ultimately found no evidence that the robbery had ever happened because the victim, who is "known" to police "changed his story a few times."

"I can't say it did not happen, but it certainly looks like something we have no evidence of," said an e-mail from police department spokesman Lieutenant Phil

Harrington.

According to police logs, officers responded to Beacon and St. Paul streets shortly after 1 p.m. on Oct. 7. There, a man reported that about a half hour earlier near St. Paul and Freeman streets, two men had robbed him and hit him with a bat. He told police his cigarettes, wallet and Walkman portable audio player were stolen. The report said the man was hospitalized.

The report said the man described two assailants as Hispanic males. One was described as being in his 20s, about 5 foot, 7 inches, with black hair, a goatee, a gray Nike shirt. The other was described as being about 5 foot, 5 inches, with a mustache, Nike sneakers, jeans and Celtics T-shirt.

That robbery was the fourth reported in that area during a two-and-a-half week span. Two days later, another robbery was reported in Boston at 808 Commonwealth Ave. The day after that robbery, Brookline police held a press conference and discussed four robberies in detail, never mentioning the Oct. 7 report.

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