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JAMAICA PLAIN, ROXBURY

Shootings in Bromley-Heath housing area leave residents on edge; city may establish police substation

Posted by Matt Rocheleau July 5, 2012 12:06 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau Town Correspondent

Over a two-and-a-half week span, at least five people have been shot in three separate incidents around the Bromley-Heath public housing development, according to Boston police.

In a statement sent to Boston.com on Thursday, Bill McGonagle, director of the Boston Housing Authority, said the city is discussing possibly establishing a Boston Police substation at Bromley-Heath, a 23.5-acre development that contains nearly 1,000 units

Owned and managed by the city, the complex located near where Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill and Roxbury converge has long been troubled by crime.

McGonagle acknowledged an "uptick in shootings in recent weeks." But he said that in recent years reports of violent crime and property crime at the housing complex have decreased. He said residents have shown more willingness to call police and arrest numbers have risen

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Police and arrest numbers have risen.

He said in the statement that the authority plans to install security cameras, increase exterior lighting in an effort to deter crime and that the Boston Police Department and Boston Housing Authority Police "are aggressively pursuing those responsible for these shootings."

McGonagle' statement said the authority and city police officials plan to co-host a meeting in the next few weeks to brief the community on their efforts.

According to the [Jamaica Plain Gazette](#), nearly two dozen people gathered at the sprawling residential complex on Tuesday to protest what they called the lack of response to the recent violence. Protesters told the Gazette there have been a total of nine shootings at the development in recent weeks.

A 19-year-old man became latest victim early Monday morning, authorities said.

At about 12:35 a.m. on July 2, Boston Police said officers heard gunfire nearby as they were patrolling along Centre Street near the south side of the public housing complex.

The officers went toward where the gunshot sounds came from and were flagged down by a witness, police said. The witness brought them to the area of 960 Parker St. where a 19-year-old was suffering from an apparent gunshot wound.

He was transported to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center with non-life threatening injuries, officials said.

Six days earlier, a [23-year-old man was shot](#) in the abdomen in the area of 154 Heath St, according to Boston Police. Officers responded to that scene at about 2:15 p.m. on June 26. The man was taken to Brigham and Women's Hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

Twelve days before that shooting, [three people were found shot](#) near 279 Centre St, police said. Their injuries were considered non-life threatening.

Boston police officers along with officers from the city's housing authority, which oversees the housing development, responded at about 9:20 p.m. on

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One of the victims, a male whom police did not provide an age for, was suffering from gunshot wounds to his arms, police said. He was taken to Boston Medical Center. A 22-year-old was suffering from a gunshot wound and a 27-year-old man had a gunshot wound in his left calf, officials said. They were taken to Brigham and Women's Hospital.

The [Jamaica Plain Gazette](#) also reported that a man was hospitalized after he was shot multiple times at about 1 a.m. on May 26 at 42 Horan Way inside the housing development.

Police have confiscated at least two illegally-carried guns during recent arrests in that area.

On June 19, at about 8:35 p.m., Jiwan Battise, 33, of Dorchester was arrested at the Bromley-Heath complex for illegal possession of a gun, which had altered serial numbers, authorities said. He also was arrested for resisting arrest and possession of Class-E drugs.

On July 1, at about 10:12 a.m., officers arrested four people on firearm chargers after they stopped a speeding vehicle in the area of Columbus Avenue and Dimock Street in Roxbury.

Inside the vehicle -- a rental car that was supposed to have been returned to its owner more than two weeks earlier -- police found a loaded small caliber gun and a bulletproof vest in addition to open containers of alcohol.

Biyis Pimentel, 23, of Jamaica Plain; Steven Gonzalez, 22, of Boston; Rosa Soto, 27, of Dorchester and the vehicle's driver, Xavier Velasquez, 19, of South Boston were arrested for illegal possession of a loaded gun among other citations.

Three months ago, Mildred Hailey, retired after working for more than 40 years as executive director of the Bromley-Heath Tenant Management Corp.

After her retirement, the Boston Housing Authority assumed direct control of operations from the tenant management organization.

Hailey attended this week's protest to speak out against the violence.

“Every day we have a shooting,” she said, according to [the Gazette](#). “The media is quiet. The BHA is quiet. The [Boston Police Department] is quiet. We cannot afford to be quiet anymore. We can’t wait for a solution to fall on our laps.”

The Boston Herald [also covered](#) the protest.

In McGonagle's statement, he said the the housing authority's police chief, Steve Melia, the authority's family services manager Greg Davis, and the authority's deputy chief of staff Anthony Gilardi attended the rally.

"The Boston Police Department and Boston Housing Authority Police Department are engaged in ensuring that the vast majority of law-abiding citizens at Bromley-Heath live in a safe neighborhood," the statement from the authority's director said. "BPD, BHA police, local management and social service providers have been meeting on a biweekly basis to discuss policing strategies and a possible location for a BPD substation onsite."

Boston Police are investigating and ask anyone with information to call District E-13 detectives at 617-343-5628. Those who wish to provide information anonymously can call the CrimeStoppers Tip Line at 1-800-494-TIPS or texting the word 'TIP' to CRIME (27463).

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