



Police Laud Chinatown Crime Watch

Jun 3, 2005

By Adam Smith

Boston Police said at the June 1 Chinatown Safety Committee meeting that the neighborhood crime watch appears to be helping to lower crime in the area.

"I think the crime watch is working," said police captain Bernard O'Rourke, whose district includes Chinatown.

O'Rourke said the number of reported crimes was lower in May than April.

"We have not had a (successful) robbery of an Asian females since April 9," he said. One wallet-snatching of an Asian female occurred, he said, but the suspect was quickly caught with the help of a witness and police.

Chinatown only experienced five robberies in May, and three of those resulted in arrests, police said.

Police sergeant Tom Lema said of the crime watch: "maybe that's why you see five robberies instead of nine." He said that when residents and community leaders show they care about safety, criminals will take notice.

The Chinatown Crime Watch started around April and now has a total of 60 volunteers, said its leader, Michael Wong. The volunteers wear blue vests and hats that read "Chinatown Crime Watch" as they observe the neighborhood from 4:30 to 10:30 p.m. Typically, one police detail is hired by the group every night for \$40 per hour, said Wong. The group receives financial support from donations and the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association.

"If you compare day one to now, (Chinatown) is totally different," said Wong.

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Article Reference: http://www.sampan.org/show_article.php?display=60

Crime Watch Called Effective

But Some Question Use of Police Detail



[ENLARGE](#)

Boston Police Commissioner Kathleen O'Toole, far right, visiting the Chinatown crime watch on June 14.

Jun 17, 2005

by [Adam Smith](#)

Many Chinatown market and restaurant owners say they're pleased with Chinatown's crime watch and they perceive a dramatic drop in crime since its beginning in mid-spring.

Meanwhile, some question why the watch feels compelled to hire a police detail for \$40 per hour to accompany the volunteers on their six-hour nightly watches, and why the city doesn't provide more police coverage in the neighborhood.

"We need them, it's very important for the community," said Minh Tran, owner of Kim's Fashion Design at 12 Kneeland St. for 18 years. "Before, after 6 p.m., we didn't want to open the door -- too many crazies." Now he feels the area is safer.

But when asked how he views the hiring of a police detail during the crime watch patrols, Tran said: "In my opinion, that's the police's responsibility (to patrol the neighborhood)." Instead of hiring a police detail, he said, the community should hold celebrations to recognize on-duty officers for their efforts.

Tran's feelings were echoed by several others.

"They're doing a pretty good job," said Henry Szeto, owner of Moon Villa restaurant on Edinboro Street. He said he's noticed fewer drug dealers on his street, which has been plagued in recent years by loiterers and drug pushers.

But when asked his feelings on the crime watch's drive to raise money for police details, Szeto said: "Why do you hire a police detail? The city is supposed to do that." He said the community will not

be able to sustain the fundraising to pay for the over-time officers.

Tim Ruan of the Chinatown Resident Association agrees. Ruan said he personally feels the crime watch has helped lower crime and he appreciates its efforts. But, he said: "In my opinion, the patrolling is the job of the police department."

"Since they set up the Chinatown patrol, it's much better. I feel (the crime) is almost 70% gone," said Alan Yen of Cindy's Planet on Tyler Street.

Yen said that it would make more sense to pay the volunteers who patrol the streets, but "you don't need the police detail."

Wilson Hui, a cook at Wai's Restaurant on Kneeland Street, criticized the use of a police detail and said: "If Chinatown residents have to volunteer to protect themselves, it's a shame."

Eva Hui, who has worked at Wai's for four years, said that "because we pay taxes," the city should provide the extra police coverage.

But others support the use of the detail, which a police spokesperson noted is a voluntary choice of the crime watch.

"It's much better than before," said Joseph Cheung, who runs Happy Sales Inc., a gift shop on Kneeland Street. Cheung said he donated twice to the crime watch and that paying for the police details is worth the cost. "My store [has been] robbed several times; [now] it's very good when crime watch patrols the area," he said.

Wai Ming Fong, owner of Asia Garden restaurant on Harrison Avenue, said he also feels the area is safer now and that he supports the idea of paying for police protection. Fong's wife was injured in late April after a violent carjacking of a company car.

The crime watch's leader, Michael Wong, said: "We need to hire the detail to feel safer. Some of the volunteers are 60 or 70 years old. We are not going to fight (the criminals ourselves)."

According to Wong, the group, which was formed by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, has so far raised \$50,000 from businesses and community groups.

"They (the police) don't have enough people. They cannot afford to have police (in Chinatown) for so many hours," said Bill Chin, a business owner who is involved in the crime watch.

"City Hall can only do so much" because of limited resources, said Debbie Ho, who is involved in the watch. "That's just the way it works," she said, "If we had four or five police officers on (every) corner, we wouldn't need the crime watch."

Police commissioner Kathleen M. O'Toole congratulated the crime watch's efforts when she met the group in Chinatown on the evening of June 14.

"Working together, we can accomplish so much more," O'Toole said to the group, after calling them "effective" in lowering crime. She said that of all the city's neighborhood crime watch groups, Chinatown's is especially "innovative."

When asked by a reporter to comment on the hiring of the police details, O'Toole said that the police force has devoted many resources to Chinatown and that "it's hard for the police to do it alone."

Anita Chang contributed to this story.

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Article Reference: http://www.sampan.org/show_article.php?display=77

Boston's Chinatown Community Shows Solidarity and Pride

by Michael Ferola
Email: [mferola \(nospam\) ferola.com \(unverified!\)](mailto:mferola@ferola.com)

21 Jul 2006
Modified: 24 Jul 2006

BOSTON, Mass. -- In response to a group of men fighting near 88 Beech Street in Chinatown on Thursday, July 20, 2006 at approximately 7:10PM, members of a group of the local neighborhood Crime Watch sprang into action. Crime watch team members, Michael Wong among other community members, tried to talk the disorderly men out of fighting and to move on. After being threatened by these men, the team immediately called police.



The Boston Police and the Mass. State Police arrived on the scene within a minute or so. The police quickly and professionally apprehended the men who disrupted an otherwise pleasant evening on Chinatown's "Main Street." One of the men involved in the fighting was taken away by ambulance as a result of his injuries. Witnesses interviewed claimed the men were from Houston and staying at the Pine Street Inn. Why they were loitering in Chinatown was not clear.

This incident illustrates that the Crime Watch in Chinatown is working. The community working together has reduced crime in a visible way, and has ensured that the shopping, dining, and people watching center that locals and tourists come to enjoy remains a desirable hot spot. The persistent vigilance of these proud neighbors is keeping Chinatown one of Boston's great neighborhoods.

This reporter interviewed the Crime Watch team following the incident. The conversations revealed that the community of the Chinatown neighborhood has been working hard in many ways to keep their 'town' pleasant, safe, and welcoming. In addition, they are working on many other projects including the possibility of constructing another traditional Chinese gate for Chinatown, and planting flowers and other greenery. The people interviewed expressed great pride in their work, and were proud of working as a community.

Although they follow the advice of the Boston Police and work with representatives from state and local government, the solidarity of this group is what works so well. They are local residents and they are taking the initiative and the responsibility for improving their neighborhood and working toward a brighter future for themselves and their children. The solidarity and pride of Boston's Chinatown is a model for other communities looking to take more control of their future and improve their present situation without relying completely on local, state, or federal governments.

For more information on Boston's Chinatown see <http://www.chinatownmainstreet.org>





National Night Out

Tuesday August 1, 2006

“Empowering Peace”

Community Service Awards

A-1, Tai Tung Village, Chinatown, 4:00 – 4:45 p.m.

Michael Wong

Michael Wong founded and has led the Chinatown Crime Watch Group since its inception over a year ago.. The Chinatown Crime Watch Group has been quite effective in reducing homelessness, drug activity, and other social ills that effect the area. Michael is a great community leader and an inspiration to all the residents in Chinatown. The Boston Police Department commends Michael for his efforts in the community.

National Night Out Boston is Sponsored by:

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*For further information call the Neighborhood Crime Watch Unit Boston
Police Department*

617-343-4345 or visit www.BostonCrimeWatch.com



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Michael Wong

Michael Wong is the Coordinator of Chinatown's Crime Watch program. An active member of the community and resident of over thirty years Wong, along with other members of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, created the program as an attempt to reduce the area's crime rate. "Crime watch has been going since last May," said Wong. "We have been able to get a lot of funding and hope to continue the program until the budget runs out."

During the Chinese New Year, Wong said there was a lot of criminal activity in the area. So the community then decided to create a program where residents can become active participants in community safety.

Every night between five and ten, roughly a dozen residents don bright blue jackets and radios, and walk the streets.

The residents are unarmed and if they spot any illegal activity, they alert police. "During the summer it was really nice to do crime watch because most volunteers rode bikes," said Wong.

Over 70 people are volunteers in the Crime Watch program. Residents meet the first Wednesday of every month, at the Doubletree Hotel for a Crime Watch Safety meeting to discuss developments.

At the start of 2006, Wong will take on new responsibilities as the chair of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association a position that he hopes will enable him to further serve the Chinatown community.

Posted by Susan Fitton

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Behind the Headlines: APA News Blog

May 12, 2005

Fighting Crime in Boston's Chinatown

Posted by: C.N.

The Boston Herald has an interesting article about the efforts of residents and business owners in Boston's Chinatown to **fight back against a wave of robberies**, muggings, and purse snatchings in their neighborhood:

Chinatown residents are vowing to take back the streets with security cameras on crime-plagued corners, a nightly Crime Watch patrol and police details paid for by residents and businesses. In response to robberies, assaults and at least a dozen purse-snatchings in three months, the community is fighting back.

"We don't want them to take over Chinatown," said Kay Chin, longtime owner of the Cathay Corner, a Chinese gift shop on Beach Street. . . . Residents just this week formed Chinatown's first Crime Watch. Each night until 10 p.m. five to 10 residents roam the streets, taking note of shady characters and and possible drug-dealing. The community even hired its own police detail officer with \$15,000 they raised. The officer patrols the streets each night on a bike.

I wonder if thugs and criminals are targeting people in Chinatown based on the belief that Asians are powerless or at least less likely to resist or report the crimes to the policehmmm. At any rate, it's nice to see that Asian Americans, in this case Chinese Americans in Boston, are fighting for their rights and quality of life -- just like any other "regular" American would be entitled to do.