

Group 5 Police

First of all we appreciate you guys, I know like with everybody else, but especially with the 2 of you, you've got your hands full, you're busy and to kind of give you a quick background and we'll try to get you out of here in an hour or so, I'm Dave Gilmore with GAI Consultants and you know Adam, we are teaming with him on updating the West Side Community Strategic Plan and the last time, it was 2008 was the date, so as you probably know, with most of these types of plans after about 10 years they are pretty stale so were dusting it off and getting ready to update it. This is really the couple, yesterday and today, is really a kick off for that effort and as consultants and planners, the first stage of this is really and I'll promise this is the most you'll hear me talk this morning, but we will really listen. So, the first couple days have been what we call focused stakeholder groups, that deal with a specific thing. In your case, crime, prevention, the drug problem, and so on. We've talked to people land ownership, you know there's a surprisingly big number of non-profits, so we've had a focus group on that. So, we spent all day yesterday and we want to do it again today, so we appreciate you guys coming in. So, the way we structured these, it's not a real, it's the opposite of structured it's more of a conversation and we found that with the other groups and it will be with you all that we kind of kicked it off, we found that we've been able to wind people up and then just kind of kick back and let them, and everybody has something that they want to point out or say and we'll interject and ask questions as well, but it's been a very informal discussion on some of the problems and issues that from you're all perspectives. That's really what it is all about. We'll try to get you out of here in an hour or so and so just quickly maybe you could introduce yourselves and we'll go around the table and then get going.

Opie Smith.

I'm Paul Purdue, I'm the Public Service _____ Manager.

I'm Mary _____.

I'm Ron _____, with CURA.

I'm Patty Folan and I work with GAI.

I'm Bob _____ with _____ Group, Charleston Branch.

I'm James Yost, I work with Dave, also with GAI.

There was one line in the original plan that kind of sets the direction, a multi-faceted approach to this plan has to be the expanded area is in need of a redevelopment plan to stop the continued deterioration of housing and improvements in infrastructure, safety, and housing, and open spaces and business opportunities, so it's really kind of wide-ranging. Obviously, safety is a pretty critical one.

Right.

I'll tell you what we heard yesterday during the meetings was that everybody is really happy with the Charleston Police Officer's responsiveness to issues.

Yes, that came up quite a bit.

But they still feel like there is a safety issue. They don't necessarily feel safe and particular what I've heard about in the last 2-3 years, the homeless situation, the vagrant situation, that sort of thing. So, we want to hear from your perspective of what you guys see over here.

Well it's pretty much all we do every day, I mean it's constant, it's kind of what this unit was built for.

So, you all are specifically dedicated to the West Side.

Well not just the West Side. The thing we're dedicated to, we have 32 watch groups in the city now, and 4 years ago there were 2. Now folks care, so they are getting involved and that is a good thing.

Not to interrupt, but I'm curious out of that 34, what would you say would be the percentage the West, versus downtown, versus the East End?

I'd say the West Side, but some of those aren't as active. Some are _____, but they are active and have a direct link to the liaison between the Charleston Police Department, which gives them access. So, pretty much a lot of what we do is we dedicate ourselves to those issues as well as the daily cost of services as well as being part of a beat as well as every since solitary abandoned house, encampment and every.

I bet that keeps you hoping, all of the abandoned properties.

So, what happens is.

What does it take to form a watch group?

Call me and I'll give you some direction, all you have to do is get some folks on board in your neighborhood and we start, and then once you get it formed, there is some hierarchy in there and that kind of thing, but ultimately what you're going to do is get some information out, get some people trained, and tell them what to do, what not to do, that kind of thing. Tell them what to look out for, be aware of their surroundings, give them some directions, and also give them that liaison that they can report directly back to somebody in the police department where they can get an answer and stuff, instead of calling metro, you know there are civilians that work up there and we're not necessarily _____, they are up there answering calls and we're out here running the calls, so it gives them that direct line which is extremely important. But from our perspective, you know, the drug epidemic has definitely pushed the numbers up of dilapidated homes, the folks squatting inside of them, the drug use, shooting up, now what they're shooting up with mostly is this meth, heroin, because is _____, meth come in and is creating a totally different kind of tweaker so to speak, because these people are hyped up rather than falling asleep. The larceny went up as a result of that, people are getting their lawnmowers stolen, their bicycles stolen and all those types of things. But the dilapidated homes, in and of itself in my opinion, is one of the main hubs for the criminal activity and harboring activity and allowing it to continue and that's, we're reboarding or having the city to reboard every day. We spent \$90,000 in plywood last year.

And it probably still doesn't stop it.

Yeah.

I'm also curious because I know our office is right across the river, downtown at the BB&T tower, and just because I'm hyper sensitive to it, as a matter of fact, our office is on the 11th floor and my office literally overlooks Slack Plaza and I know in the last couple of years it seemed to really hit a _____ downtown, I mean there were drive by shoots at Fruth and everything else with those people, but it seems like, in getting that open and running down on Slack has helped, the detachment, because you don't have to be a planner to figure out that the bad guys usually go where the police aren't. So that's been a big help. But perception wise to me, you still see it downtown but it really seems like it's calmed down, but I'm just wondering because we've seen this before, it seems like, there's still obviously a problem downtown, it definitely isn't what it was even last summer, last summer was crazy. But have these just scattered, has it increased, as it got lower downtown, did it get higher on the West or East End.

What's happened, and I'm not trying to be silly, but Charleston is the hub, I mean this is where you can get everything you need. You know like you have a littler supermarket somewhere in town and you go in there you can't buy a shovel, but you can buy bread and that kind of thing, but in Charleston you can get your shovel and bread at the same time. So what it does it draws folks into here as a result of that.

And word spreads, right?

Right. And these folks that are addicts are folks that have worn out their welcome with all of their friends, they've worn out their welcome with their family, because they've stolen from the, taken advantage of them, so now they have nothing, they come here. Part of the reason that that number has went down since last year, since last August we have been working with Presteria, Council passed an ordinance that says that we can use what we call family reunification. In other words, if Adam was to come here and he was from Pennsylvania and he comes here and gets stuck here for whatever reason, and he wants to go back to Pennsylvania, where his family is at, if he has criminal charges we can work with him. We can put him in contact with Presteria for services, have him taken down to the bus station, he can get on the bus, they pay for his ticket, and the City reimburses them for that ticket and he can go home. So, we've sent 175 people home on that in the past year. So that's part of the relief that you're seeing.

Have many of them shown back up?

Five.

So, most of these are from out of town?

Yes, and most of them are getting back to that place and I put it into perspective the other day, when I retire I want to go to Florida, I don't want to ever scrap any frost from my windshield, I don't want to scrape my driveway ever again, I want to go somewhere where I can wear flip flops all year, that's what I want to do and then I started thinking about it the other day and what I thought was this, once I get down there I'm not going to have that support system that I have here, my family is not going to be there, my friends are not going to be there.

Right, that's an underestimated thing.

But making these new friends are not going to be as solid and good friendships as I have here, you know what I mean.

I do know what you mean.

I'm not going to give some new person the key to my house and so thinking about the support system that they're missing, once they get back to it, most of them are starting to see some success out of it, at least they're making strides.

They've been away just long enough to realize that there's no place like home.

Right, so I think some of that is showing in that number as well. In addition to the fact that right now as far as even though the media will portray it differently at times, the relationship between the police department and the homeless entities that provide services, it's huge. We're getting along better than, we're working together, and I think they realize too that a huge part of our job now is social service rather than, it's not just putting handcuffs on people every day, it's finding somewhere to get someone's ID, it's finding somebody a place to sleep, it's finding some kid clothes, it's finding, you know, we've done bedroom suites, basketball hoops, I mean it's just insane, food, housing, we've given out and after hours stuff. We'll always find a way to make something work for the people that we run into, always.

I know a lot of the social services and I mean if you look you see it, they're clustered down on the East end, all together, so when it comes to, this is kind of filtering over to the West Side, is it just because they are in town, is it, I mean are there social service areas around here where you see a similar cluster of things.

Not as much on the West Side, there's not much of a cluster of services as.

There are some.

There are services, yeah. But they're not clustered, things are spread out a little more. And typically, what you're getting down there on the East End, the folks that are here, that we see on the West Side,

for the most part, are those folks that have worn out that welcome at home and worn out the friendships and things like that. That's typically what we see.

And they don't want, I was going to add that, it seems like they really don't want the help or the social services because they won't let them drink or use drugs and then you've got such a heavy, even way more on the East End, such a dilapidated housing stock on this side.

That's another thing too.

_____, how does it look.

It's huge, there are 80 that have went down, 20 of those have been torn down by the owners, 60 by the City, that has been huge for us and I can take you right over here to one, right on the other side of _____, that was a freakin nightmare for us, I mean every single day we were there and now, from there it's crickets chirping, I get no calls from that corner ever.

So how many, 80 have come down?

They've done 80, that number is probably up since then, thanks to CURA, thank God. But that number is probably up since then.

We can get back with _____, but that's real close.

That's a fluid number.

Absolutely.

All the tents going up, there are six crews are working and the majority, and that's something don't want to necessarily get out on the East and Southside, but the majority of those homes have proportionately have come from _____.

Right, is there a criterion for obviously, it's got to be a problem property, but what is the criteria actually say, all right, let's bulldoze this property?

Does Tony make that decision?

What happens is there is an administrative search warrant and Tony, based on complaints and those kinds of things, the eye sore, the trouble spots in the neighborhood, you know, the mice, bugs, all those kinds of things. He can now go to the judge, the City Court Judge and request what is called an administrative search warrant. That will give the right for us to go in the home. So, we'll go with the Building Department and the Fire Department, we go down, if nobody answers we bust the door in, or however we're going to get in, we go in and clear the house, then the Fire Department goes in, they put their clothes on, they film the entire thing, looking for smoke damage, water damage, all that kind of stuff. The Building Department comes in and takes pictures of all the mold damage, the floors and that kind of thing. All that's noted, put into a package and submitted back to the judge and at that point the judge makes the determination as to whether or not the house can be condemned or not, for demolition.

So, when you guys have done that, what percentage of the house, either there's somebody squatting in it.

Oh, it's almost all of them, it's big, half at least.

Those people squatting.

Uh-huh.

Yeah, I think it would be more than that.

And these are the houses that we've boarded up multiple times. The one that they showed the other day, right down here beside of Stonewall, there are two homes down there with garages, _____, what they're doing murals on. We've had that boarded up 10 times this summer, we filmed people wanted out of state, I mean 6, 8, 10 people at a time.

They take the screws out and just move back in.

Right.

And that's what we're running into here is the ownership issues. What happens if the judge says we can tear down a house, but it has to be posted in the paper for 20 days and then there has to be a notification sent to the last known address of the owners so there's no answer, it comes back in 20 days, the city can tear it down and once they are torn down, the _____ the property so that the owner can't just come back, swoop it up, and build.

Right. So, who does that, so once it's torn down, does that go to CURA?

No, the owner still owns it, it has a lien on it, but.

You put a lien on it, okay.

If the owner wants to do something, he's got to deal with the City. Typically, if there is a buyer who actually wants to do something, the City will waive some or all of that lien, if it's the owner just trying to make money, the City will get a request.

When you talk about establishing like a land bank. Once you've paid the mall it's their property, the structure, and then there's probably many cases where the City has to go in and mow the lawn.

Because the City doesn't own it, that's why the City won't take the ownership. I've talked to them about liens, and I said why don't these liens have, why don't we foreclose after 5 years and then they don't want the property.

Yeah, that is my question, how does it get into the land bank.

They still own it, they are still maintaining the land, is that what you're saying.

Right.

That's what I figured.

_____comes into my office daily.

They are, but they're not responsible.

Right, they are not legally responsible for it.

Because my point is every time they do that, that ought to be another charge and once you hit the appraised value of the property you ought to just.

There is a place to put it. And one thing I wanted to ask you guys is, you mentioned the Administrative _____, which was a huge change that we took to legislation and got done.

that's was awesome.

What other tools can you guys, that you can think of that would make you guys more effective. I mean do you need a bike team out here. We heard people say things like, you know, cops presence during the

day is pretty good, but there aren't that many at night. There's a lot of air conditioners and copper being stripped out; a lot of landlords don't know what fix to use.

He's been doing his work over here, but there was another property owner saying that is one of the challenges of getting a property rehabbed is, they'll be out there and they'll get it 50% of the way and somebody comes and strips all the wire out.

You have to think about this too, a lot of the times it's the folks that you hire, I'm just throwing that out. Sorry.

It's very true, yeah, it's a good point.

I didn't mean it like that.

Sure, you didn't.

It is what it is. But you know, the thing about it is, I think presence is a huge thing. I don't know if we would ever have enough. Thankfully now we have 10 extra folks in the academy at this juncture, so it will bring our numbers up from 163 to 173, that 10 extra came as a result of council passing through another, saying we could have more folks.

Is that the total force?

Total force, yes. When I started here we had 182, so now we're getting closer to that number. At one point, we were down to 153.

When was the 182?

1999, yeah.

And that's the highest it's been.

That's the highest I've ever known.

Okay.

But the opioid epidemic, it's torn us up.

One thing, the abandoned buildings that they are surveying and have identified some hot spots of I think vacant structures. One of the places that kind of surprised everybody is when you get onto Washington Street, really towards the far end, up on this hill here and then the other, there was a cluster that really kind of follows the railroad tracks, a linear cluster. So that railroad track is an issue. I was wondering if their correlation to the crime with the railroad, but the bad thing about that is they've got one railroad policeman where there used to be two for 800 and some square miles of track, that's insane to me. We specifically have been working with them on hunting meth in that area, where the dog was hung last year, where we've had murders, where we have people in there shooting up every day, the vegetation is horrible, and you know the police officers are right on board with us, it's like this needs to go, this is bad, if we get rid of that vegetation through there, plus we could work on those houses, would make that area a ton better and I do have the contact information for the fellow that.

That would be great, you might want to talk with him.

It's not the policemen, the policemen are stuck, because he sent it and forwarded it to there, their guys in charge of vegetation and that kind of stuff, and they refuse to cut trees down or whatever, I don't know.

Besides the rail line are there any other places security forces are active in this area?

He's overwhelmed.

Just neighborhood watch groups and as far as this area you're talking about, they are few and far between as far that area you're talking about here and by the tracks, there's none.

Do any of the business have, like the mall has their security folks, are there any private businesses that have anything like that.

They've got cameras.

Well, that's a step in the right direction.

Yeah.

We put them up about 2 years ago and have had _____.

I have them at my house right now and I like the feeling a lot.

And it just donned on me, that you guys should definitely have some input on this, these are focus interviews here, but there will be some series of public meetings coming up, the first one in the next couple of weeks, but part of the process of doing this is updating the border that essentially, the plan that was done in 2016 combined the downtown, it primarily dealt with commercial, but this is essentially the 2008, then it deals more, it has a residential flare to it, but this is no doubt going to change and essentially what that border means is it just expands the area or contracts, that could happen to, that CURA can allocate funds. It also makes it easier for developers to come in and get tax credits, but it just occurred to me while we're talking that it should probably, you all should have as much or more input on the border, like if there are really any hot spots that.

We see a difference in the crime situation in this part of the West Side, you know, as we move further east.

Even up the hill.

At this point, I think the hill is getting more activity than the flats.

It's true.

You tore down all of the houses they were living in, so they moved, they've got to go to higher ground.

And they are.

Is there any effort to deal with _____ people in trying to figure out if some of them are good human beings that could be retrained?

Oh my gosh, that's what we do every day. We are in constant, what happened as a result of that ordinance that came through, there are two outreach workers now that Presteria provides that are paid for by the City. We are in contact with them every single solitary day.

I mean is there any job training programs?

Oh my gosh, yes. Goodwill does one over here. There's college credits available at Goodwill. They offer, like a lot of them get stuck, they don't have their ID, so Presteria will work with them to get their ID, because they can't get their ID because they don't have a social security card and they'll help them get their social security card from their home state. If they don't have their birth certificate, they'll help get it back. I mean, whatever it is, that service, they'll provide it. Presteria is there, it's the full gambit.

They're really trying to pick them up, help them.

Oh my gosh, we had literally on the riverbank the other day, I pushed them a picture of my guy down here and they arrested a guy who was a sexual predator, 14-year-old girl, before they even put him in handcuffs, they had a warrant and I think you were there. Before they even put him in handcuffs, Prester was up there offering services. They called Prester to come up and offer him services before they ever put handcuffs on him. I mean we totally changed our mindset as to what we're trying to do as far as rehab and stuff. But somebody has got to be willing to.

Right, in the end it doesn't matter if they're not.

Right, we can draw them to the water, but can't make them drink.

Right, that's for sure, so.

Since we have all these bad buildings, dilapidated structures, deconstruction by hand is something, I mean it's expensive, it's not profitable, but I mean if there was some kind of program where you had crews demolish, deconstruct houses, to offer these guys an opportunity to go do some hands-on work and get a little pay and start. Because when you get a little money in your pocket you can start feeling a little bit better about yourself because you have some work that you're doing, that kind of gives you an incentive to maybe not to want to be high all of the time or drunk or whatever.

But I think there are definitely times in situations where that's true, but I wonder if it's now. It's not like it's a lack of opportunity that's keeping somebody from working right now. I mean there are employment opportunities around and Goodwill is a great place to point people. They've been huge.

I mean if you create those, I see the need for those programs if there is not opportunity available now, but if somebody is not willing to take opportunities that are already available, what makes us think that if we create these new programs, they'll take that opportunity.

The big part we're missing now I think is beds, that's a huge thing, and I think that's statewide and not just here, but I mean once that stuff gets a grasp on you, and I've seen it in my life with a family member, it totally changes that person and you know to this day like there's no, it's not the same person that it was 20 years ago, because that drug got a hold of them. It's a fight every day for them to stay out of that and that kind of thing.

It's ironic you said that, because we had a long day yesterday so I took Patty and James to dinner last night over at Tide Water and we just walked over and after we ate we were walking back to the BB&T building and just walked down Brawley to cut up, right there by your substation, and there at the buses, there was a guy there and he was in a hospital gown. I guess maybe he had OD'd last night and today he's trying to get home and he was wearing the green smock that was tied in the back.

What rehab is in Charleston, I mean there's Recovery Point for Women over here, Highland has a unit which is small, are there any other what is that one called, I can't remember, there is one more.

But there's not a lot and right now we have a QRT team which is a Quick Response Team that was developed and so what that is, it's kind of the model that mimics Huntington's model, you know there's a, within 48 hours after an overdose, you're visited by a policeman, a paramedic, and somebody else and I can't remember who else is on the team, but the policeman is dressed down in plain clothes, doesn't have a badge and doesn't show one, but both of the folks that are on the team are clergy, they are Chaplains, so they have religious stuff too and they go there and try to talk them into rehab. If there are 10 people in the house that they go into when they go there, they try to talk to all 10 of them. Ultimately what happens out of that is that if they say yes, that's when they go straight, they are out, boom. But what we run into and we can tell you this too, if we do get somebody at that point, where they're at the point now where they say I can't do this anymore, I need help. We have trouble finding beds and that's when he needs to go.

So, what happens when they're full, and you need to get somebody in a bed, what happens?

We look everywhere, places we have to look are like in Ohio and we call those places, and they want payment, they do, they want paid and they're like well we will use their insurance and I'm like, they don't have insurance, they don't have medical insurance.

Right, they don't have an ID.

And that's what you run into, is people wanting to make money, and I'm like okay.

There's just no money to build more facilities.

They've been trying in Charleston for years to build a Teen Center, which is going to be more of higher unpaid sort of thing. I mean you pay for that too, don't get me wrong.

The folks that we see that we need to get off the streets don't have insurance and they don't have money.

Is Recovery Point looking at doing a similar facility in Charleston for men?

They haven't.

They seem to be the most successful. They are the model right?

Yeah, when I first went down there, I was the liaison with the police department that dealt with them when they came and got to know Rachel and the other girls and I didn't realize until the day of, but when got up there and she started talking that she was an addict herself and I was like, what.

They say the most successful recovery programs are run by.

All of them, everybody that works down there are that way. It's a 100 percent true, because it would be like me coming up and telling you how to put a fire out right now or whatever and I say, hey here are some safety tips for your house, you'd say like, and it's that way. They can sit there and say I've been there and done that and it's hard to argue with that. But that model works phenomenally I think.

I'm curious, just because I know these issues are tied together, when you encounter people with these substance abuse issues do you encounter a lot of these, maybe people that are just showing up with mental health issues as well?

Some, de-institutionalization killed us as well, that's another thing, we have folks, the system right now is failing us miserably, I have to have a meeting with a chief judge over there who has denied my appeal stating that there were no issues with mental hygiene, that there were no appeals ever made to the mental hygiene system. So, I went back and asked the folks that are getting the mental hygiene, I'm like have you ever appealed and they said I didn't know there was an appeal process, nobody has an idea of how that works, so we're getting ready to try to get that into effect as well. As soon as they deny it, because there are folks that need help and they're mentally, you know, we had a veteran that stayed over behind Fruth Pharmacy for about 2 weeks, my until was a lot smaller so I was a lot more on the ground that I am right now, so I was going down every day and talking to this guy and trying to get him help. I had Presteria down and finally Presteria was able to get a mental hygiene on him, they put him in, he was a homeless veteran who was off his medication, they got him back on medication and he's fine now and he went back with his family in Fayetteville. Now the thing of that was, he sat there for 2 weeks with people bringing him food and he had urinated and defecated on himself for 2 weeks straight that they had to soak him like a burn victim to get his clothes off, because it had grown into the skin.

There are people that need help and there are people that need those things, but right now the mental hygiene process isn't helping them. They're denying those mental health hygiene left and right unless they are a direct threat to themselves or someone else, mainly if they are not going to kill themselves

or somebody else, even though they are sitting out in the street and could be hit by a car tomorrow, so we're working on that part. We're going to depress the crap out of you today.

No.

Why are the mental hygiene people taking such a hard line?

It depends, you know, it's like you'll have teachers and some of them will let you be 5 minutes late and some make sure you're on time, that kind of thing. Sometimes the letter of the law is the same way, you know, policemen are that way too. I mean there, for me there's a ton of gray, I got a ton of gray, but unless they hurt me we'll do it this way or that way and that's it, a lot of people aren't like that. He's in the gray area too.

Is he just saying that because you're sitting there?

He's got a ton of gray, trust me. Where we are right now in the judge realm, but there in that, there's not a lot of gray. So, you either meet the letter of the law or you don't and if you don't then we're not getting it to you. So, it's one of those things, we're going to have to learn to process and part of that learning to process is the field process and I'm not an attorney by any means but we'll figure out how to deal with it.

You're still learning how to be a social worker.

That's all we do, it's about 90% of what we do.

It's almost flip flop.

And we get 10 years of problems solves in 5 minutes.

I finally got a mental hygiene on one fellow that really needed help, we needed him off the street, he was a danger, he was taking his private parts out as women would go by, making threats. Prester was finally able to obtain a mental hygiene, we couldn't, and we got him off the streets.

He sat at my table and he came up and just sat down. He was from Detroit and his mom was collecting his check back in Detroit. He was receiving an SSI check and mom was swiping his SSI check and living off of it while he was down here living on people at Soho. And mom put him on the bus.

Sounds like he had a fantastic lunch.

One of the guys from our unit worked with Prester to get him on a mental hygiene. I mean he was clearly a danger, he really was, he needed help.

So, do you have a feel for, I know it's subjective, but the percent that actually have a legitimate mental illness.

Just say it's 50%, that's a tough one, I don't know, several and then you've got chemical dependency, you throw that in and it's another mental illness, I mean 50%, I think it's going to be a lot higher, it's pretty high.

So, on the West Side, in the residential side, what are the main types of crime do you see outside of the substance abuses, is it mainly property crime?

It seems like the violent crime.

The violent crime is the stuff and you and I say we probably aren't going to have to worry about at any given point. Most of the time, 99% of the time it's not sporadic it's a specific target. It's probably funny, but I haven't bought drugs and will never, so nobody has ever shot at me either, I mean if you hang around with that kind of element, I mean that's the kind of lifestyle that evolves around it and

eventually you know you tick the wrong person off and they're going to hold up their street cred and somebody is going to shoot you or shoot at you.

Put yourself in that position.

Yeah, so for the most part, that's what we see on the rise are the property crimes and stolen bicycles and lawnmowers and the burglaries and the beatings, and ____ to autos, shop lifting, fueled by the drugs.

I was going to say it probably all goes back to the drug problem.

How do you fence that stuff?

Oh, it's clans, they have to report to us, but in essence a lot of times some of the pawn shops, there's 18 serial numbers on a television and they reported that television, they may accidentally mess up one of the 18 characters and somebody was supposed to put in a zero and the put in an "O" so now when we run it, it doesn't come back, and it's just one of those things they play.

When you give them 5 times and.

We can report that, we can figure that out and definitely nail that down, we can do that, but it's just hard sometimes the way they kind of play the game. But they have to report, once they report we have a system that we can utilize to look at those things.

Do they have to report everything or are there certain things they have to report?

They have to report precious metals, it all goes into a system and database that we can look into. Now CDs and stuff like that.

Some of these places you see bikes and lawnmowers and you drive past these pawn shops and they have a row of bikes and lawnmowers.

You can walk past up here and see a guy with 2 bikes on his shoulder and pushing one, we did it the other day, and stopped the guy and none of them are stolen because nobody knows they're stealing them. That's another thing, I think an education campaign as far as you know, which we try to do every day, but getting folks to know their serial numbers and makes and models of their stuff, taking pictures of it or whatever, because what happens is, we can stop one person, we catch one person whose breaking into these cars or whatever, it solves 20, 30, 50 different _____. One person can be a crime spree in a neighborhood and that's a big thing.

He preaches that a lot at group meetings.

And people don't know each other, you sit here and call yourself a neighborhood, but you're not a neighborhood anymore. Everybody is looking at their phone and looking away and not talking to each other and if you don't get to know your neighbor, you aren't going to give a crap, they're not going to give a crap about your house being broken into, they might not call the police because they don't want to get involved.

Right, not watching out for you.

Speaking of neighbors, what about the West Invest Program, that's probably something we want to touch on as well in this meeting.

I think it's working out well, we have 3 right now, getting ready to get the 4th on 1st Avenue. The guys seem to be liking it, the neighborhood definitely likes it from everybody that I've talked to. I think it's been a worthwhile thing.

I mean the goal of that program is public safety, so do you think it helps in a neighborhood if you have an officer living in the middle of the block.

Yes, it's a big deterrent.

Not so much a deterrent, but it changes the street. And I'll say this, Jacob lives down on Hunt, and not trying to be subtle, when I first started here, I could walk down Hunt Avenue and not a soul would speak to me, nobody and I go down there now and I've got kids hanging off both arms, kids climbing up on my shoulders, I mean and it's just a totally different outlook. But now too, I mean I said this earlier, the police are the next generation that are going to have the issues that we have throughout the country, because right now there's such an outreach, if somebody calls, we go. I mean teach kids.

I think the mentoring helps a lot too.

Mentoring, yeah, we do 2 mentoring sessions down here too, one at Mary C. Snow and then one at Stonewall. The Mary Cl Snow runs the school year long.

When is that?

On Tuesdays, now it will be from 2-3, it was 3-4 but they changed the school time. And it will pick up and we'll start it as soon as they start their next semester after their break.

I worked the _____ detail about a week or so ago, and there was a lady stopped at a stop light and a kid rolled the window and yelled at me and said hey, you came to my school, so I mean it.

Yeah, if somebody calls, I don't care if it's South Charleston, I don't care where it's at we go. We'll go get the kids fingerprints, we'll talk to them about safety.

We'll do one at a time, two tomorrow.

Yeah, and so I think that perception is going to go away with that next generation because the kids are growing up with us in their school every day.

Right.

Are you all aware of that soft touch program, I think it's called PD at school?

Handle with care, yeah. That's another thing, people say that Charleston is behind the curve, but we're starting a lot of stuff, and that program is going nationwide and it all started here in Charleston, WV.

That's awesome.

This was the first of the two pilot schools, Piedmont and Mary C. Snow, so that started here in WV and it's going literally from sea to shiny sea.

Well we just obtained an ambassador dog as well that we are going to use with the kids, it's just a friendly dog, not really a therapy dog, but sort of like a therapy dog.

And we're doing the lip sync challenges for the love of God.

It's really good, that was awesome. It got 2.3 million views, that's incredible.

Are there any contacts or promos for the parents in these schools that you work with?

I'm going to make some, all they have to do is ask, I'll make some. I don't have time to make something without somebody asking though. I don't.

I know there's only 24 hours in a day.

Yeah, I got to literally, just in my bureau, now keep in mind patrol, they're out running calls and stuff like that, but just in my bureau, I'm up to 18 total people and I've got 34 neighborhoods watch groups to report to. We run safety city which is 65 classes a year for third graders in the city and I've got three prevention resource officers that work inside the schools. I've got a law enforcement instructor out at Capitol High School who teaches a 3-year program up there, that they get a certificate out of. I have Eddie Whitehead, who is now going to be the police athletic lead director and we're still in the planning stages of that.

That's something brand new isn't it.

Brand spanking, like two weeks ago brand new. Like Thursday he called me and I didn't even know he was coming Monday, I called the chief.

What department.

The police athletic league, they have them throughout the country.

So that means he's going to working with athletes.

Yeah.

I mean if you get to the coaches.

I think we will be the coaches, I think.

Well I coached little league sports for 17 years and coaches have an effect on the kids, if you get some good guys or people, coaches, cheerleaders, leaders, they really understand the concept of early childhood development and it helps a lot because of the situation these kids are coming from and how coaches tend to be hardnosed and that can drive kids away and make them better and I agree, more destructive and being creative, not trying to understand the situation, you know, everybody in the world is not the greatest football or basketball player.

That's it, you've got to learn to be a good loser.

A lot of these kids just want to be a part of something, they never get to play, they want to put that uniform on and go to practices and be part of the team.

I think that's what part of this will do, you know, in the same concept we do that for middle school aged kids, every year we would run that junior academy.

And when you talk to any of them, give me a call because I would like to work with them on that. I've always believed that if you get good coaches, because the coaches are like teachers and you know kids listen to coaches and all of the experience that you have later on is, I mean you get tied to them like parents and especially if you can follow them a little bit after they leave your teams and stuff like that, and not just the good athletes.

Oh yeah, yeah.

You made a good point, you mentioned earlier about having them get involved with the parents at the school.

Yeah.

But what I heard from the principal at the school, Ms. _____.

They don't want the parents in the school.

No, they want the parent there, they can't get the parents there. But she said that she could get the parents at sporting events, so if you get the police out at sporting events, that's hands on.

The reason we mentor, we mentor at Stonewall, Star Base 2.0, Star Base is that program that is run by the air guard, it's a week long program generally up there where the kids go on a field trip and it's awesome, they get online, they experiment and this will be our 4th year involved with them, because they couldn't get the parents at Stonewall to volunteer to be mentors, so they called me and said can you get some police down here every week you know for 14 weeks or whatever and I'm like yeah. So literally this is our 4th year and we've been, and there hasn't been a parent show up for the first time, out of the whole school, and a free program.

Well it sounds like, and that came up yesterday about what were the available programs for kids to have something to do outside of school and mentoring, but quite honestly in talking with you, it's kind of uplifting because it sounds like there's a lot in place but is there a problem getting the word out, because stuff like that came up.

I'll put it like this, we have the West Side meeting at the police department just to bring everybody together at one time and we generally do them every season, about every 3 months, so when I do that I put it on Facebook, do a press release, I have my guys go out and literally hand out pamphlets, have people hang them up in the stores and then I still hear, I don't know. I mean I put it on the Marque at Stonewall, I put it on the Marque at West Side Elementary, I don't know what else to do, smoke signal, I don't know.

Well I guess you're always going to have that, it doesn't matter.

There's a disconnect there.

It's not like you're not trying to, you are getting the word out, but not everybody.

I even handed them out with receipts at Kroger, because everybody has got to go to Kroger.

Yeah, we did all the stores up there it's just one of those things, I don't know, we hand them out at school, and we'll print them out, take them down, and send them home to with the kids from school, I mean it's like that.

Right, so it's not from the lack of effort, it's an undertaking.

Can I ask a question, something that came up yesterday, changing the streets to reduce the number of one-way streets, what is your perspective, would that make things safer or?

I don't, the traffic pattern right now, I don't think that the streets are sufficient right now and I don't think that's going to change that much.

From a crime standpoint.

Now the West Side Hill can be very confusing, I mean I think it would hurt, the interstate and streets the way they flow now.

Our space has been changed for two years out back with parking and you guys pay taxes, there used to be meters out back the building and now it's leased parking, we don't have any parking at our station, so we go to the basement. So now, it's been two years now and people are still pulling back there and it's like why can't I park there. It's just one of those things, I think it takes time and I don't think that will help or hurt people.

The parking lot, of your all's access, it seems like it would have a tremendous impact on you guys getting in and getting out?

Yeah, it's better.

I mean I hate it as well as anybody else, because you've got something to do at City Hall, and you grab a parking meter for 36 minutes.

And when you call the police you don't want them going all the way to the third floor of the parking building and sitting in traffic, not cool.

Waiting on the elevator.

Yeah, when I went over there, it was kind of "oh gosh", then when you start thinking rationally, you kind of say well I've got a lot more time to full around than the police, you know.

Well, one thing they've done in some other towns is a crime prevention measure to deal with, on the planning side, they'll create cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets, so that you don't have the through traffic going through neighborhoods. Well what I heard yesterday and what I think I heard today is most of its foot crime. I mean most of this people walking through the neighborhoods.

Yeah, it's people walking.

I mean if you look at it, I don't know if there is a study done or whatever, but I think it would interesting to see. But how many people have access to a car and I'd think you find that that is lower than what you think, the percentage of people with a vehicle and it's a lot of folks, it's a lot of found opportunity, it's a lot of folks leaving their purse in the backseat and leaving items of value out and that's where that education process comes in, but you have to get them there to educate them.

Right.

I've got resource flyers that we made up as the police department, put together to get out to folks, to show them the resources that are there. There's the 211 that's on your phone whether you know about that or not. There's always some way to figure out what's available to you out there. A lot of people just don't, I don't understand not taking advantage of stuff that they are given. And a lot of its pride, I mean.

You need to recap that lip-sync video with tips.

Yeah, yeah.

Are there lighting issues on the West Side allies that we can even address?

Every time we get a lighting issue or something like that, we always try to take care of it. And that's another thing about the neighborhood watch too, that we out to folks. It's not strictly about, it's about bettering your neighborhood, it's not just about crime prevention, so part of that is the lighting aspect of things. If we run across something or the lights out or whatever we always try to get it fixed. So, I can't think of anything right now lighting wise.

There's dark allies.

There may be, but as far as if it comes to our attention, we take care of it then.

What do you mean take care of it, add lights to people's buildings?

Yeah, we just a light added at West Moreland, it needed one, the City footed that bill, \$850.00. Actually John ____ the bill and he's ticked out it, I don't know why he got it actually.

____, a public yard, the alley behind Ty's place over there, they did a bunch of work over there, they've got the drainage working, but the lighting, is that a problem throughout the West Side or just the allies, do the allies create an access point for crime?

Yeah, yeah, I'm sure it's places you can go and be hit and things like that and the bad things about alleys too is a lot of times too, the vegetation is high, the trees are always down low, it gives people perfect places to hide, there's lots of shadows, it is a breeding ground.

There's a pedestrian alley behind our building and we got together and shut off the alley on both ends because people were sleeping in there.

We target it from an infrastructure standpoint, target the alleys in this area with lights and cameras, that might do more to solve some of the crime issues than.

Is a lot of this in the camera?

No.

I don't think so.

I think you would be surprised at the amount of people who actually have them, it's one of those things.

It's personal.

Yeah, we have to go door to door and knock and just like in the case of that dog, I came out that night when the dog got hung down there, when we came out, we went door-to-door, that's what we do, we start knowing, and luckily we found a lady who had one, we caught him dragging the dog up the railroad tracks and it was just enough that we started passing around the picture and showing it, and everybody was like, yeah, that's him, that's him.

And really the cameras have gotten so good these days and you can get it like \$100 at target.

I've got a Ring, just ring the doorbell.

Walmart has one almost as good as the ring and it's \$25.00.

Yeah.

\$25.00, buy a camera.

And they are really high resolution too.

We've solved a lot of crime based off those rings and those Arlo systems.

Is there any kind of camera system in the city?

We have cameras but we utilize that we can move from place to place to place but they are getting moved and we are limited to the amount that we can have based on the server.

Are they mostly on the lights of the intersections?

He can't tell you (laughing).

A friend of mine wanted me to ask.

Those are for the fire department to be able to switch them to green, that's what those little things are, those aren't cameras.

A lot of people think they're cameras.

Yeah, let them think they're cameras, you know what I mean, because it will help us out in the long run.

I already knew that.

We trouble spot move those cameras.

How many, so there is a limited amount?

I am thinking 30.

So, you need help buying a new server to get 20 cameras. It would give you guys a lot more coverage if the cameras were ____.

There are issues with that, for whatever reason, I don't know that whole, I am far from being an IT guru, that's far from my expertise but ____.

The technology really, just because I'm looking for an Arlo system for our house, we live in the woods, you can, everything is wireless now and for \$500 bucks you could get a heck of a system.

Cameras are done all over the country, we're going to figure out how to do it.

Right, but we'll trouble spot, we'll move them you know to where we need them.

For businesses it is an expense issue, just being involved with the Main Street program, you know, when we were doing the facade improvements, I had more than one business owner ask me if they would consider cameras as part of that project, if they could get some help because they would be happy to have them, but you know, I think we spent \$10,000 on our system here.

Oh my, well.

And now you can get those that are wireless, everything stored in the cloud for 24 hours for free, it's really made it accessible.

It's handy.

Yeah, and they are all high resolution.

Yeah, that and the serial numbers are the two biggest things that help us get people convicted.

Yeah. I didn't know that about, I've never been in a Pawn Shop, but I didn't know that everything.

Just try not to be the suspect, that's all (laughing).

I really haven't, I didn't know that.

Going back to tools, is there something you run into a lot where a different, a harder ordinance, and we even talked about an overlay, if you do something in this district, the punishment is twice.

That's the thing I mean we have a budget, what happened a couple of years ago and when ____ was in office, he had a movement that he wanted all of the misdemeanor crimes to be moved from magistrate court to the municipality. So, if your municipality had a municipal court, which we do, he wanted all of the misdemeanors moved there. Well in essence it's a good idea because what it does it, if you're the judge for instance, then you see the drunks everyday doing this, this, and this, well now you have all their caseloads so you know what kind of fits them because you're getting all of their misdemeanors. I'm not trying to be silly but 10% of the population is who we deal with every day. I mean the other 90% we don't even see. And so, it was a good idea in essence but what it did was this. Prior to that if they went to magistrate court, the magistrate court would pay the bill at the jail, now when we send them

somebody, we're paying \$48.50 a day per person to send them to jail, which after you know say they stay there 30 days, that \$1,500, you know what I mean. There's a budget for that. Now saying that, we haven't even come close to meeting our budget for the last three years. So, I think there needs to be a little more, like you say, consistency in upholding the laws we already have rather than trying to make new ones.

I'll agree with that.

That's kind of, yeah, people talk about the gun laws and those kinds of things, making them stiffer, let's just punish the people that are doing stuff now and it will probably fix itself. But what we run into is that, I mean.

So, you're saying, and this was an idea that was thrown out yesterday that I think might have some legs, but you can't institute this city wide because of bars and restaurants, in certain, like Ron said, maybe there are some overlay areas that are primarily residential, this is. Is there any kind of curfew in place now?

There is for juveniles.

Okay, and what's the time.

Midnight and one on the weekends, it's been in place forever for juveniles.

It seems like when I was coming up it was about 10 o'clock, but that's been a long time ago.

We can, we don't unfortunately not all of the time. If you go dealing with juveniles, I'll promise you this. If we get a juvenile shop lifter right now, we will fight over who's going to take them, because the parents won't come get them and then I can't let them go. Once the lost prevention turns them over to me, I've got to set with them.

___ for them.

But in that, there's the liability, if something ended up happening, then we're getting sued is something happens to a kid.

Wasn't there a talk about a program to have them, you know, to take them a church to somewhere.

There was, and ___ started that up and I have no idea where that went after that, it kind of died off.

What you're talking about, you bring one kid in and your stuck with that kid until the parents show up.

In that case, what he was talking about doing was a good idea, because what it did it put the juvenile services there as well, so it freed us and we could hand them off to them and it frees us back up to go on the road. Because they were talking about doing stings for curfew violations, is what they're talking about. And those stings we would go out and have those entities there to provide services to the parents, the kids, for social services, whatever it was. We were all going to be in one place at that church. Now that would have worked, if we could have gotten enough people, I don't know what happened to that. I got enough of my own projects to try to keep up with others. But I think, you know, the juvenile thing, you're starting to see a whole lot more of grandparents now taking care of those kids because the parents are addicted or out of the picture of whatever and the grandparents are tired and we see it every day and there's a lot more leniency towards those kids. In other words, they let them stay out or do whatever they want because they are just too tired to deal with them I think. And that's where part of that system that you're talking about comes into play with that lady from West Virginia State that runs that grandparents as parent's program. We set people up with stuff all the time with that trying to help them, it's hard.

Just circling back on that, is some sort of map or is that boundary delineated as far as where the curfew is.

It's Fall City, it's city wide, it's a city ordinance.

Okay, so it's not just in specific areas for juveniles.

Yeah, juveniles. it was challenged, it was taken to the West Virginia Supreme Court.

Was it? So, you can't, I mean you've probably answered my next question, it would be very difficult to do even in just say a residential area for adults.

That's called ____ (laughing).

I don't want to do that here.

Well you said, I'm calling it a curfew.

Wow, that's scary.

I mean I don't like looking out my driveway at 2 AM in the morning and seeing somebody and I've had that happen, in the middle of the woods.

That's something, even when you hear someone walking down the street in the middle of the night, you immediately think somebody's up to no good.

And they usually are.

Yeah, they think you know, but if I called there, at least I've got a reason to be there, presence and a lot of times I'll ____ that and that's a big thing we're trying to push people to do. A lot of times they don't feel like making a phone call to the police, don't want to bother them, but in essence we have them on an emergency number and non-emergency phone number goes to the same place that the 911 calls go to and don't hesitate to call.

Do you get anonymous tips?

Yeah, they can send us, it's on our Facebook, I've got a Facebook page that's not that anonymous but you can anonymously submit through our website.

But you can't call.

You can call.

Never have I ever put a name in any of the stuff that comes from my neighborhood watch stuff, never. Nobody that ever goes out to the drug unit and whoever goes out to the Special Forces unit, or ever goes out to my unit, or goes out to anybody, there is never a name that is shared and I always make that known to the neighborhood watch groups, I don't care, unless it's a homicide.

You just want the information. If it's a homicide?

Then I'm sharing your name, sorry. Because I'm not going to let somebody die and somebody not getting prosecuted because I'm trying to hold your credibility. But they can anonymously submit a note, but on that website, there's a place on their specifically, we get them all the time, tips and things like that.

So, it sounds like it's taking a lot of your, because there's no question you all are responsive on issues, does it eat up a lot of your time, is the vacant houses.

Yeah, yeah, going through them, having to reboard them up, it's costing the city some money. So, we're not just going through them, I mean contemplate this from just a manpower issue. Say you're looking at your manpower, so my guys go out and respond to the call initially, so they go and clear the house, let's say it's a 3-story house. Here I've got, I have to have two guys to clear at least, so they go in and clear, they get it done, and if they find somebody in, now they're calling for us to come down and talk to them. Maybe they've got warrants, maybe they don't. If they've got warrants, now we're taking them to the station. So, let's say the arrest process, we're looking at a 2-hour window for 2 guys that I lose off the street. Now they have to get a hold of the building guy to come down and board it up. They're not going to do it right at that moment, it's going to be the next day. So then you've got to go back in and clear the house again, right. And so when you go back in to clear the house again, I lose them again for ever how much time that is, waiting on them to board it up and that kind of thing. So, manpower wise, that's killing us. And when you think about that buildings report and 40% of the structures being vacant, that's just some ____ and valley you can't win.

So does the city have enough code enforcement and enough people to do everything that you them to do?

Tony Hardman is swamped, Tony Hardman is the hardest working man that I have ever seen in my entire life and I love them and I appreciate him every day because he helps us out immensely. I don't know that they have enough, I don't think you could with what we've got right now, I think they are way understaffed.

And they do the boarding, they are basically the ones who do.

Well, they kind of ____, but the building department comes and does the board well not the building, the construction crew. The construction guys, but what happens is they have 8 people in the construction crew, two of them have been strictly dedicated to boarding up houses every day, so a fourth of the workforce in the construction crew is now dedicated to boarding houses.

Instead of fixing a sidewalk or every day.

Or fixing something at City Hall, have you seen our.

Yeah.

Go down there and take a toy PlayStation.

They've been talking about ____ that for a decade.

Since I've been here.

Who pays for that?

CURA helps out with that.

Part of what ____, it wasn't part of it. It's so costly when you're _____ so we had other funding resources.

Well I want to, and this is tied into something you said earlier, but when you all did that, and it's a great thing you did, did you usually, Rodney ____, is the main guy, but did you have to advertise that and actually hire a demo contractor as the lowest qualified bidder or who actually does the demolition?

Well we did it for two reasons, we gave the land to the city because they have the infrastructure to handle the demolition. They bid it out, but I can't give the details, but they bid it out, every other year they bid it, and right now the contractor is WV Demolition, but I'm not sure what your question.

Right, well I'll tell you where I am going with it, because he had a rather cool idea, you know, you could help supply some labor for this but because they things are using public finds the city has to bid it out, and there are insurance issues, so you just can't hire somebody off the street to go demolish a house, but I was just wondering, you would almost be up to the contractor if he wanted to supplement his workforce.

But you get give advantage points to someone who would use local, in this particular case.

Right, you are right, that might be a possibility to use some folks.

A few people a couple of years ago were looking at doing some deconstruction programs and I don't think they ever got legs, but they, there's not much to salvage.

There's not much left in when they're torn down. The copper is gone.

Any architectural features.

Not much left.

There's a lot of good wood.

If we've got a house and they found that it's salvageable, the judge will not allow that demolition.

You know, that might be away to look at that program, it's not that it's a true demolition program, but if you had a program that you were working with some people to teach them demolition and salvage, just to work something where they could go in first and salvage anything that had value to help fund the program like that, and then the city would still demo the structure once they were done with.

You might find a structure that needed to be demoed, it would be a lot of easier to fix, especially if you don't have foundation problems, you know.

Well that's part of that program, if it's salvageable the judge won't allocate it to them. It's got to be in bad shape and most of them, it's bad. It's one of those that you walk into and you're scared that it's going to go through the floor completely.

Once you get past all of that dirt and debris and furniture that people have left, then you start tearing these walls out, you find that they've got real 2X4's in them, I mean you know I've done several, I'm working on one right now, you know you gut it all out and very little construction is going to have to be done. I was hearing that you guys have houses that you're tearing down, has that changed?

No, we're still in it.

So, I hear people say that it's low impact _____.

Yeah, you would have to have seen it before and then see it now.

Even downtown.

I don't know, it's kind of like those districts for instance right now, you know what I'm saying.

Yeah, I mean you've got a ton of biscuits and is it going to bother you to go throw them outside, because you've got a tone of biscuits and but now if there was one biscuit in there, we all had to share it for the next 5 days, things would be a little different, people would be more preserving with that biscuit and that's the kind of way it was. If there's an over flow and there was no oversight what so ever, as to how they were going to.

They were just _____.

You give a person a couple of needles that's one thing, but if you're giving somebody 30 needles, 50 needles, that's nonsense.

Yeah, it's like he hands you a bucket, and you say well here are your 30 new ones and it's like.

And they were supposed to bring them back before they got more.

Really.

And they never did.

I couldn't believe that, that they were giving one person that many.

We had one guy he got 300 and some and you're like what are you doing and he was like well they let me keep the old ones and then they let me keep the new ones.

Because they weren't making them bring them back and they were supposed to bring them back right.

Keeping it in mind, the number they got as well, came from the dump box that came from outside, which my guys put needles in them, in that dump box out there. When we see one, we don't let it lay, we pick it up, and retrieve it.

I always scratched my head on that, but the minute the plug got pulled on that, it almost was instantaneous.

___ those things, and literally we would go in there and make 12-14 arrests, the next one we did after that, one. The next one after that was zero.

We had a two and a one.

So, I mean, that number is totally different. Guess what, we can't just go in there and curfew them, it's not like we're going in to arrest them, we're running their names and they've got warrants. These are people that are walking around you shopping at the mall and have warrants and most of them stem from stealing them from the mall.

You just mentioned in the beginning you were seeing this moving from pills to.

And from marijuana, I know it's hard to believe but it did. So marijuana used to come from Mexico, the cartels made money from it, now all of the marijuana that comes into West Virginia comes from legalized states, so once it comes from here to there, and the CHC level is so much better, so the cartels aren't making money, and being good business owners, what do they do, they change their product lines and they started selling more crystal meth which is absolutely beautiful compared to the West Virginia Sissonville meth that we use in the lab here and so they flooded the market with it, they make it cheap, they get people addicted, and once they are addicted they have problems for life and they raise the price back up and it's just a good business model. The whole thing comes back to marijuana, they ship it here from legalized states, the devil's levels.

We actually got 44 pounds in an apartment one day. It's legal for them to ship it, it's not legal for you to pick it up. It's legal in Colorado but it's not legal here.

Right, I stopped a guy, he was shoplifting. I walked in there and needed a drink and the lady said that guy put stuff in his coat and I stopped him. He had a little vial from a legalized state and had some marijuana in it. He said it's legal, I said it's legal where you bought it but it's not legal here. He just got off the bus, walked over to the stop.

My barber, a couple of years ago, he doesn't live here anymore, he's in Clarksburg, but he said that it's a great idea to get marijuana now legally because I have family in Colorado and I said that's not legal.

I think eventually it will go to that, I mean, you know the bad thing about it is we ruin everything and that's what is going to happen when they legalize everything because it's never enough and the THC levels are never enough and finally you go the point where you start marking butane hash oil, where they the marijuana and put it in a glass tube, pour butane over it, strain out it and what comes out of the butane makes THC, then you got to separate the THC from butane, so how do you do that. What is butane, it's lighter fluid, so they separate it with heat. They're having butane hash oil explosions in Colorado and those places because they want to get the THC levels up to about 80%, compared to the 2% of marijuana in the 60s.

I am interested, we were just talking on that same thing, and we do a lot of public space design around town and one of the things we just finished was the Brawley Walkway on the east side of Slack, from the Town Center to Slack and then from Slack to Capitol and we put those, and I don't think I told you about this, but we put these string lights at Slack Plaza and I was noticing that a lot of the lights would be missing and we found out, they were unscrewing the light and they were climbing up on that decorative wall we did, unscrewing the light bulbs, and using them to smoke meth and they had, I believe it was Chris Knox that was telling me, I think they replaced like 500 light bulbs so far, so they are replacing them with plastic bulbs. But how do your public proof that, you can never, it's like whack-a-mole, when you think you're ahead of something.

We've got cameras there too, at Warner Law Office, and at the other place.

Yeah, they've had a terrible time.

But I've got a guy that works down that strip every day and that's all they do is take care of that and we are writing complaints now based on, the City Attorney finally came through and gave us the go ahead that we can write complaints on what is on camera and he's prosecuting them now.

Well I just bring that up because I thought I had seen everything, but there is always something that comes up every year that I just.

I didn't know you could get plastic light bulbs.

That's what they tell me, at least the ones that they can climb up and reach, they've been replacing them with plastic, so they can't.

You mentioned earlier a high priority need, is there any other needs or gaps that you see out there that we should deal with that are high priority.

I think that parent link issue, and I just don't know how to fix that.

Yeah that's a tough one.

I don't know, I can't think of how many of my guys are buying stuff for kids every day and we don't make a ton of money, but that parent thing is missing altogether and it's every single day we're dealing with a new kid, these parents are on drugs and we're chasing them down and finding them in an outbuilding down here with 10 other people eating out of trash cans.

And that's probably the hardest and most important thing to fix but it's probably also the hardest. A lot of this other stuff would go away if the parent thing got solved.

That would be a big thing, the family, my growing up, I went to my Aunt's funeral 2 days ago, and my uncle got up there and talked about my family and how I thought back on and thought gosh I was lucky. I had people that loved me, took care of me, my neighbors whipped me, they did, and then when I got home I got whipped again.

You probably deserved it.

That aspect, the whole village is gone.

Yeah.

I'm not going to change it.

Is there anything we missed, just big picture stuff.

I don't know I think you've covered just about everything and then some.

There's no gaping holes in here that you'd like, obviously it sounds like you are almost overwhelmed with stuff.

All it's every day.

It seems like there's a lot of stuff.

How many hours do you work a week.

I don't know, I don't know how much I make an hour. I have a very significantly young lady who takes care of me and my daughter is grown and then I have more or less a stepson that is 30 right now, so pretty busy.

You're probably on call pretty much.

My phone rings all day and my wife wakes me up (laughing). If you need anything holler at me.

Well this will be going on 3-4 months at least and we'll see