



Village of

## **Roslyn Estates**

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**From the Office of Hon. Paul Leone Peters, Mayor**

**February 6, 2024**

Dear Neighbors;

Last evening, Trustee Susan Rubinstein and I attended a meeting held by the Nassau County Police Department (NCPD) at the Manhasset-Lakeville Firehouse off Community Drive. The purpose of this hastily organized community meeting, intended mainly for community leaders but also open to the public, was to discuss recent burglaries and car thefts on the North Shore of Nassau County. Leading the meeting was Commissioner of Police, Patrick J. Ryder. He was joined by Detective Sergeant Jeffrey Raymond, who heads the department's Burglary Pattern Squad, along with the leaders of the Third and Sixth Precincts and several local police departments (e.g., Port Washington, Brookville, etc.).

The Commissioner spoke first, and he explained in no uncertain terms that, despite emotional assertions to the contrary, we are not in the midst of a "crime spree." In fact, major crimes – including burglaries and car thefts – are significantly reduced over the past few years. For example, with 510,000 homes in Nassau County, there were only 366 residential burglaries in all of 2023 – which was down 19% from 2022. This year, the pace to date is down another 14%. Also, while there are about 1.2 million cars registered in Nassau (plus another 60,000 on dealer lots), there were only 820 cars stolen in the county in 2023 – and that was down 15% from 2022. So far, the pace of car thefts in 2024 is down another 19% from 2023. He also cautioned against both believing and spreading information about such crimes from social media, explaining such information is rarely accurate and almost always exaggerated – as it has been about recent criminal activity in the area.

Commissioner Ryder pointed out that the NCPD has set up a joint task force that includes police departments throughout New York State as well as the FBI to both apprehend the criminals involved and work to prevent these crimes in the future, with the success of that effort being shown in their reduced incidence. He described in relative detail (within permissible parameters) the work they do – and have done – to solve these crimes, take down the organizations behind them, put the perpetrators in jail, and discourage others from attempting similar crimes in Nassau County. That includes sending detectives to other jurisdictions (including, for example, New Jersey); shutting down bridges to prevent car thieves from delivering their stolen vehicles to the fences at Port Newark; working within and around the restrictions placed on local DAs and courts; and using their Intelligence Division to assemble and analyze all the data they receive from all sources. In addition, our County Executive, Bruce Blakeman, is providing all the funding the NCPD needs to solve these crimes and prevent more from happening, while the dedication, resourcefulness and determination

of our police department have given Nassau County a well-deserved reputation as a bad place to commit these crimes.

Detective Sergeant Raymond noted that there had been a temporary increase in the number of car thefts between December 23, 2023, and January 13, 2024 (yes; he was that specific!), but that those thefts have “stopped” (his quote) because of their efforts. He also mentioned that there had been two attempted break-ins by criminals posing as utility workers or contractors, but that both crimes were either solved or in the process of being solved. He noted that the stolen car rings recruit underage young men to do the actual work of stealing the cars, because minors (at least those who do not actually enter the home) are soon released without bail, so those are the toughest criminals to deal with. (However, he explained that if anyone enters a home illegally, they can be jailed regardless of their age.)

Detective Sergeant Raymond pointed out that these are crimes of opportunity. Currently, for example, car thieves are no longer out to steal the most popular cars for “chop shops” to break them down and sell the parts. Now, they are looking for specific cars – i.e., those that give them the biggest payoff. For example, a Mercedes “G-Wagon” can bring the car thief between \$21,000 and \$23,000, while many other desirable models (e.g., BMW SUVs, Porsches, Range Rovers, etc.) can fetch anywhere from \$8K to \$15K. By not displaying those cars in your driveways, and especially by not leaving them unlocked with the key fobs inside, those opportunities are removed. Similarly, if you refuse to open your door to strangers – no matter how urgently they may claim to need access to your home – you can prevent a home invasion. Commissioner Ryan emphasized that neither type of criminal wants any confrontation, so removing the opportunities – and raising a fuss whenever you are threatened or even see anything suspicious – can help keep you and your property safe and secure. (He also reminded us that a dog can be the best way to deter criminals!) Not only will that protect you from becoming a victim yourself, but, also, if there are few – if any – such temptations in a given neighborhood, criminals will go elsewhere where there are more options to find what they want.

Regarding private security patrols, the Commissioner noted that any additional pairs of eyes can be helpful in acting as either a deterrent or as an aid in catching criminals. However, he also pointed out that these criminals are smart and can easily work around the patrol schedules and routes through a neighborhood – especially since these crimes rarely take more than ten minutes or so from start to finish, and with only a few seconds to steal an unlocked car from a driveway. He also noted that private patrols have no authority to arrest or detain and can only call the Police for that – as can any resident. Regarding a question on surveillance cameras, he acknowledged that they are not deterrents, but rather one of many assets in helping to solve crimes. His recommendation was that the best surveillance for your home is provided by your neighbors, who are not cruising by your house for a few seconds but are both in place and familiar with what appears as normal and what is not. Most importantly, he urged everyone to call 911 whenever they observe anything out of the ordinary, adding that 911 calls help their Intelligence Division analyze crime patterns and allocate resources for the most effective crime solving and prevention. He also noted that the average response time for a 911 emergency is 3-5 minutes; that their 911 operators are highly trained professionals; and that part of their job is to quickly determine what response is needed, without judgement.

For me, the only unfortunate part of the meeting was when, at times, the questions turned political, asserting (accurately) that the overwhelming majority of people currently committing these crimes were some of the extremely large numbers of undocumented aliens who are entering our country illegally. However, the Commissioner pointed out that, previously, nearly all the foreign perpetrators had been here legally on 90-day tourist visas (VWP), with the change in demographics stemming from revisions to that program which effectively eliminated that source. The significant reductions in the incidence of car thefts and burglaries over the past year or two means that it's not where the thieves are coming from or how they are entering the country, but the effectiveness of the NYPD and how well residents are intelligently protecting their cars and properties; looking out for their neighbors' welfare; supporting the police; and not hesitating to call 911 for any reason.

As Commissioner Ryder noted, even a single car theft or burglary is unacceptable, and it is especially unsettling when you are the victim. Having been such a victim years ago, I understand your concern and fear, and I assure you that all of us on the Board of Trustees, as well as all the staff at Village Hall, join with the Police in doing everything in our power to prevent crimes most effectively and efficiently in Roslyn Estates. To that end, and as we have repeatedly and consistently urged, the best way to prevent these crimes for each of us – and all of us as a community – is as follows:

- Keep your cars in the garage, with the outer garage door closed!
- If you must leave your car in the driveway, remove the key fob and garage door opener from the car and anything from view; lock the car; and do not leave the key fob where it is easily seen through a first-floor window. (The farther from the car, the better!)
- Install an alarm system and arm it whenever you leave the house (“Away”) – even for a few minutes (you’d be surprised how quickly burglars can enter a home illegally and leave with what they want) – and when you are in for the night (“Stay”).
- Always lock your windows and doors at night, and always leave lights and a TV on when you are not home. (The police tell us that most such crimes are committed either at dusk or around 4AM.)
- Install strong deadbolts on all doors and security lights with photo sensors and motion detectors.
- Do not let any strangers in your home or even open the door to them, no matter what excuse or reason they give.
- Call 911 immediately if you see or suspect anything.

If you have any questions about any of this information, please do not hesitate to contact me or reach out to the NCPD Sixth Precinct at **(516) 573-6600**. As always, we appreciate your efforts to work together to keep Roslyn Estates safe.

Sincerely,



**Paul Leone Peters, Mayor**

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