

# REQUEST FOR DECISION

— REGULAR MEETING —



**To:** Mayor and Council

**From:** Chief Administrative Officer

**Date:** November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Subject:** Proposed Implementation of City Block Watch Coordinator and Block Watch Program

**Recommendation:** **RESOLVED THAT Council receives the Staff presentation about the proposed City Block Watch Coordinator and the Block Watch Program.**

**Recommendation 2:** **RESOLVED THAT Council provides approval for the City of Grand Forks' Bylaw Enforcement Officer, Mr. Bud Alcock, to become the Block Watch Coordinator for the Block Watch Program for the City of Grand Forks.**

**AND FURTHER RESOLVES to approve of the approximate funding in the amount of \$1000. (approx.) for additional hours to facilitate this program for the setting up of the Block Watch Program and for the coordinator's role for the balance of the year 2017, and the acknowledgement that these funds are available within the current bylaw enforcement budget for 2017.**

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**BACKGROUND:** With the recent concerns for community safety due to an elevated crime activity within the City of Grand Forks, the City has been researching avenues for which the organization has the ability and legislative boundaries to help – attached is a memo that outlines initiatives that the City is already implementing.

The organization was recently contacted by the President of the Block Watch Society of British Columbia, who was more than happy to share the required information for our municipality to consider in facilitating the program for our City. The organization thanks Lorraine Dick, resident, who made the initial contact to Mr. Borisenko from the City of Vernon.

In order for the Block Watch program to be recognized and in place, there must be a Security Cleared Coordinator who is a member of the Block Watch Society of BC, who is responsible to administer the Program. This person will then have access to all Block Watch training and educational material as well as signage for the Block Watch Group. Mr. Alcock already has security clearance which will fast track the program. Block Watch is a licensed Brand and cannot be used unless you are a member in good standing of the Society. Working with the City, the Society will provide the Coordinator with all the information and support needed to help get this Program running.

The continuation of this program for year 2018, during the term of the Bylaw Enforcement Officer contract, the City anticipates additional costing of approximately \$350-\$400 per month, in additional hours for the coordinator role in the Program, and another \$100-\$200 per month for material, advertising, meetings, etc. This will be brought to Council during the 2018 budgeting process.

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## **Benefits or Impacts of the Recommendation:**

<b>General:</b>	The recent public demand for enhanced security and safety for the community has expedited this proposal for consideration of Council
<b>Strategic Impact:</b>	Community Liveability, Community Engagement
<b>Financial:</b>	As outlined in the above report as an approximate estimate
<b>Policy/Legislation:</b>	Council has the authority to assign and approve of desired services and programs for the betterment of the community
<b>Attachments:</b>	1) CAO memo on City Initiatives; 2) Block Watch FAQ's 3) Example of Block Watch brochure

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- OPTIONS:**
- 1. RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL RECEIVES THE STAFF REPORT.**
  - 2. RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL DOES NOT ACCEPT THE STAFF REPORT.**
  - 3. RESOLVED THAT COUNCIL REFERS THE MATTER BACK TO STAFF FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.**
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Department Head or CAO	Chief Administrative Officer

# MEMORANDUM



**DATE :** November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Chief Administrative Officer

**SUBJECT:** Current City Initiatives in assistance to affordable housing, and addressing nuisance activities, etc within the municipality

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Considering recent activities involving drug addiction, homelessness and criminal activities in our community, the City has limited powers to provide assistance to these areas. As a "child" of the province, local governments are governed by the Community Charter which allows municipalities to provide certain legislative directives, initiatives and services to its perspective community.

Keeping in line with our municipal role, the following initiatives have been put in place or are currently a work in progress:

1. Proposed adjustments of the Zoning and OCP Bylaws currently in play for Council consideration and public engagement: The recommendations from Staff on proposed changes to allow more affordable housing options
2. Bylaw Enforcement – a. recent renewal of the Bylaw Enforcement Officer's contract to October 30,2018; b. working to clean up unsightly areas; c. working with the Province on cleaning up of Crown Land pieces; and d. Bylaw Enforcement Officer liaises and has a good working relationship with RCMP on issues outside of our municipal powers (criminal)
3. Bylaw Enforcement Initiative – The Bylaw Enforcement Manager/Building Inspector has hired an individual from CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), who came to town to assess areas that could be considered high risk for criminal activities; the City is currently awaiting for a report on findings and suggested recommendations from this investigation
4. The Mayor, as he has previously informed, that he and Areas C & D Directors met with local RCMP on the issue and plans to further contact Nelson office as a next step
5. Council's meeting with the ministers at UBCM to talk about the issues at the Provincial level.

6. Council appointments to liaise with BIG (Boundary Interagency Group)
7. Council approved initiative in working with BETHS (Boundary Emergency Transition Housing Society), on an initiative proposed through BC Housing for a proposed full-time shelter/hub that includes operational funding
8. Initial contact with the President of the Block Watch Society of British Columbia regarding the proposed Program for the City of Grand Forks which has generated this subsequent report.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane Heinrich  
Chief Administrative Officer



# BLOCK WATCH FAQ'S



## Q. What is the Block Watch program?

Block Watch is a free RCMP endorsed community program operated by the City of Vernon Community Safety Unit.

The Community Safety Unit will implement, co-ordinate and monitor an effective Block Watch program in the City of Vernon. Citizens in the community are responsible for organizing, operating and maintaining the Block Watch program in their neighbourhoods.

What are the goals of the Block Watch Program?

- For the community to become actively involved in crime prevention in their community.
- Reduction in crime in the community.
- Increase in the community reporting suspicious activities to Police.
- Promote community awareness and community pride.

## Q. How does the Block Watch Program work?

Block Watch operates on the idea that the Police cannot be everywhere at once. The Police require the assistance of the community to effectively prevent, reduce and investigate crime in the community. The Police need citizens to be active in crime prevention by identifying and reporting all suspicious activities in their community.

Block Watch can only be successful if a majority of the community are actively involved. The more people who are involved with Block Watch the more successful the program.

## Q. How long do I need to be involved with Block Watch?

Your block can be involved for as long as you meet all the requirements. The Block Watch program is monitored by the Vernon Community Safety Unit Crime Prevention Coordinator. Any Groups not taking the necessary steps required to keep your Block Watch active will have the program ended in their block and their signs removed.

## Q. What are the duties of the Block Watch Captain and Co-Captain?

Block Captains and Co-Captains must be genuinely interested in preventing crime in their neighbourhood, and must be prepared to listen to and communicate with the participants in the program. They must be prepared to constructively promote Block Watch, and be able to pass a *security clearance*. Their basic responsibilities are to:

1. Canvas their block to explain the Block Watch Program and encourage neighbours to participate.
2. Maintain an accurate list and map of all participants on their block. Update this list and map every six months to ensure all information is current. Supply the Crime Prevention Officer or





# BLOCK WATCH FAQ'S



Block Watch Coordinator with all current information.

3. Host the initial meeting to implement the program in their neighbourhood. This meeting is hosted by the Block Watch Captain, either at his/her home or another suitable location which he/she is able to arrange.
4. Ensure that the yearly neighbourhood meetings are held.
5. Set a good example by initiating home security and target hardening measures in his/her own home.
6. Identify and work closely with other Block Captains and Co-Captains.
7. Act as a liaison and communication link with the Area Coordinator, the Block Watch Coordinator, the police department, and the participants on their block.
8. Distribute the Block Watch newsletter (via email) to all participants on his block.
9. Responsible for distributing "fan out" of important property crime information to block participants.
10. Welcome new residents by explaining the Block Watch Program and encouraging their participation.
11. Report to the Block Watch office all break and enters and attempted break and enters in his/her neighbourhood.
12. Canvass neighbours to see who would be interested in Block Captain, or Co-Captain should these positions become vacant.
13. Work closely with the Block Watch Coordinator and assist them when required.

## **Q. Who fills out the Captain and Co-Captain security application forms?**

Only those people who are becoming Captains and Co-Captains need to fill out these application forms. Participants do not need to fill out the application forms.

## **Q. What if there are no changes to our block, Do I still need to send in a Block map?**

Yes. Each calendar year you must send in an updated block map to the Block Watch office. Even if your block map has no changes you must send in your block map annually. By sending in your block map annually you keep your Block Watch program active.

## **Q. How do I add new neighbours to our Block Watch program?**

Just add the new neighbours with their contact information to the map and send it to the Block Watch office at:





# ***BLOCK WATCH FAQ'S***



Protective Services/Community Safety Unit  
Block Watch Program  
3400-30<sup>th</sup> Street, Vernon, BC V1T 5E6

or Fax to (250) 545-7876

## **Q. What happens when a Captain or Co-Captain moves or resigns?**

Contact the Block Watch office. The remaining participants must find a new Captain or Co-Captain.

The new person must then fill out a security clearance form (PIC) available from the Crime Prevention Coordinator or the Vernon RCMP Detachment.



## Join Block Watch

There are many crime prevention programs that can help keep you and your property safe, but none reduces crime in your neighbourhood more than Block Watch.

This program of "neighbours watching out for neighbours" often contributes to reductions in crime rates. There are neighbourhoods that have experienced a drop in crime, by as much as 80%, (attributed to statistics)

Crime is a community problem that requires community support. Be part of the solution - Join Block Watch today to keep your neighbourhood safe for all to enjoy.



## Getting Started

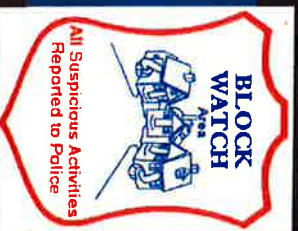
With as few as two people from different households, you can bring Block Watch to your street or complex or building.

We require a Captain for each street that will be screened by the (enter your agency Name).

Once neighbours gather to learn more, they will be given information to target harden their homes and decals for their doors and windows. A sign will be erected in the neighbourhood.

They will also receive (personalize to add what you offer them such as newsletters, crime prevention tips, crime stat reports etc...)

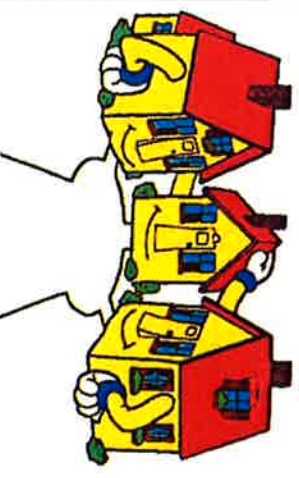
Call today to start a Block Watch in your neighbourhood. Contact us at (Personalize this area with your contact info and website)



*"A community of neighbours working together can help reduce criminal activity"*

## Block Watch

Neighbours  
working together



**BLOCK WATCH** ®

Replace with your agency info and logo

## How Does it Work

- Block Watch is an extension of what you may already be doing on a daily basis. Watching out for your neighbours when they are away or at work.
- With the support of the (Insert your agency name), residents communicate among neighbours to share crime prevention information, crime alerts, and to report suspicious activity.
- Under Block Watch the watchfulness is broadened and becomes more systematic. All residents on a block get to know each other through participation and communication to keep an eye out for each other.
- The program involves three commitments: Know and watch out for your neighbours  
Mark your property for identification  
Report all suspicious activity to the police



## Block Watch doesn't

- require you to patrol the neighbourhood
- Require you to perform special tasks or go to a lot of meetings
- Require you to live in your neighbour's pocket
- Require you to be any friendlier than you want to be
- Require you to be a homeowner. The Program is just as beneficial to tenants as it is to owners.

### BLOCK WATCH NEIGHBOURS PROTECT EACH OTHER BY REPORTING SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- Unfamiliar persons loitering in their neighbourhood
- Slow-moving vehicles circling the block
- Unfamiliar/occupied parked vehicles
- Persons looking into parked cars
- Persons going door-to-door (particularly back doors)
- Any suspicious behavior or activity that draws attention, or
- When they hear unusual noises such as screaming, breaking glass or barking dogs

## Block Watch Recommends

Always making your home look and sound occupied with timers, lights, window coverings and sound. A home that appears unoccupied will attract a thief's attention

The following hardware items are recommended:

- Medium priced, grade 2 or better deadbolts for all exterior doors, including garage
- 6-12" Interlocking plates on all exterior doors to keep screwdrivers from prying the door open
- Heavy duty strike plates with 3-inch wood screws to strengthen the door frame and reduce the chances of the door being kicked or shouldered in

Other home security tips to take into consideration:

- Outdoor photo-activated motion sensor and/or timer lights to illuminate entry and exit points of your home at night. This allows your neighbours to observed suspicious activity around your home
- Trim shrubbery that offers concealment near entries or windows to eliminate hiding places