

Hello All ~

This starts with bad news. And ends with what we are going to do about it.

Sheriff Hart will not meet with our group. Instead he wants Lt. Steve Carney to meet with us (*"I have relayed your request to the Sheriff and he has directed operations staff to meet with the group to answer any questions and discuss areas of concern. I will brief the Sheriff after our meeting and relay any concerns/comments."*).

It gets worse.

In an email exchange with Lt. Carney, I explained our reason for wanting Sheriff Hart at the meeting that I was trying to arrange (*"We want to understand if there is a policy from Sheriff Hart to not issue citations for fireworks or if this is something that you and other deputies decided. It is important for us to have your boss in the room during this discussion. I hope you can understand because, frankly, people were shocked that only one citation for possession or use of fireworks was issued on the July 4th weekend."*)

In response, Lt. Carney explained the following (bolding is my emphasis):

"Each year the operation plan is developed by a Operations Lieutenant. This year the plan was developed by me and operations staff carried out the plan. The Sheriff and the Operations Chief (my direct supervisor) were briefed on the plan and ensured that the plan is consistent with community concerns and legal authority. **During the months leading up to the 4th of July, we receive feedback from both citizen groups – those most negatively impacted by fireworks, and those who believe our enforcement is not consistent with taxpayer desires. We do our best to develop plans that find the middle balance, ensuring that we address concerns from those negatively impacted.** This year's plan was not perfect, but made an attempt to provide more of a "personalized" response by ensuring personnel had more of an operational understanding of what was occurring in their specific sector."

"The decision to cite violators rests with the individual deputy working a specific area. **The Sheriff** does not usually provide direct orders as to specific enforcement types, rather he **makes recommendations on overall objectives based off community concerns.**"

I shared Lt. Carney's comment (about being responsive to those "*who believe enforcement is not consistent with taxpayer concerns*") with John Leopold at his constituent meeting on Wednesday (8/10), asking if it is right that the Sheriff makes policy about whether to enforce County Code or not. Leopold got it immediately, saying that is not acceptable. I sent the email thread between Carney and me to Leopold the following day. There will surely be some repercussion from the Board of Supervisors (BOS) at one of their September meetings, where the report from the Sheriff will be discussed. September BOS meetings are scheduled for the 13th, 20th and 27th. We'll want to check agendas as they are posted one week before each meeting.

Meanwhile I am canceling further consideration of a meeting with Lt. Carney. It is a waste of our time.

Instead, get ready to show up at the Sheriff Center on **August 17** (next Wednesday) at 10:00 am (5200 Soquel Avenue, at Chanticleer).

Here's why. The Sheriff is having a meeting for the public to learn how the Department has incorporated the 21st Century Policing Model "*to strengthen its relationships with the community.*"

"The Santa Cruz County Sheriff invites you to learn how our office has implanted the 21st Century Policing concept.

"Please join Sheriff Hart and California Department of Justice Director of the Division of Law Enforcement Larry Wallace to learn how the Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office has incorporated the 21st Century Policing model to strengthen its relationships with the community, **improve our accountability to the public, consider policy impacts on the people we serve, improve safety for the public** and Sheriff's deputies, and **to prevent crime.**"

Yes, 10:00 am is a poor time to share anything with the working public, but we hope as many of you as possible can be there. Perhaps those of you who work at home and have flexible time can schedule an hour and a half during your work day, or even take a half day off.

We will question this business of "a balance" between two citizen groups, one that expects the law to be enforced by law enforcement officers and one that thinks enforcement is *not consistent with taxpayer desires*. Notice that our group was not referred to as "taxpayers."

Sheriff Hart will be in the room and we can use that opportunity to say that ...

- to improve accountability
- to consider policy impacts on the people they serve

- to improve safety for the public
- and to prevent crime

... ***we expect the Sheriff to enforce the law!*** No taxpayer is above the law.

I urge all of you, who are able, to be at this meeting! We don't know if we will be allowed to individually ask questions or make comments. If not, then I think some hand-held signs might be a good idea ("enforce the fireworks ordinance," "one citation for fireworks on the 4th of July is inexcusable," your job is to enforce the law by issuing citations to those who break the law," "the Sheriff's policy enabled law breakers on the 4th of July," etc.). Maybe have them folded in half, at the ready, in case we cannot each speak our mind about what happened on the July 4th weekend and how the Sheriff's policy undermined all the education actions of the County BOS's directives to help solve the problems of fireworks in our neighborhoods. We might not have to use them, but we'll have them if necessary.

Jean

<http://freedomfromfireworks.weebly.com/>