

Hello everyone ~

There are now 128 of you receiving our newsletters. We've grown a lot in the past less-than-three full months! We now also have 109 names on our [Supporter's page](#), lending credibility to our campaign. Our list of [Neighborhoods](#) has likewise grown.

Meeting Attendance

Our meeting on Thursday, with Sheriff's deputies, lasted an hour and a half. After the meeting, there were many people who stayed and talked further with the deputies and with one another.

There were 34 residents from many different neighborhoods, from the mountains (Boulder Creek) to the sea and everywhere in between (thank you all!). The other four in attendance were: Lt. Greg Lansdowne, Sgt. Joe Clarke, Allyson Violante of Supervisor Zach Friend's office (District 4), and surprisingly - the area manager of [TNT Fireworks, Inc.](#) who had driven all the way from Sacramento to attend this meeting (more on him further in this newsletter).

Not in attendance was Sheriff Jim Hart, who had a conflicting engagement. However, when we send our follow-up comments to Officers Lansdowne and Clarke, we will copy Sheriff Hart on all communications. We may even request a small personal meeting with Hart.

Most Important Things We Learned

We learned that the enforcement (or lack thereof) of the Fireworks Ordinance in the unincorporated County is basically in the hands of deputies who do not fully know the law and who do not understand the extent of the year round problems caused by fireworks. How can that be, you ask?! Allow me to explain.

...before I explain, please understand that anything negative reported in this summary is done in a manner to identify the situation and not to bad-mouth the deputies. Our job is to understand the problem and seek to solve the problem. Lansdowne and Clarke met with us and we are thankful that they were willing to do so. We will be working with the deputies going forward and we will stay respectful and rational in our approach.

Right now, Lt. Lansdowne is the key fireworks deputy. He and his decisions for enforcement make a big difference. Five problems exist in this regard:

1. Coming into the meeting Lansdowne focused only on July 2 - 6.
2. On the 4th, Lansdowne and Clarke de-emphasize the possession of so-called "safe and sane" fireworks as a basis for citations, preferring to issue warnings to "*that family that is visiting and doesn't know the law.*" They did say that they confiscate the safe and sane fireworks when they issue said warnings.
3. However, both Lansdowne and Clarke appeared to have no particular problem with

"safe and sane" and put them way down on a list of crime priorities, apparently not understanding the absolute connection of "safe and sane" to the bigger stuff that plagues us not only on the 4th but throughout the year.

4. The rest of the year - aside from the 4th - they put regular fireworks (the explosions) way down on their list of enforcement of priorities.

5. Lansdowne didn't appear to understand that the law currently allows fines of up to \$1,000 and up to 6 months in jail for violation of the County Ordinance year round.

And Now the Good News

When we started this campaign, we thought our job would be to develop creative, practical and workable recommendations for presentation to the **Board of Supervisors (BOS)**, who would make policy changes to enhance enforcement of the ordinance. We have now learned that half of our work must be directly with law enforcement, for the policy is already set. It is the way the Sheriff interprets and implements the policy that needs a lot of work!! We still plan to go to the BOS with recommendations, but now know we can get a lot done by working directly with the Sheriff. During the meeting, Lt. Lansdowne took notes on suggestions made by several residents on some specific ideas to implement the ordinance.

When we will email our appreciation for the meeting, we will include the list of recommendations they heard that night. Lt. Lansdowne told us that they meet as early as February with others (e.g., SC Police, Fire Depts., Cal Fire, CHP) to plan for July 4th, so we've plenty of time to add to that list as we think of even more suggestions. Needless to say, we will also include our suggestions on how to implement the ordinance throughout the year.

What We Learned From TNT

Although initially concerned that the TNT guy (Milton Broussard) showed up uninvited, his presence actually helped us learn a few things that we would otherwise not have known. Also, his presence shows that we are a force...to get the fireworks manufacturers concerned! Milton stood out immediately - he was the only person in the room wearing a very expensive shirt and tie and looking like he did not come from laid back Santa Cruz. So when I introduced myself before the meeting began, I was not surprised to learn he was from TNT :o)

One of our greatest frustrations is if only "safe and sane" fireworks are legally allowed in the State of California, how and why do the regular fireworks (illegal in CA) find their way into our neighborhoods in Santa Cruz County? Milton said they come through the Port of Long Beach and the Port of Oakland. He did not go into detail about how they are disbursed from those ports, but he did say that 65% of fireworks that are illegal to possess in CA come from sales in Pahrump (Nye County), Nevada. Interesting, because...get this...the use of all fireworks, including safe and sane, is prohibited in Nye County. They can be sold there but not used there. One must sign a waiver at the time of purchase declaring that the purchased fireworks will not be used in Nye County.

We have also learned, independent of TNT's Milton, that shipping of fireworks to

California (and 12 other states) is prohibited by interstate law. Whether there are ways to get around that we can only speculate.

Too Much Information?

We hope not, although this may be more than you wanted to know! In any case, thanks for reading through this long meeting summary. We'll make the next newsletter shorter...and that is a promise!

Jean, on behalf of the [Freedom From Fireworks](#) campaign.