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San Francisco Patrol Special Police Affirm Their Commitment to Work with Police Commissioners to Address Public Safety Needs This Fall

(San Francisco, Monday, August 30, 2010) – San Francisco’s Patrol Special Police officers and a new slate of Association officers elected at the end of June, look forward to meeting for the first time with Police Commissioners on Wednesday, September 1. They hope to initiate a dialog and suggest ways they can expand patrol services and address continuing safety needs in troubled entertainment districts and other neighborhoods this fall.

President-elect Alan Byard will respond to recommendations from an almost two-year old research project on the commission agenda. "This will be our first opportunity to hear recommendations from the study, which we understand surveyed similar programs in other cities and states, and may suggest organizational and program improvement," Byard said.

He’s concerned that the study may be outdated because local information was gathered and interviews took place upon initiation in May 2008, over a year and a half ago, and long before San Francisco’s fast-changing economic crises, and the recent upsurge in crime. “There have already been positive steps taken to implement community policing after our new Chief arrived, and there is improved liaison between the PSP, SFPD, and the commission.”

“As demands on SFPD officers grow and resources are stretched even more thinly, increasing the numbers of Patrol Specials trained and available to meet the needs of our exiting and potential private clients can help,” said Byard.

Byard has served as a patrol officer in the Marina neighborhoods for over 30 years and was elected after former Association President Officer Jane Warner passed on May 8 from ovarian cancer.

“We’re proud to be part of a national trend, and by complete chance, we were just notified that our police force will be mentioned by the largest security professional association this Wednesday in their online magazine,” Byard said.

“Tale of Two Cities: Oakland and San Francisco’s Approach to Crime & Economic Constraints” by Dr. James F. Pastor, a noted security consultant, will be published September 1 on the ASIS International’s online magazine. ASIS International is the largest security association in the world with approximately 40,000 members.

In the article Pastor notes and approves the 15-person civilian investigator program recently introduced by San Francisco’s Police Chief, but believes that the use of “para-police” or “special police” such as the Patrol Specials, is the best option for public safety strategies for the future.

“This model is similar to the medical and legal professions, where “para-medics” and “para-legals” provide cost effective and necessary services,” says Pastor. He’s sees benefits such as the direct relationship officers have to their respective clients and cost reduction.

“Our force can be particularly effective in serving as ‘eyes and ears’ for collecting important security information, and working cooperatively with SFPD foot patrol officers to extend their effectiveness,” Byard said. “We want to keep the community informed and also explore how to relieve a significant amount of policing burden this city faces, especially when it comes to ‘quality of life’ crime that would otherwise tax Police Department personnel and time intolerably,” said Byard.

Byard will introduce to the commission and community, a new service launched on their community outreach website, www.sfspecialneighborhoodpolicing.org. Each major “beat” or area of the city served by the Patrol

Specials has, or soon will have, a police log detailing the extent and nature of quality-of-life matters handled during

the past two weeks. The public is invited to visit the "Safety Advice" webpage regularly to keep themselves informed about criminal risks and activities in their neighborhood.

The dissemination of specific information about crime, disorder and Patrol Special activities in local areas is viewed as a service, according to comments that officers have received.

“Our activity report for the South Beach area is primarily designed as a 'guide' to disruptive activity, an opportunity for readers to identify and try to mitigate trends, and an opportunity to work collaboratively with others on safety and security for everyone. We include information from the Patrol Special Police Officers who serve our neighborhood as well as the SFPD and a variety of other sources,” says Ken Craig, a resident in South Beach and President of CommunityPatrol USA, a non-profit working on crime strategies to expand scarce public resources.

Byard plans to affirm one of his primary goals as working with the commission and police department representatives to facilitate more rapid processing of applications for new Patrol Special officers. Representatives of the Patrol Specials are preparing to submit five applications for background screening by the SFPD and for ultimate approval for appointment by the police commission.

Marcy Berry, Chair of the local Libertarian party, will attend Wednesday’s police commission meeting to listen to the results of the study. She notes, “The City has the resources in place since 1874 in the form of the Patrol Specials to allow police officers to focus on violent crimes, while the Specials take care of neighborhood policing.”

Recent statistics reported in the *San Francisco Examiner* and elsewhere, show that different categories of crime have risen by over 8% after 80 Oakland police officers were laid off due to funding shortages. Berry notes that she hopes this doesn’t happen in San Francisco and says, “These neighborhood police permit dwindling tax revenues from the City’s economic challenges to be directed to other pressing needs.”

About San Francisco Patrol Special Police

San Francisco Patrol Special Police are the only private neighborhood safety service in the city that is legally permitted to patrol San Francisco's streets as well as private locations under the city's Municipal Police Code Sec. 1750 and is on police radio frequencies.

Patrol Special Police officers are screened by background checks conducted by the S.F.P.D. are trained annually at the San Francisco Police Academy and/or other police training organizations, regulated by the Police Commission and supervised by the S.F.P.D.

Throughout more than a century-and-a-half of unique neighborhood policing, Patrol Special Police have supported the City's public safety needs. Since the Gold Rush Days, Special Police, later known as Patrol Special Police,

Special Police were first sworn in by Police Chief Marshal Malachi Fallon in 1851. Five years later the force was written into the City Charter in 1856. Special Police have assisted city authorities with controlling historical criminal gangs, such as the infamous Hounds of San Francisco. Over the years they also maintained public safety during labor strikes, riots, and natural disasters - including the devastating 1906 earthquake.

Today, Patrol Special Police augment the S.F.P.D. by providing neighborhoods with cost-effective and crime prevention services and safety education. Patrol Special Police resolve disturbances at an early stage with a view toward the welfare of all. Their early intervention and visible presence unburden S.F.P.D. officers to address other law enforcement needs.

Patrol Special Police services are financed by private clients who include merchants, professionals, homeowners' associations, individual residents, street fair and special event organizers, government agencies, and other business and private organizations.

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