



Contact:

Alan Byard, President, Patrol Special Police Officers Association

P. O. Box 12133 , San Francisco, CA. 94112

Phone: (415) 221-9450 atbyard83@yahoo.com

Member, Special Neighborhood Policing: a support organization of and for
Patrol Special Police

Websites: <http://sfpatrolspecpolice.com/>

www.sfspecialneighborhoodpolicing.org

San Francisco Patrol Special Police Endorse Some Operational Suggestions for Improvement in the research report presented to the Police Commission on Wednesday, September 1; Patrol Special President Alan Byard Points to Positive Steps Already Taken

(San Francisco, Thursday, September 2, 2010) – San Francisco’s Patrol Special Police Officer Association President Alan Byard listened intently to the presentation Wednesday evening before the Police Commission, of a research report on the neighborhood policing program he represents.

“The report we have awaited since May of 2009, clearly provides useful information on some operational issues of our program that we can and will improve. The more information the commission and our Chief have to enhance our joint mission to improve policing services and protection of the public, the better,” said Byard. Byard has 30 years of policing experience as Patrol Special Police Officer for the Marina neighborhood.

Byard notes that he has already implemented steps that address some of the research team’s concerns. Since research was completed in March of this year, the team did not know about steps already taken to work collaboratively with the SFPD as well as with clients and community groups.

Immediately after he was elected in late June, Byard personally met with the SFPD program liaison officer to understand and to formalize SFPD requirements for new applicants to the Patrol Special force. He pledged his support to package and review all applications in advance of their submission. The goal is to make the SFPD review process less costly and time consuming. Updated requirements are already posted on one of the Patrol Special’s informative websites: <http://www.sfspecialneighborhoodpolicing.org/secondarypages/applytopsp.html>

“That’s one way we have reduced time and cost to the SFPD to facilitate their job. With our more active help, the Commission can expeditiously approve more officers to serve the crime prevention needs of our clients and neighborhoods where we work,” Byard said.

More service to the community has also been spearheaded by Byard. Detailed police logs of Patrol Special activities have been launched for the Castro, Noe, Mission, and South Beach/Rincon/South of Market areas. Police logs are planned in the immediate future for the Polk Street neighborhoods, with other beats soon to follow.

Byard continued, “We believe these monthly logs comply with regulatory requirements, although some beat owners in the past may not have been timely in submission. However, we don’t expect our entire force to be penalized, since individual discipline is appropriate. Police logs published routinely on our internet website will more fully inform the public about the nature and level of disturbances of quality-of-life crimes in the neighborhoods where we serve. Our logs augment serious crime that the SFPD already reports but not include incidents we handle.”

Byard remains concerned about specific matters in the report as he noted in a three-minute response time allowed by the commission per person during public testimony. He cites a number of inaccuracies and lack of complete information to give the commission and public a full picture. Byard thinks this has led to the team’s flawed recommendation for the city to remove the Patrol Specials from any local oversight. Patrol Special Police have a 162-year old legal status in the City Charter with special powers, authority and ability to address and prevent crime at a higher level than is possible by security guard companies.

“I’m frankly concerned. I thought the report might recognize the tremendous value to the city and the SFPD of crime prevention service the Patrol Specials provide,” said Ann Grogan, client of the Specials in Glen Park for the past two years. “Rather, the team showed a slide of the Glen Park deli where a beloved ‘mom and pop’ store owner was nearly murdered two years ago. The team director said that a Patrol Special just standing by in front of the deli would not necessarily stop another attack. To me that is non-sensical and just as easily supports the rather absurd

proposition that we should do away with all SFPD officers just because crimes can *also* be carried out in their presence.” Grogan said.

The Patrol Special Police recognize that cost remains a valid concern in provision of public services. However, the research team included certain costs that have never occurred. “They also inflated the significance of other costs, without considering the concomitant value to the city received from our policing,” Byard said. For example, during the past few years, either the SFPD failed to implement the required 24 hours of annual training, or training was held and the Patrol Specials paid for some or a substantial amount of it themselves.

Liability risks and costs associated with Patrol Special policing services were also a concern in the report. However, Patrol Specials are already required by commission regulation to provide liability insurance to protect their clients and the public in case of a lawsuit for negligence.

Byard notes that the city does not require the off-duty SFPD private policing program to provide such insurance, nor does the city indemnify those officers in case of litigation. “I want to take a more detailed look at this concern and see if there is some validity to it and find ways we can diminish costs by some creative change,” Byard said.

Byard pledged to respond to requests from Commissioners Kingsley and Chan for further details on the cost and value of Patrol Special services according to specifics that will be given to Byard in the near future.

“The neighborhood policing services we provide and the issues we take off the plate of the SFPD by handling ordinary disturbances, shoplifting, and crime prevention, certainly provide a benefit to the public,” Byard said.

Marcy Berry attended and spoke on behalf of the Patrol Specials with a goal to keep them in a quasi-public and regulated position. Afterwards she said, “The good news is that the Commissioners voluntarily acknowledged that the report dealt mainly with the interests of the SFPD, and was not focused on those of the general public. They asked a lot of intelligent questions, and pushed for a subsequent meeting when the Patrol Specials would have a chance to respond for the first time with full details how their services are of benefit to the City.”

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.

###