

**Email update from Chief John Kapica of the Greenburgh Police
Department on the Edgemont Burglaries**

May 19, 2008

From: John A. Kapica <jkapica@greenburghny.com>
Sent: Monday, May 19, 2008 7:13:30 PM
Subject: Edgemont Burglaries

I have received a number of emails over the weekend from Edgemont residents concerned about the burglaries that occurred on Clayton Road on April 28th and on Rock Hill Lane on May 16th. Several described what they perceived was indifference on the part of the police to this situation while others expressed a belief that adequate resources were not being assigned to the problem. While the frustration and anxiety expressed in these emails is completely understandable, I want to assure you that the perception that the police are indifferent to this problem could not be further from the truth. In fact, exactly the opposite is true.

Although we would like to be able to stop all criminal acts from occurring, from a realistic perspective this is simply not possible. While perhaps little consolation to the victim of a burglary, we have managed to reduce the number of these crimes by 76% since 1991, from 307 to 75 in 2007. Since January 1st of this year there have been 25 burglaries in the town. Nine of these have occurred in the 10583 zip code and one of those was cleared through an arrest. Prior to the April 28th Clayton Road break in, there had not been a burglary in Edgemont for more than five weeks. Additionally, suspects whose method of operation fit the description in our burglaries had been arrested in another jurisdiction. In view of this, I believed it was reasonable to reduce the heightened police presence in the area, and return those officers to the other duties from which they had been reassigned. Tour commanders had the discretion of assigning additional patrol officers to the location if they were available. Residents should also understand, however, that the resources of this department are not infinite. While whatever fiscal difficulties the Town is now or may be facing in the future had nothing to do with the reduction of personnel assigned to burglary patrol in this section of Edgemont, it would be a mistake for the public to believe that this heightened level of patrol presence could be continued indefinitely. We simply do not have the resources necessary to accomplish this. Because of the size of the Town and the demand for police services, we attempt to utilize our personnel in the most efficient means

possible relying in part on the use of various computer programs to track trends and patterns of criminal activity. Often, however, our ability to keep up with calls for service becomes challenged as was the case the evening of the Rock Hill Lane burglary. Within 17 minutes of receiving that call, our officers were dispatched to a complaint of a disorderly person in Hartsdale, a fatal hit and run automobile accident on Saw Mill River Road in Elmsford, and a burglar alarm sounding on Castle Walk. Within an hour after receipt of the call, we had responding to a total of 8 complaints which in addition to those already mentioned, included a drug overdose and a domestic dispute. Most of these calls required multiple officer responses. Notwithstanding this, the response to the Rock Hill Lane burglary included shutting down adjacent streets and the use of canines to try and track the suspect, unfortunately without success.

Someone also mentioned in an email that on the day after this burglary at 7:10 a.m. , they noticed marked police units undertaking speed enforcement on Central Avenue in the area of Underhill Road and thought that in light of the burglaries, this was a poor use of resources. This assignment, as well as some other specialized enforcement targeting drunken driving, is funded through grants specifically let for this purpose alone which had been scheduled for weeks prior to these events.

The two burglaries we experienced in Edgemont over the past three weeks are similar to the method of operation used in the previous burglaries. Based on this, we will once again be increasing our patrol presence in the area where these burglaries occurred. These assignments will encompass the periods during which criminal activity has been noted. We continue to need your help in bringing the person or persons responsible for these crimes to justice. Please continue to report any activity you deem to be suspicious. Some people report being frustrated by a police dispatcher asking for additional information which they perceive causes a delay in a police unit responding to their call. Please do not let this discourage you from phoning. Our dispatchers will try and obtain as much information as possible from you. This does not mean they are delaying the dispatch of a police vehicle. In fact, they may ask to put you on hold while they dispatch the vehicle to the area, then return and ask you for additional information. The more information that can be provided will help ensure we stop the right person. This is especially important if the closest officer is tied up on a call for service meaning a response will be somewhat delayed. Since the vehicle or person may not be where you first noticed them, the responding officer will look for the

vehicle or person during his response. A thorough description will assist him, and other officers who receive the radio transmission, in recognizing the person or vehicle you have reported.

The Police Department is committed to bringing the individual(s) responsible for these offenses to justice. However, the lack of forensic evidence left by the perpetrator(s) has thus far left us without a prime suspect. We have experienced situations similar this in the past and they are always frustrating and usually resolve through information provided by an alert resident. I therefore ask for your continued support in not only helping to solve these particular offenses but to protect Edgemont against other potential criminal activity as well.

John A. Kapica, Chief of Police