

McKownville burglaries lead to petition

By STEPHEN PAUSE

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Spotlight
Mailbox

Some residents of Providence Street in McKownville have become so worried by a string of burglaries in the area that last week they presented town Supervisor Ken Runion with a petition to get their lighting district extended.

Cindy Peaslee, a four-year resident of Providence Street, said that for years the residents had wanted streetlights at the end of their road, but the recent rash of thefts prompted residents to act.

"They had talked off and on about having the lighting district for some time, and the burglars encouraged them to be active in it," said Don Reeb, president of the McKownville Improvement Association.

Reeb said that residents were told to keep their eye out and call the police if they see anything suspicious. He said the simple tactic worked after a string of burglaries on McKown Road about a year and a half ago, in which tips by vigilant neighbors

led to an arrest and a conviction.

The rash of thefts began about a month ago, and the targets are usually construction sites and toolboxes.

"They seem to be pretty much into expensive tools and trucks," Peaslee said, noting that the first theft was at a house under construction. That incident occurred before Christmas, when a generator was stolen from a house in the area.

In that case, a neighbor saw the license plate of the thief and he was arrested.

Following the generator theft, a truck parked in front of Peaslee's house had its aluminum toolbox broken into and tools taken. Then, on the night of Jan. 6, another truck in Peaslee's garage was broken into, and \$1,000 worth of tools were taken.

Peaslee said this crime hit her especially hard, because the truck had been backed within a few inches of the garage to help protect against burglars.

On the same night, a resident on nearby Tracey Street found his tailgate down and some footprints around his vehicle.

Most recently, Peaslee said, someone cut down a six-by-eight foot section of her backyard fence.

In the wake of the most recent attempt, she has taken drastic steps to protect her home. She said she has shored up everything in the backyard, fixed the torn fence, and installed motion sensors in her carport and near her front door.

Peaslee said that the crimes have left her feeling violated, vulnerable and unsafe. She also said that she had been considering an addition to her house, but with all that has been going on, that has been put on hold.

"I want to feel safe, and I was when I moved in," she said. "It's not like they were in the driveway or on the street; they were right up against the house."

Guilderland Police Senior Investigator John Tashjian said that it is not uncommon for construction sites to become targets for thieves.

"Anytime that an area comes up, sergeants may assign extra patrols, just to saturate the area," he said.

Runion said, "I think the neighborhoods are safe. From time to time we do have some issues in some of the neighborhoods, and our police department is quick to react to it and to intensify resources to the neighborhood so that whatever issues arise are dealt with in a quick fashion."

Runion added that he didn't expect the extension to face any resistance.

"The only time we have trouble with a lighting district is where it's new, but an extension shouldn't present any problem," he said.

There is already a telephone pole on the street that might be suitable for a streetlight.

The petition went before the town board on Tuesday.

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