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Date: December 14, 2020
To: Mayor and Council
Author: Police Services Board
RE: Report on OPP initiatives on theft and mischief
Report No.: 2020-PSB-01

AIM

To provide Council with a response to their motion relating to OPP initiatives that deal with theft and mischief.

BACKGROUND

On October 13, 2020 Council adopted the following motion no. 582-2020:

Requesting that a report be submitted by the Kingsville OPP Detachment Commander and the Kingsville PSB identifying:

- a) Data of theft and mischief reports in the municipality of Kingsville year over year;
- b) Does Kingsville have a "Street Crimes" Unit;
- c) If so, what initiatives have been taken to curb petty theft and mischief;
- d) If not, why not?
- e) How active is the "lock it or lose it" Program;
- f) Now that the OPP Auxiliary Program has been recalled, how can we be better served to deter theft and mischief within Kingsville, Cottam and Ruthven?

Following the adoption of the above motion, this item was placed on the October 28, 2020 Police Services Board agenda for discussion. Staff Sergeant Johnson and Constable Bertoni provided the information enclosed in this report.

DISCUSSION

The OPP have a community Street Crimes Unit in place and it is very active. The OPP reported that there was a spike in mischief and theft reports in early summer but confirmed that there was an overall decline of 14% in incidents year over year from 2019. Statistics from July, August and September are reporting a trending decrease in this area.

Other ongoing and active initiatives to curb theft and mischief, include the following:

- Front line officers;
- specific patrols being engaged;
- Community Policing Committee;
- media releases;
- Project Safe Trade;
- Lock it or Lose it Program supported by Auxiliary members

The Lock it or Lose it program is an award winning crime prevention initiative aimed at encouraging drivers to take simple precautions to help prevent crime and victimization. Vehicles with unlocked doors or open windows are an invitation to thieves. Thieves are usually amateurs who take advantage of owner negligence by grabbing the first vehicle they can find that's been left unsecured. The lock it or lose it program also addresses issues of theft of motor vehicles in addition to theft of contents from motor vehicles. This type of crime is not new, but it is very often preventable through community engagement.

With the Auxiliary program recalled, volunteer Auxiliary members assist in the delivery of traffic safety and community-based crime prevention initiatives. Auxiliary members assist OPP Officers and are part of community outreach and education programs. Their duties may include patrols with regular members and assisting with community events, seat belt clinics, RIDE initiatives, safety displays, presentations, victim assistance and ceremonial duties.

Recognizing the increase in 'suspicious persons' calls, specific efforts have been incorporated into the local policing. Community safety checks, where officers are patrolling on foot and vehicle through areas of Cottam, Kingsville and Ruthven. Checking on storefront doors and the properties to ensure they are secure are common after hour routine. Positive responses have been received from the communities and owners.

In light of the recent responses to loitering, noise, and mischief at the Lion's Community Park, a suggestion was made to revise the Curfew By-law wording to say dusk to dawn and not a specified time. This could help deter mischief in some of the area parks where the Curfew By-law signs are posted. The OPP support the consideration and signage on a park by park basis should the bylaw be amended in the future.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

To promote a safe community.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

Kingsville OPP
Kingsville Police Services Board

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the report on OPP initiatives that deal with mischief and theft for information.

Nelson Santos

Nelson Santos
Chair of the Police Services Board