

## **Recent Crime Wave Calls for Increased Vigilance in Our Community**

Over the past few weeks, our town has experienced a surge in criminal activity, affecting several neighborhoods at different times. Surveillance footage from various outdoor cameras has revealed a group of young adults roaming our streets during the early morning hours, systematically checking for unlocked vehicles and open garage doors. Despite heightened efforts by local law enforcement, including the deployment of the Sheriff's Department helicopter and additional patrols from the State Police, several cars were stolen nightly. A common factor in these incidents was that the majority of the vehicles targeted had been left unlocked, with key fobs inside.

On one notable occasion, a Sheriff's patrol vehicle was rammed by suspects attempting to flee when the deputy observed a running car with its door ajar in the middle of the street. The criminals, often using stolen vehicles, demonstrated a willingness to resort to dangerous measures to evade capture.

I have always advocated for the practice of "leaving the lights on" as a deterrent to potential criminal activity. However, at 3:00 AM, one of my daughters experienced an attempted car theft after inadvertently leaving her garage door open. Although her Ring camera and driveway floodlights were activated, the three young, masked males were undeterred by the illumination and proceeded to search her vehicles for valuables. Fortunately, her key fobs were not inside the cars, and the intruders left her property within a minute. Unfortunately, several other neighbors were not as fortunate that night.

Similarly, two nights later, on the opposite side of town, Town Councilman DiCostanzo's security cameras recorded individuals attempting to access his vehicles parked in his driveway. There have also been instances where the thieves gained entry to garages through unlocked side doors.

Our community, known for its safety and trust, has inadvertently become a target due to the common practice of leaving houses and cars unlocked. With the ongoing investigation by the Sheriff's Office and the State Police, we can assist law enforcement by being more vigilant and adhering to some basic safety measures:

- **Always lock your vehicles and remove any valuables.** Even visible items in a locked car may attract unwanted attention.
- **Secure your home and garage doors** at all times.
- **Utilize outdoor lighting** to deter criminal activity.
- **Refrain from confronting suspicious individuals.** Instead, contact 911 immediately.

If your vehicles are parked outside, keep your key fobs inside your home, preferably where you sleep, to reduce the likelihood of them being cloned. If you suspect someone is on your property, activate your vehicle's panic alarm. The noise and lights are likely to scare off potential intruders.

Together, by taking these proactive measures, we can enhance the safety and security of our community.

