

PORT WASHINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



"Where Citizens Are First"

"SWEEPING FRANKLIN STREET"

*A ZERO TOLERANCE APPROACH
TO
REVITALIZING DOWNTOWN*

2009-2011 Problem Oriented Policing Project

2011 WACOP Sir Robert Peel Award Submission

"SWEEPING FRANKLIN STREET"

Project Leaders:

Officer Jason Bergin
Officer Jerry Nye

With the Assistance of:

Chief Richard Thomas
Lt. Eric Leet
Officer Kurt Knowski
Becki Hill (PWPd Crime Analyst)
Tammy Sheppard (PWPd Records Manager)
Port Washington Police Reserve Unit

In Partnership with:

City of Port Washington
City of Port Washington Public Works Dept.
City of Port Washington Main Street Program
Holiday Inn Harborview, Port Washington
All Bars and Taverns on Franklin Street
Port Washington Downtown Business District

Table of Contents

<u>Description</u>	<u>Page</u>
Background.....	4
S canning.....	5
A nalysis.....	6
R esponse.....	8
A ssessment.....	11
Appendix.....	14
-Maps	
-Police Data	
-Newspaper Articles	
-Project Signs	
-Photographs	

Background of "Sweeping Franklin Street"

The **"Sweeping Franklin Street"** project is three year (2009-2011) problem oriented policing project, which has uncovered a growingly, increasingly public, problem of disorderly conduct/ behavior, littering, and property damage on Franklin Street. The project will show how the Port Washington Police Department implemented the project using the SARA Model for Problem Oriented Policing in an attempt to combat and solve this problem.

Franklin Street is a .15 tenths of a mile, four block long section of State Highway 32, which is a main thoroughfare running North and South between E. Grand Avenue and E. Jackson Street through the heart of the Historic Downtown Port Washington, Wisconsin. By day, Franklin Street serves as the center of the city's business district and by night it serves as the center of the city's entertainment district. It is home to many businesses during the day and is also home to a few restaurants, five bars or taverns and one hotel (Holiday Inn, Harborview). As a result the area becomes quite busy during the evening and especially late night to early morning hours on weekends.

SCANNING

At the end of 2008, Officer Jason Bergin and Officer Jerry Nye while working as third Shift patrol officers for the Port Washington Police Department on and around Franklin Street uncovered a growingly and increasingly public, problem of disorderly conduct/ behavior, littering, and property damage which has been occurring on Franklin Street between 10pm-6am. Specifically patrons of the Franklin Street were engaging behavior such as urinating in public, causing disturbances leading to physical altercations, littering of liquor and beer bottles, and damaging of city owned "Ginkgo" trees as well as destroying of city owned decorative concrete flower planters placed in the parkway of Franklin Street which were all part of the redesign and landscape improvements done in 2008 to Franklin Street. Officer Bergin and Officer Nye through their observations believed the problem appeared to be heaviest amongst the bar patrons moving between the several bars located on Franklin Street between 10pm-3am. At the same time Officer Bergin and Officer Nye were making there observations and beginning to analyze the issue, the problem became the focus of many newspaper articles and editorials of **The Ozaukee Press** as well as a topic of city council meetings.

ANALYSIS

To confirm the observations officers and the community had made about the increase in problems on Franklin Street during the hours of 10p-6am, Officers began to look department data regarding calls for service, citations issued, and arrests made on Franklin Street for the years 2006, 2007, 2008.

In reviewing the data analysis of department records revealed an increase in calls for service, increase in municipal citations, and an increase in arrests made on Franklin Street during 2006-2008. Also in looking at the data, officers discovered Franklin Street was indeed becoming a problem. In 2006, there were 154 calls for service on Franklin Street, 61 of those calls were between 10pm-6am. In 2007, 182 calls for service, 90 were on third shift. In 2008, 137 calls, 65 were on third shift. Every year about ½ of the total calls on Franklin Street came on third shift. In 2006 the department had issued 31 municipal citations (non-traffic related offenses), 21 citations were issued on third shift. In 2007, 38 citations were issued, 29 issued on third shift. In 2008, 45 citations issued, 34 issued on third shift. And lastly the department made 11 state arrests in 2006, with 8 arrests being made on third shift. In 2007 16 arrests made, with 12 being made on third shift. 10 arrests made in 2008, with 7 of them being made on third shift. Again showing most of the department's activity on Franklin Street is between 10pm-6am and it truly is a "Hot Spot" needing close monitoring.

During 2008 Franklin Street was redesigned and also had new landscape added. The new landscape design to Franklin Street added 23 Ginko trees and 24 concrete decorative flower planters to the parkways along the East and West sides. After completion of this project in 2008 two trees were snapped in half and numerous planters had the flowers pulled out by the roots by bar

patrons. The two damaged trees were replaced at \$ 550 each (cost of tree and labor). Also, the area was beginning to get a reputation due to the disorderly behavior- urinating in public by intoxicated persons, physical altercations/fights which were occurring. As well as, property damage to both public and private property. This information along with the complaints in the end of 2008 from the community regarding property damage and disorderly conduct of patrons of the Franklin Street between 10pm-3am, Franklin Street was a problem that needed the police department to take control of and restore order.

In the end of 2008, this problem was only being addressed by normal police patrol in a patrol car, in an area this difficult to patrol as it is a very small congested area and patrol cars were easily seen. These attempts were not very successful.

At the beginning of 2009, Officer Bergin and Officer Nye came up with a plan of attack, which had the following goals in mind. To implement a sudden and aggressive police presence using non-traditional means of patrol which included the use of the Port Washington Police Department Bicycle Patrol Unit, uniformed foot patrol, as well as plain clothes foot patrols stop the damage to property and to manage the patron conduct of Franklin Street so everyone can enjoy it. Officers made it clear to patrons the goal was to allow patrons to have fun as long as they did it responsibly and did it in an orderly manner.

RESPONSE

"SWEEPING FRANKLIN STREET" project used a multiple tactic approach to address the issues of disorderly conduct and property damage occurring within our downtown business district. Our response grew over two years from its initial stages to what it is today. Officers continued to evaluate the effectiveness of methods that were employed and tweaked or added additional responses to address new problems. Our plan consisted of a sudden increase in police presence and enforcement to re-establish orderly conduct and eliminate, as much as possible, the property damage that was occurring downtown. Once this was accomplished, it was our goal to gradually decrease this large presence and enforcement while maintaining orderly conduct and minimizing property damage.

RESOURCES

Our plan used minimal resources and included using bicycle patrol officers, foot patrol officers, police cars, volunteer reserve officers, a printer and paper, officer creativity and the purchase and installation of tree guards. These resources combined with partnerships and cooperation with local businesses was used in our strategy.

RESPONSES USED

ZERO TOLERANCE PATROLS

Our initial response was to increase police presence by dedicating one officer to the downtown district on Weekend third shifts, from 10p-after bar close. In order to do this, supervisors from those shifts would be responsible for handling calls for service in that officer's normal patrol area. Also, officers from bordering patrol areas were encouraged to patrol Franklin Street during their tour. When available, a bicycle patrol officer would patrol the downtown area on bike to give him more mobility to monitor areas in and around the bars and

businesses. On nights when a bicycle officer was not an option, officers would do foot patrols throughout the downtown district. Some officers would park their squad car across the street from one tavern, with a red/blue arrow stick illuminated facing taverns in the next block, to give the most police presence possible. When an officer saw a violation, municipal citations or state arrests would occur depending on the severity of the incident. The Ozaukee Press, a local newspaper, was also used to print a story about the department's upcoming efforts and to notify the public that the police department would be using a zero tolerance policy on violations in this area for a period of time.

We discovered that while this response was being used, it appeared very effective. However, as soon as the presence was not there, problems would again arise. We had already sent a zero tolerance message to offenders who were caught. Our goal now was to create an environment where potential offenders would feel a great likelihood of being caught, even when they did not physically see a police officer and to try and eliminate opportunities to damage property. To accomplish this, we used multiple methods.

SURVEILLANCE

At the time of this program, a public hot topic was video surveillance. We were able to take advantage of this topic, by creating signs that showed someone in handcuffs and a warning that this block may be under police surveillance. With the approval of many local businesses, these signs were posted along the two-block walk between two popular taverns. Video cameras were never installed, however, with use of the Port Washington Police Reserve Unit and several local businesses, we were able to plant reserve officers within businesses with views of Franklin Street to monitor activities. When a violation was seen the reserve officer would call it to a patrol officer who would then respond. Along with these signs, other signs were also posted reminding potential violators that strict enforcement would be taken and reports would be released to the press.

TIP LINE/CASH REWARDS

The department also implemented an anonymous tip line which offered \$50 cash rewards for information leading to an arrest of anyone for property damage. Signs were developed and dropped off at area businesses, including taverns, to post for public view.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Officers from this shift developed a very good working relationship with tavern employees. This relationship made tavern employees much more comfortable coming to the police with information about intoxicated and borderline disorderly patrons. This early warning allowed officers to identify potential offenders and address them before violations would occur.

TREE GUARDS

In addition to these efforts, the city agreed to our request to purchase and install tree guards around trees within this two-block stretch to help lessen the opportunity for an offender to damage any more trees. Ten tree guards were purchased at \$200 per tree guard. These tree guards were placed on trees located in the area in the 100 and 200 blocks of Franklin Street, which is the locations where all the city trees were damaged between 2008-2010.

ASSESSMENT

IMPACT

We immediately started noticing a large increase in the number of violations that were being discovered in progress while officers were patrolling in this program. With strict enforcement and assistance from the press, we weren't the only ones noticing. Officers working these shifts heard patrons talking about the increase in police efforts. They noticed our presence and saw the outcome of inappropriate behavior. The officers working this program also started noticing that bar staff was more frequently assisting us by identifying potential problem patrons, before violations were being committed. This early warning allowed us to address these people before damage or disorderly behavior occurred. The number of reports of property damage in the downtown has decreased nearly 80% and Officers have noticed a decrease in the presence of litter on the streets after bar close.

OBSTACLES

During the first year of the program, we noticed the program could be successful, however, found a few obstacles to overcome. The size of our department did not always allow us to maintain a zero tolerance dedicated patrol in the downtown. Calls in other areas of the city would sometimes require that officer leave his post to handle other calls for service. During that time, property damage would occur. After developing the

other strategies, this problem started to decrease. There was also some concern from city officials over the cost and appearance of tree guards being installed in the downtown.

GOALS ACCOMPLISHED

Our goal was to initially increase our presence and enforcement to minimize the property damage, litter and disorderly conduct in the downtown. That goal was accomplished as evidenced in the large increase in number of citations and state arrests that were made during the initial stage of the program, between 2009 and 2010.

Our second goal, to continue to minimize the occurrence of damage, litter and disorderly conduct while decreasing our zero tolerance efforts and presence in the downtown. This was also accomplished as evidenced by a sharp decrease in the number of reports of property damage.

DATA

An example of this would be in 2008-2010 we averaged approximately 10 property damage complaints a year. To date, for 2011, we have only 2 reports of property damage. One specific target of property damage was the Gingko trees. From the end of 2008-2010, ten city owned trees were damaged. There have been none so far this year.

DISPLACEMENT

The problems on Franklin Street in our city are unique to just this area of our city. A large concentration of alcoholic establishments are located within these few blocks, unlike other areas of our city. We have not noticed any increase in this type of activity anywhere else in the city.

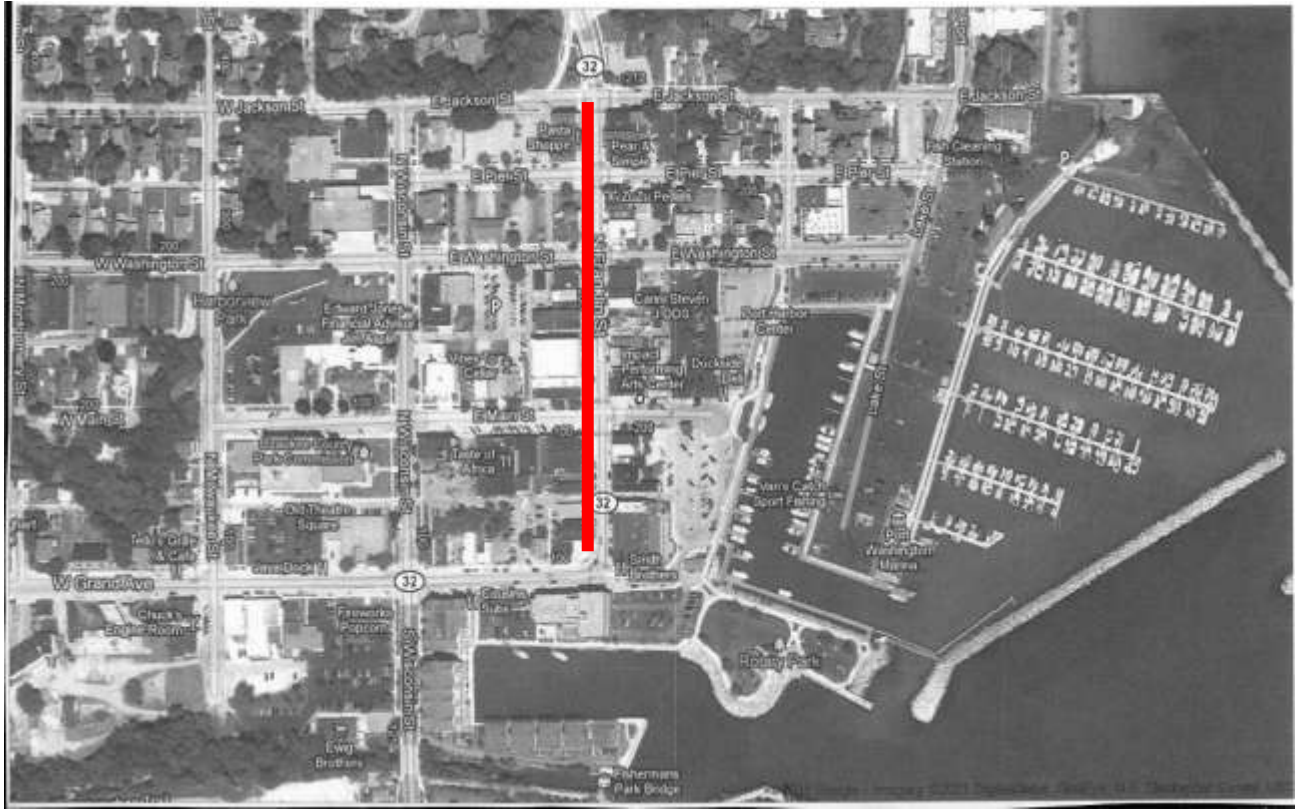
CONTINUATION

As with any problem, a continuing monitoring is always necessary to maintain results, however, the amount of effort and presence that was dedicated at the start of this program is significantly less with no signs of an increase in the violations. The establishments on Franklin Street have begun to police themselves in monitoring for problem patrons and assisting in addressing these issues before the problem resurfaces.

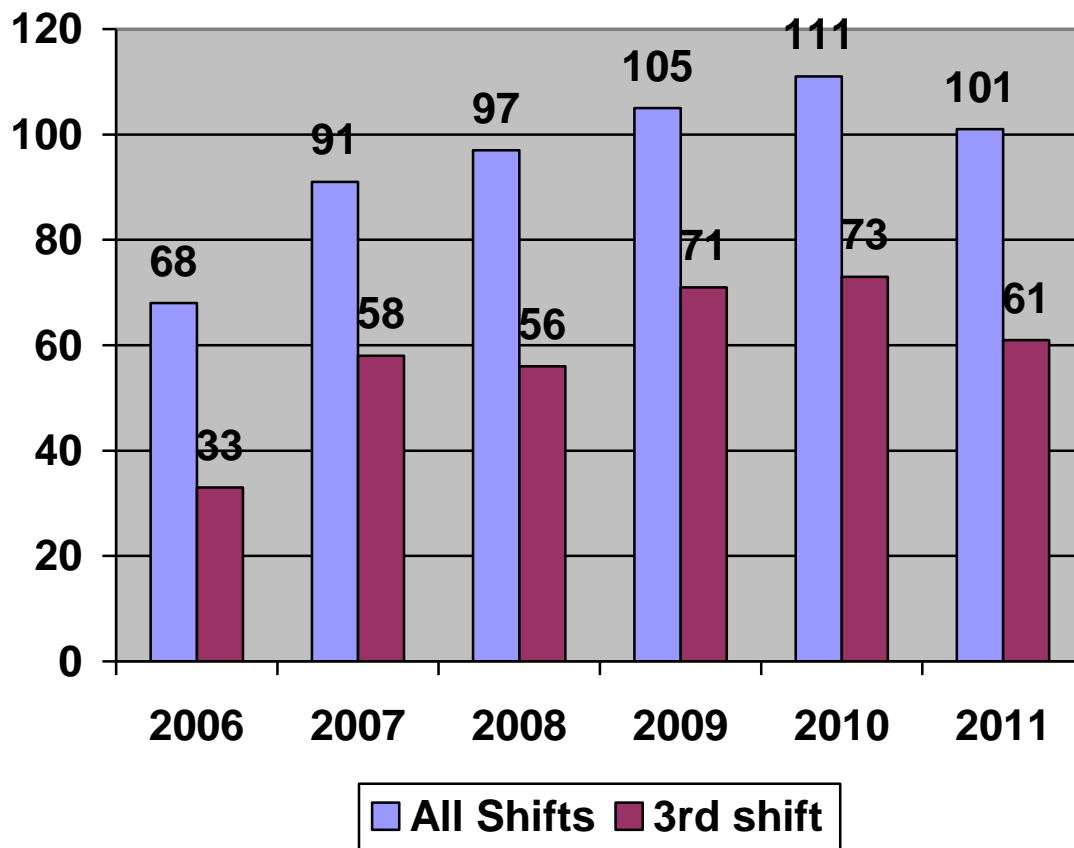
"SWEEPING FRANKLIN STREET"

APPENDIX

MAP OF FRANKLIN STREET

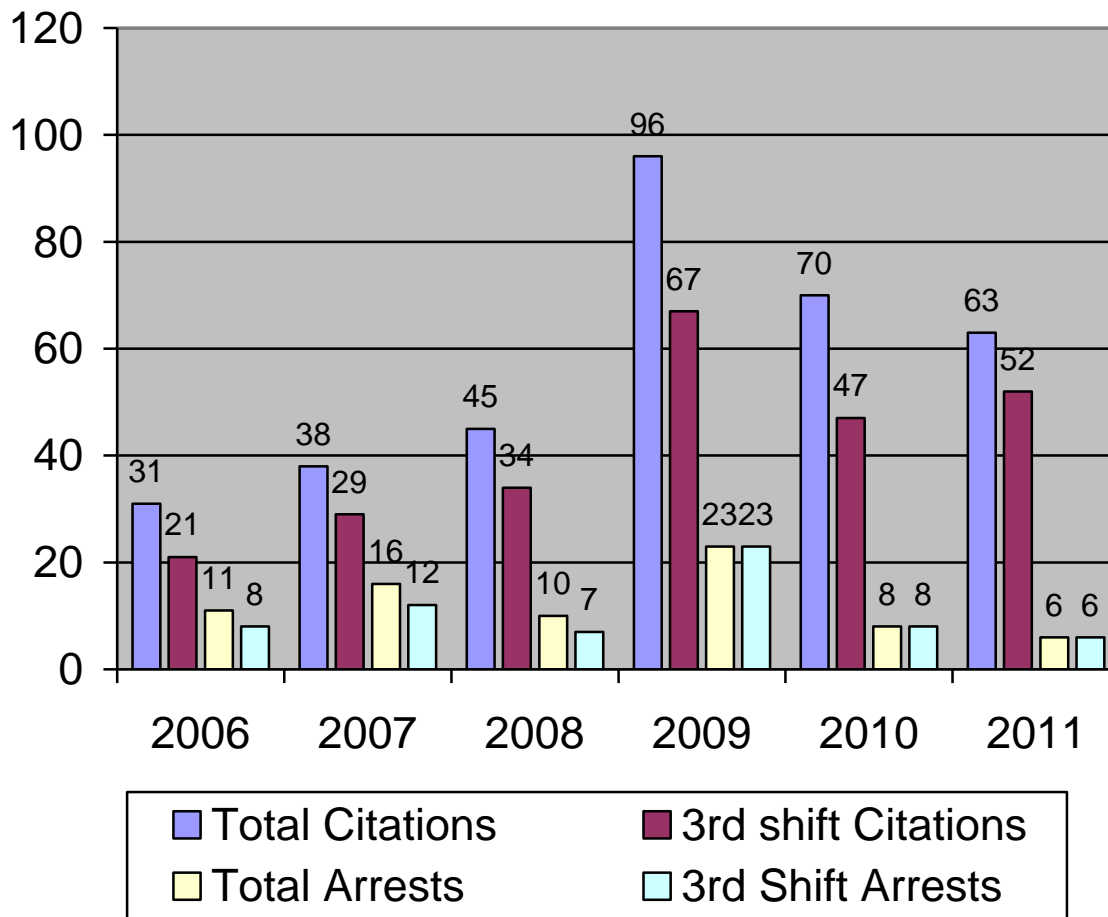


FRANKLIN STREET CALLS (2006-2011)



***** 2011 Totals are thru 10/28/2011 *****

FRANKLIN STREET
CITATIONS/ARRESTS (NON-TRAFFIC)
(2006-2011)



***2011 TOTALS ARE THRU 10/28/2011**

**** Arrests=(Criminal Arrests, Warrant Arrests)**

OZAUKEE PRESS NEWSPAPER

ARTICLES/EDITORIALS

www.ozaukeeexpress.com 10/23/08 OZAUKEE PRESS THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2008 3B

Vandalism sparks call for security cameras

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
Ozaukee Press staff

Repeated vandalism in downtown Port Washington is causing the Business Improvement District to consider installing two surveillance cameras.

"We're tired of it happening," said Sara Grover, owner of Heart N Home Treasures and BID director. "The businesses, for what they invest in downtown Port, deserve a little more respect."

The vandalism, she said, includes many things — damage to the planters installed during the Franklin Street reconstruction project this spring, graffiti and bricks thrown through windows.

"For a while, we thought we were doing OK," Grover said. "But after dark these nasty people come out and wreck them."

"If Port Washington is going to be vested in itself and businesses are going to invest in downtown, this has to stop."

Vandals are repeatedly pulling out the plants, vomiting in the planters and smashing bottles and glasses in and around them, she said.

"I've had to sweep parking spaces and sidewalks because of the broken glass," Grover said. "You have to be careful if you reach into the planters because you could get cut. There's glass and worse left in them."

"I've had it."

A presentation on the camera system will be given to the BID during its Nov. 19 meeting, she said.

In essence, cameras would be mounted in several places downtown, Grover said. They would be wireless, have the ability to zoom in and transmit video of the area that could be picked up by virtually anyone with a computer.

Police officers on patrol could check on the downtown using the computers in their squad cars, she said, as could clerks at the police station and dispatchers.

The system has memory, so officers could review a night's video if they don't see something happening in real time.

The BID is considering installing two cameras at an estimated cost of \$2,000, probably sometime next year.

"It all comes down to money," Grover said. "You have to decide what's important. If it (vandalism) is costing our members money, maybe this is a good investment."

In addition to its role in securing downtown, Grover said the cameras could have another function — selling the downtown to potential tourists who could bring up the

See Cameras on page 12B

Ozaukee Press 10-23-08

Cameras: Vandalism targeted

FROM PAGE 3B

images and check out the beauty of the community.

"It could be used for tourism to pitch the beauty of Port and sell the city to tourists," she said.

City Administrator Mark Grams acknowledged the cameras may smack of Big Brother, but said that may be what's needed.

"Obviously we don't want to do that, but if we continue to have vandalism and damage downtown, what else can we do?" he asked. "No one wants to spend the money on this. I prefer not to go that route if we don't have to."

Mayor Scott Huebner said he supports the idea as long as the cameras are used for surveillance, not to boost tourism.

"I don't think we need that (for tourism)," he said. "But there's been enough stuff going on downtown that we need to do something. These vandals are going to get caught and they're going to pay the price when we do catch them."

"I don't know if the cameras are the answer, but short of sticking a police officer downtown every day, it might be an alternative."

Cameras are a more cost-effective answer than stationing an officer downtown would be, Huebner added.

He acknowledged that the cameras may make some people nervous.

"I'm not a believer of Big Brother, but push came to shove in this case," he said. "If you do nothing wrong, you have nothing to worry about."

Man cited for vandalizing tree

02040000 Press 12/4/08
A 23-year-old Port Washington man was cited for destruction of public property last week after he broke the decorative lights on a downtown tree, according to police.

An officer observed the man walking on North Franklin Street about 2 a.m. Nov. 27 and saw him grab a branch and pull the tree until it was bent in half, police said.

The man then let go of the tree, breaking some of the decorative lights on it.

When the officer asked the man why he was grabbing the tree, the man denied doing it, according to the police report.

The man was intoxicated, police said.
Public Works Director Rob Vanden

Noven said the lights will be repaired later this week, at the same time lights on two other trees in the downtown are repaired.

This was the second time the downtown trees have been vandalized, Vanden Noven said.

One of the first weeks after the trees were planted, someone snapped a ginkgo tree planted in the downtown parkway, he said.

The broken part of the tree was then duct taped to the rest of the ginkgo, Vanden Noven said.

City crews replaced the tree, which was valued at \$150 to \$200, he said.

02040000 Press November 13, 2008

Gotcha!

4-9-09

Finally someone is being held accountable for downtown vandalism; now it's time for more police presence, but not security cameras

It didn't rank with apprehending a couple of America's 10 most wanted criminals, but the arrest of two miscreants in downtown Port Washington late on the night of Friday, March 27 was satisfying nonetheless. Finally someone is being held accountable for the vandalism that has frustrated a community working hard to bring new life and beauty to its downtown.

Because a police officer was patrolling Franklin Street and a witness did the right thing, two men were arrested for destroying three of the ginkgo trees that were planted last year as part of a downtown streetscaping project.

The two, one from Saukville, the other from Random Lake, received municipal citations and face fines of \$172 each and a \$1,400 restitution bill for replacing the trees. It was somewhat disappointing that the offenses were deemed not to rise to the level of state misdemeanors, which besides making more severe penalties possible, would have resulted in booking photos that could have been published in this newspaper. Public shaming would be a fitting element of justice in this case.

A surprising aspect of the arrests was that the accused vandals weren't even close to being "kids" acting out what is sometimes called, in a nod to the role of immaturity in bad judgment, a "youthful indiscretion." The men arrested for spending part of their night in Port Washington breaking trees were 30 and 29 years old. The expression "Get a life!" comes to mind.

What was no surprise at all about the pair was that they had been drinking alcohol—a lot, according to police. The operating assumption about downtown vandalism has long been that it's been perpetrated by people who have been patronizing Franklin Street taverns.

To keep the problem in perspective, though, it should be noted that the vandalism has been more a matter of isolated incidents than a plague of property destruction—plants torn out of the planters that line Franklin Street; ice sculptures created during winter festivals (some of them qualifying as worthy public art) that could not survive a single night without being smashed; the occasional broken window; and that old favorite, throwing up in planters.

More important than its financial cost, this mischief injures and embarrasses the community by mocking its continuing efforts to improve its downtown.

The tree killing should serve as a notice to tavern owners, particularly of the two bars that tend to have a more boisterous clientele, that they need to take some ownership of the downtown vandalism problem.

At the same time let's keep in mind that the bars are important businesses—in fact, the longest surviving downtown businesses—that bring visitors and residents downtown. They contribute financially to the Business Improvement District and Main Street program and thus help pay for downtown improvements and promotions. They also, of course, benefit from the substantial

investment the community is making in downtown revitalization.

Besides observing standard rules for responsible serving of alcohol—the tree vandals were blitzed, toasted, loaded, you name it; they had been kicked out of one bar and were being served in another until police put a stop to it; the main bad actor denied what a witness had seen, gave police a hard time and later got a ticket for urinating on cars—bars should also try to educate, or warn, their customers about trashing the downtown.

The incident also showed that police patrols work. Police didn't witness the offenses, but an officer was there soon after, which led to the arrests. Police Chief Richard Thomas is talking about increased downtown patrolling, and yes, it is about time for that. Officers walking the sidewalks before and after bar closing time would discourage bad behavior and lead to quick arrests of those too impaired to notice that cops were around.

It would be a mistake, however, to view the latest vandalism as justification for mounting security cameras downtown, an idea that was recently presented to the BID board.

There are places for these TV spy cameras, but downtown Port Washington is not one of them. Installing them would be an overreaction that, besides invading the privacy of law-abiding folks visiting the downtown, would be a civic embarrassment. This is not a high-crime area. There's a little vandalism. And as the nabbing of the tree wreckers shows, Port Washington is going to deal with that.



Working to repair the damage done by vandals

City workers last week dug out what was left of several trees that lined Port Washington's downtown Franklin Street before they were destroyed by vandals the night of March 27. The ginkgo trees, planted last year as part of a downtown streetscaping project, will cost \$1,400 to replace. Two men, ages 29 and 30, were cited for destruction of property in connection with the vandalism.

Photo by Bill Schanen IV

Two accused in tree vandalism plead not guilty

4-30-09
The two men accused of destroying three trees in downtown Port Washington pleaded not guilty before Mid-Moraine Municipal Court Judge Steve Cain last week.

Pretrial hearings for the men have been scheduled for May 15.

Chad R. Arndt, 30, of Random Lake, and Jason J. Gahan, 29, of Saukville, entered the pleas April 22 for three citations for de-

struction of public property — one citation each for destroying the ginkgo trees along Franklin Street in front of John's Pizzeria, Port Washington State Bank and the former M&I Bank building last month.

Those citations call for a fine of \$172, plus restitution. Port Washington officials estimated it will cost \$1,400 to replace the trees, including labor.

According to police, the men snapped

the tops of the trees while rough-housing shortly before midnight on March 27.

The trees were so badly damaged that street department workers were called in Saturday morning to cut what was left of them down.

The destruction of public trees planted during a downtown beautification project last year infuriated city officials, who called for a crackdown on vandalism.

Use decorative tree cages to foil downtown vandals

To Ozaukee Press:

5-7-09
Not only do we need to crackdown on vandalism, we need to teach a lesson to the two who pleaded not guilty to destroying three trees in Port Washington's downtown. Rather than admit their guilt, they've pleaded not guilty and the matter will now go to court, costing the taxpayers even more.

Let's teach them a lesson. They should have to pay the fine, pay full restitution for the trees and their planting costs and pay for tree cages to be placed on all the ginkgo trees in downtown. There are wonderful black tree cages that would match our new waste receptacles. I suspect the vandalism will continue and we will be replacing the

trees throughout the summer; tree cages might prevent it. At least the men who were caught after destroying the three trees might learn a lesson.

Meanwhile, as I start to clean up the planting beds at the Pebble House, I would like to remind smokers that flower beds and the flower pots are not there for your convenience as a place to dispose of your cigarette butts. I suggest you extinguish them and put them in your pocket (or maybe not extinguish them and put them in your pocket) to dispose of when you get home. Not in our flowers or in our downtown streets.

Geri Zehren
Port Washington



Two men are charged with breaking this tree and two others after leaving a downtown tavern.

New patrol begins quick crackdown

6-11-09 Ozaulkee Press

Port Washington's new downtown police patrol is already reaping benefits.

Shortly after midnight Saturday, June 6, Officer Jason Bergin cited a 25-year-old Mequon man for disorderly conduct after he saw the man pulling on a gingko tree in front of the former M&I Bank building on Franklin Street, police said.

Bergin, who was patrolling downtown on the department bike, saw the man walk down Franklin Street toward Schooner Pub and then pull the gingko so far the top of the tree was parallel to his shoulders, police said.

When Bergin asked the man what he was doing, he told the officer he was trying to grab a bead necklace that was in the tree. He then pointed to a necklace on the ground.

Bergin told the man to leave the city's trees alone and cited him, police said.

The night-time bike patrol program, which was initiated by Bergin, began last weekend and runs from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

The program is an attempt by police to stop downtown vandalism, which has become a thorn in the side of city officials, merchants and residents.

"We're going to have zero-tolerance for quality of life issues such as littering, open intoxicants, public urination, disorderly conduct and damage to property," Lt. Eric Leet said last week in announcing the initiative.

One of the most notable incidents occurred this spring when three of the trees along Franklin Street were destroyed by vandals. Two men each received three municipal citations from police in connection with this incident.

One of the men, Chad Arndt is scheduled to go to trial on the matter on Oct. 21. The other, Jason Gahan, was found guilty after not showing up for his initial court date but has since requested the case be reopened. A pre-trial hearing is set for July 17.

Man accused of destroying trees wants his day in court

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff 5-21-09

One of two men accused of destroying three trees in downtown Port Washington will take his case to trial, city attorney Eric Eberhardt said Tuesday.

The second man failed to show up for a pretrial hearing last week, Eberhardt said, and is expected to be found guilty of three municipal charges of destruction of public property by default.

An attorney for Chad R. Arndt, 30, of Randon Lake, had attended a pretrial hearing last week but on Tuesday notified him they in-

■ He will fight ticket for vandalism in downtown Port

tend to take the case to trial, Eberhardt said.

No trial date has been set, he said.

Eberhardt said he would submit the necessary paperwork this week to find the second man, Jason J. Gahan, 29, of Saukville, guilty of the three charges.

Mid-Moraine Municipal Court Judge Steve Cain is expected to review the paperwork and sign off on the findings, Eberhardt said, paying the way for Gahan to be fined \$172 for each of the three charges, and be

ordered to pay restitution for the trees.

City officials have said the cost of replacing the three ginkgo trees is \$1,992.

If Arndt is ultimately found guilty of the charges, the judge could order him to pay a portion of the restitution in addition to the fine.

According to police, the men snapped the tops of the trees along Franklin Street while rough-housing shortly before midnight on March 27.

The trees were so badly damaged that street department workers were called in the following morning to cut what was left of them down.

The destruction of public trees planted during a downtown beautification project last year infuriated city officials, who called for a crackdown on vandalism.

Arndt and Gahan each received three citations for destruction of public property — one citation each for destroying the ginkgo trees along Franklin Street in front of John's Pizzeria, Port Washington State Bank and the former M&I Bank building.

Plea bargain in tree vandalism case will give city restitution

■ One of two men accused of destroying property will pay fine and have other charges dropped

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff 5-21-09

One of two men accused of destroying three trees in downtown Port Washington this spring has reached a plea agreement, officials said Tuesday.

Chad R. Arndt, 31, of Randon Lake, has agreed to plead no contest to one count of destruction of public property and pay \$1,772 in fines and restitution, City Attorney Eric Eberhardt said.

In return, the city will dismiss two other citations for destruction of public property, he said.

The city received a copy of the plea agreement signed by Arndt on Wednesday and will forward it to Municipal Court Judge Steve Cain for approval, Eberhardt said. Once approved, the charges against the accused man — Jason J. Gahan of Saukville — will be dismissed, he added.

Until that time, the case against Gahan is on hold, Eberhardt said.

"Mr. Arndt indicated through his attorney that he wished to assume responsibility for the damage," Eberhardt said.

"The city's ultimate goal was to have the trees replaced, and the \$1,600 in restitution will cover that cost."

The agreement is a suitable ending to a case that hinged not on eyewitness testimony but on circumstantial evidence, Eberhardt said.

"There were no eyewitnesses who saw either Mr. Gahan or Mr. Arndt physically damage the trees," he said. "There was a witness who said he heard noises, a scream, looked out and saw people who matched their descriptions standing over a tree that had been knocked down. They were looting and loitering."

The incident infuriated officials and merchants fed up with vandalism in the downtown and especially damage to public trees planted during a downtown beautification project last year.

According to police, Arndt and Gahan snipped off the tops of the trees along Franklin Street while rough-housing shortly before midnight on March 27.

The trees were so badly damaged that street department workers were called in the following morning to cut down what was left.

The men each received three citations for destruction of public property — one citation each for destroying the ginkgo trees along Franklin Street in front of John's Pizzeria, Port Washington State Bank and the former M&I Bank building.

service. The city will not pay for the trees. The city will not pay for the trees. The city will not pay for the trees.

Two. The city will not pay for the trees. The city will not pay for the trees. The city will not pay for the trees.

L. Yes, you can see the trees. The city will not pay for the trees. The city will not pay for the trees.

But, you can see the trees. The city will not pay for the trees. The city will not pay for the trees.

City to keep downtown police patrol

■ *Port department cites vandalism drop as reason to retain evening bike officer*

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff 5-20-10

Last summer's downtown bike patrol was so effective in preventing vandalism that Port Washington police plan on continuing the effort this summer.

"I don't recall anywhere near as many incidents last summer," Lt. Eric Leet said. "We didn't have the usual flurry of broken windows. It seemed to start the same as previous years, then trended down from there."

"I was happier driving downtown. It was cleaner and there was less property damage. I noticed the downtown looked better at the end of summer than it had previously."

Even in the areas surrounding Franklin Street, where the patrol was centered, there was improvement, Leet said.

The numbers bear out his impression, said Officer Jason Bergin, who initiated the program last year.

Last June, the department issued 15 citations for violations on Franklin Street, Bergin said. In July, that number dropped to

seven, and in August it was eight.

Throughout the entire downtown, there were 28 arrests in June, 27 in July and only 12 in August.

"It's neat to see that happening," Bergin said. "By mid-summer, it was like people realized we were here. It seemed like things were on a much more even keel."

This year, the program will once again involve instituting a bike patrol to monitor Franklin Street from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursdays through Saturdays from June through early September and taking a zero-tolerance approach to such quality-of-life issues as littering, open intoxicants, disorderly conduct, damage to property and public urination.

To ensure an officer is available for the downtown patrol, the commanding officer took on more patrol duties in other portions of the city, handling calls that normally would pull the bike officer from the downtown.

In addition to the bike officer, the department kept up its regular downtown patrols.

This year, the police department plans to survey merchants to get their reaction to last year's initiative and to see if there are other issues that need to be addressed, the officers said.



POSING IN downtown Port when they announced last year's downtown bike patrol were (from left) Officer Jason Bergin and Lt. Eric Leet. The patrol was a success, officials said, and will be continued this summer. Press file photo

"We want the community to know we take these things seriously," Bergin said. "The word got out that we were there, and we were going to hold people accountable."

"We want people to come here and say, 'What a great downtown.'"

The problems of vandalism — including litter, broken bottles on the sidewalks, flowers torn out of planters and vomit and urine on sidewalks, planters and alleys — had been increasing for years.

Frustrated by those problems in a downtown straggling to reinvent itself led Bergin to suggest the intensive patrol last summer.

"It's the broken windows approach," Leet explained. "If you concentrate on the minor violations — and most of these are minor violations — it will prevent the major violations."

"We're holding people accountable for their actions."

Possibly the most serious violation last summer was the destruction of three trees along Franklin Street, Leet said, an act that raised the ire of people in and out of the downtown.

This year, the patrol will again concentrate on disorderly conduct, open intoxicants, littering and noise violations, Bergin said.

Mayor Scott Huebner said last year's patrols seemed to help downtown.

"It's a good idea to be more visible and to interact with people more," he said. "I think it works. Things went well last year."

Tree vandalism sparks call for more security

■ Latest destruction on Franklin St. prompts city to consider installing cameras

By KRISTYN HALBIS ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff 7-15-10

The destruction late Sunday of two ginkgo trees planted along Franklin Street in downtown Port Washington is prompting city leaders to once again consider security measures, including the potential installation of security cameras.

"I'm kind of at a loss," Mayor Scott Huebner said. "This is ridiculous. We shouldn't have to do this."

"Something's going to have to be done. We can't keep replacing trees like this."

Both Huebner and City Administrator Mark Grams said the concept of placing security cameras downtown is something the city probably needs to consider.

"We've talked about it in the past, but we'll have to bring it up again," Grams said, adding the issue is likely to come before the Board of Public Works or Police and Fire Commission.

The Port Washington Main Street Program board is also likely to discuss the possibility of placing cameras downtown when it meets next month, Director Sara Grover said.

Since trees were planted in the downtown parkways as part of the Franklin

Street reconstruction project in 2008, at least seven of them have been replaced after vandals destroyed them.

Police received a report at about 12:20 a.m. Monday that two ginkgo trees — one in front of Harry's Restaurant and the other in front of the former M&I Bank building — has been snapped.

Officers interviewed a patron and bartender at nearby Schooner Pub, but they said they had not seen anything.

Police have no suspects in the case, Chief Richard Thomas said.

The trees were replaced on Tuesday at a cost of about \$550, including labor, Street Supt. Dave Ewig said.

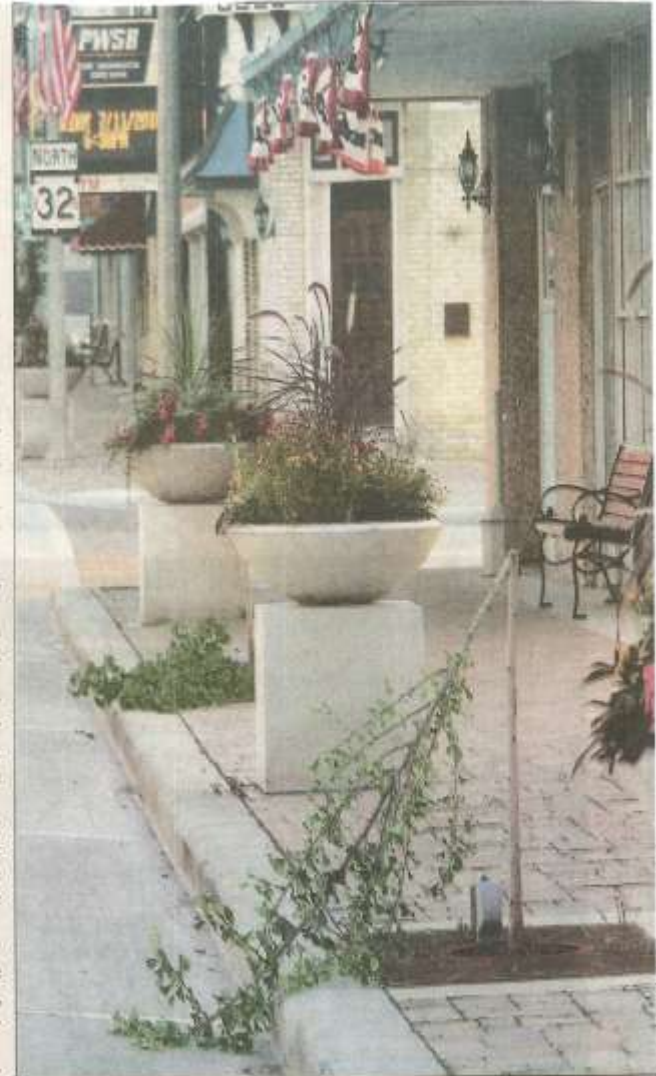
This is at least the second time the city has replaced the tree outside the former M&I Bank building, he said. It is the first time the tree in front of Harry's has been replaced, he said.

"There's no reason for it at all," Ewig said. "These trees aren't sticks when we purchase them. They're 1-1/2 to 2 inches in diameter. It takes some effort to break a tree of that size."

City officials said they are disgusted by the repeated vandalism, noting that while the tree have garnered the most attention, planters in the downtown are also frequently vandalized.

"It's frustrating. They keep getting broken in the same locations at about the same

See Trees on page 12B



PORT WASHINGTON officials are considering a variety of security measures for downtown after two ginkgo trees on Franklin Street were destroyed by vandals early Monday. Photo by Bill Schanen IV

Trees: City to take aim at vandals

FROM PAGE 3B

cont.
7-15-10

times," Public Works Director Rob Vanden Noven said. "I don't think it takes Sherlock Holmes to see where these people are coming from. The people breaking the trees are not coming out of Anchor Men's Wear or Harry's or Heart 'N Home Treasures."

Huebner concurred, saying, "To find any joy in breaking a tree off, you have to be deranged or drunk. The people who are doing this probably don't even know what they're doing."

Mark "Chico" Poull, owner of Schooner Pub, said he, too, is upset by the vandalism.

"I feel terrible about it," he said. "We're so disgusted to see it happen. Who would want to rip a tree down?"

Thomas said that because of limited manpower, the police department hasn't been able to run its downtown bike patrol recently, a situation he hopes to rectify in the coming weeks.

"With the limited resources we have, I think the big thing for us is to use technology," Thomas said.

He said he hopes to be able to use a pole-mounted surveillance camera system recently acquired by the Ozaukee County Emergency Government Department in the downtown.

The trailer-mounted system, which has a number of cameras that can provide a 360-degree view, can be remotely monitored. It

will be used for the first time Saturday during Fish Day, Thomas said.

"After that, we'll be looking for opportunities to use it downtown," he said. "It's a tool that, when available, should help us. We think it will prevent incidents."

The solution will likely include more than just cameras, officials said.

"I think you do need cameras, as much as possible a police presence, and I think you do need a presence outside by bar owners. It's a matter of self-policing your establishment and the people who are coming and going," Vanden Noven said.

The city has talked to tavern owners about the problem in the past, and will likely have to do so again, Grams said.

"I wish the taverns would do a better job," he said. "Maybe the police department should park their squads outside the doors at closing time to monitor the patrons leaving."

Thomas said his department and downtown tavern owners should also look into ways they can work together to ensure there is a presence outdoors at closing time.

"I think it would go a long way in preventing this vandalism from occurring," he said.

Other fixes, such as the possibility of placing fences around trees and different plants in the planters, should also be explored, Thomas said.

Police cite two for trying to destroy downtown trees

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff 7-22-10

Port Washington police on Saturday cited two people for trying to destroy trees planted along Franklin Street in downtown.

A 25-year-old Port Washington man was cited for disorderly conduct at about 2:30 a.m. after an officer patrolling downtown saw him shaking a ginkgo tree outside Foxy's Tavern, then bending the top of the tree as if he wanted to snap it off, police said.

When the officer pulled up, the man let go of the tree and began to walk away, according to the police report. The officer stopped him, told him his actions were unacceptable and issued him a ticket.

The man claimed he was only leaning up against the tree, police said.

At about 10:30 p.m., a 30-year-old Pewaukee woman was also cited for disorderly conduct after an officer saw her attempting to climb a tree in the 200 block of Franklin Street, police said.

The woman was pulling on the tree, bending it over, and her feet rubbed some of the bark off, according to the police report.

When the officer issued the ticket, the woman became very angry and argued with him, police said.

The tickets carry a maximum fine of \$208.50, according to police.

The incidents occurred less than a week after two other downtown trees were broken off by vandals. Those cases are unsolved.

Since the city planted trees in the downtown parkways as part of the Franklin Street reconstruction project in 2008, at least seven of them have been replaced after vandals destroyed them.

The vandalism has caused officials to once again consider the possibility of installing security cameras downtown. This concept is expected to be discussed by either the Board of Public Works or the Police and Fire Commission — as well as the Port Washington Main Street board of directors — in the coming weeks.

No need for Big Brother to watch

Ozaukee Press July 22, 2010

Downtown Port Washington doesn't need 24/7 closed-circuit TV monitoring; it needs more police boots on the ground

The knuckleheads who broke down two trees in downtown Port Washington last week managed to accomplish quite a bit with a few seconds of mindless vandalism: They destroyed two growing things intended to provide beauty and shade; they picked the taxpayers' pockets for \$550, the cost of replacing the trees; and they restarted the discussion about installing TV cameras to provide round-the-clock surveillance of the downtown.

The vandals are creeps, but the notion of trying to keep them and their ilk in check with electronic surveillance of everyone who happens to be downtown is a creepy idea.

Is this what we've come to: Welcome to Port Washington, a beautiful small town, where life is good, small-town family values abide, there is a first-rate police force and crime is rare but, by the way, our downtown is so lawless we have to monitor the streets with TV cameras 24/7?

Yes, it's true that millions of people in the world are watched surreptitiously by security cameras everyday. Nearly every square inch of London is surveilled. There was enough TV surveillance of New York's Time Square to help catch a would-be terrorist last spring. Anyone who watches local television news knows that convenience stores in high-crime areas of Milwaukee are monitored by closed-

circuit TV cameras. (This provides plenty of broadcast footage of criminals at work, but seems to have little effect on the crime rate.)

But Port Washington isn't like any of these places, which is one of the best things it has going for it. People don't have to surrender their privacy to live here safely.

Let's face it: Downtown vandalism, while wholly unacceptable and the cause of justified rage, amounts to something less than a crime wave. Four or five trees have been destroyed over two years, plants have been uprooted from planters a number of times.

The vandalism takes place in a four-block stretch of Franklin Street late at night. It doesn't take a crack detective to deduce that it's being done by customers of downtown taverns. (Which means the vandals are adults, a demoralizing thought—they're old enough to vote. With luck, they won't exercise the right.)

Protecting the trees and plants and other downtown property, public and private, boils down to scaring off or arresting a few drunks during a relatively short period of time in a fairly small area. That's not a job for electronic eavesdropping; it's a job for the police.

A police officer on foot or on a bike, maybe a squad car parked prominently on the street near bar closing time, would go a long way toward keeping trees and flowers safe, and

perhaps help keep the public safe too if a few drunken drivers were nabbed in the process.

The effectiveness of Port police officers when they are on a downtown beat has been proven time and again. In fact, officers saved trees twice in the last week, once on Fish Day when they encountered an inebriated woman trying to climb a spindly, young tree, and another time when unruly tavern patrons were found violently shaking a tree.

Tavern owners should offer to help. How about a reward, advertised on posters in bars, for information leading to apprehension of vandals? Besides discouraging bad behavior, this would polish the image of these downtown businesses. Thanks to the recent vandalism, they're getting some bad PR at the moment.

Police Chief Richard Thomas told Ozaukee Press he is planning to try out the Ozaukee County Sheriff's Department's newly-acquired mobile TV surveillance system downtown. That would apparently be occasional monitoring, and maybe something good will come of it, but we're guessing that when it comes to downtown vandalism, police time will prove to be better spent walking the streets than looking at them on TV screen.

Let's not let a few drunks label Port Washington a town that can't control its main street without electronic eavesdropping.

Camera debate raises Big Brother concerns

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHN

Ozaukee Press staff 8-12-10

The Port Washington Police Department is considering borrowing a mobile camera unit from Ozaukee County to monitor downtown streets and prevent vandalism, including the destruction of trees, the Police and Fire Commission was told Monday.

But not everyone is sold on the idea. "It feels so Big Brother," commission member Ginn Taucher said. "How much more effective would that be than increased patrols?"

The department does not have the manpower to provide increased patrols, officials said.

"It (the surveillance unit) is not the whole answer," Captain Mike Keller said. "It's a tool and it may help. It can be a deterrent."

Commission Chairman Rick Nelson said the nighttime bike patrols have also helped deter vandalism.

"The downtown patrol has been a huge help," he said.

City officials and representatives of the Main Street Program have said they, too, are ready to consider installing a surveillance camera in downtown because of the

■ Some Port officials say surveillance vehicle could help stem downtown vandalism but others worry about privacy

amount of vandalism.

One of the most visible examples is the destruction of at least seven trees planted along Franklin Street since the road was rebuilt in 2008.

A month ago, two ginkgo trees had to be replaced after they were snapped by vandals.

A week after that, two people were cited for trying to destroy trees in downtown.

Nelson noted that downtown merchants looked into the concept of downtown surveillance cameras two years ago after a spate of vandalism, but nothing was done.

"The business district was not supportive of the idea then," he said.

But cameras have become less intrusive and more common since that time, Nelson said.

Many communities require new businesses to install security cameras, he said, whether people realize they are there or not.

"There's always that fine line, are we going to be perceived as Big Brother watching everything?" he said. "We

don't want that."

Using the county's camera unit to monitor downtown at select times may be one way to combat vandalism, Nelson said.

On Fish Day, the police used the pole-mounted surveillance camera system recently acquired by the Ozaukee County Emergency Government Department to monitor the downtown, he noted.

The system, which has a number of cameras that can provide a 360-degree view, can be remotely monitored.

"They were pretty impressive in what you can see and do with them," Nelson said of the pictures obtained by the unit.

Police Chief Richard Thomas is looking into how often the city could use the vehicle to remotely monitor downtown, Keller said.

No matter what the city does downtown, Nelson said, officials must be sure the business community will support it.

The commission is expected to continue its discussion of cameras downtown when it meets next month.



OZAUKEE COUNTY'S recently acquired surveillance vehicle may be used to stem vandalism in downtown Port Washington, but some officials have expressed concerns about privacy rights.

Press the photo

Police establish hotline aimed at vandalism

■ *Port department steps up crackdown on crime spree, issues citation to Grafton man*

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff 8-26-10

Port Washington police on Wednesday announced the start of a hotline and reward intended to prompt people to report vandals in downtown.

That comes just more than a week after a tip from someone led police to cite a 25-year-old Grafton man for breaking a downtown tree in June.

The written statement received by police at the end of July was from someone who said he had seen the man snap the tree in front of Schooner Pub early June 13, authorities said.

When police contacted the man, he admitted being at the tavern that night but denied breaking the tree.

However, after an investigation, officers on Aug. 13 issued a municipal citation for destruction of property. The ticket carries a maximum fine of \$208.50.

The police department is still seeking the people who damaged two trees on April 17, two on July 12 and two on Aug. 14 — acts that have frustrated city officials and residents. It costs the city about \$250 to buy and replace each tree.

Police Chief Richard Thomas on Wednesday encouraged people to call the hotline at 268-7682 and report vandalism.

Callers who wish to remain anonymous will be given a number to keep their identity confidential, he said.

If the information leads to the arrest of someone, the caller will be eligible to receive a \$50 reward, said Thomas, who last week announced a crackdown on vandalism.

Instead of citations, vandals will be arrested and face a state criminal charge, Thomas said.

"This is like someone breaking into your home. Whoever is doing this is violating our community and our downtown and it has to stop," he said.

The chief also said the city will be putting decorative metal protectors around Schooner Pub and Foxy's, where trees have repeatedly been damaged this summer.

Police will continue to use a variety of patrols, including foot and bike patrols, to enforce the laws and deter vandalism, Thomas said, as well as covert surveillance using the Ozaukee County mobile surveillance vehicle's cameras.

Port police launch assault on downtown vandalism

■ *More patrols, criminal charges part of effort to stop crimes plaguing city*

By BILL SCHANEN IV

Ozaukee Press staff 8-19-10

Responding to the destruction of two more downtown trees last weekend, Port Washington Police Chief Richard Thomas announced a crackdown on vandalism this week that will result in more officers on the street late at night with orders to arrest, not merely ticket, anyone caught defacing property.

"Any and all people who commit or attempt to commit vandalism will face a state municipal charge, not a municipal fine, effective immediately," Thomas told Ozaukee Press Tuesday. "That means these people will be taken to jail and booked."

"The seriousness of these crimes has clearly risen to that level. We are making a huge investment in downtown and a bunch of jerks continue to undermine it. This is like someone breaking into your home. Whoever is doing this is violating our community and our downtown and it has to stop."

The chief is also recommending the city put decorative metal protectors around select downtown trees, namely those near taverns, and start a tip hot line that offers a modest reward for information leading to the arrest of vandals.

"The fact is, someone knows who did this, and it probably wasn't just one person. It was probably one jerk busting the tree and two others laughing," Thomas said, referring to the destruction of two trees in the 100 block of North Franklin Street just after midnight Saturday, Aug. 14. "I'd like to see the downtown business district step up and offer a small reward for anonymous information about who is doing this."

As for using surveillance cameras downtown, an issue debated by the Police and See Vandalism on page 13B



TWO MORE TREES in the 100 block of North Franklin Street were destroyed by vandals last weekend. The city has had to replace nine downtown trees that were intentionally broken since they were planted in 2008 as part of a beautification project. Photo by Bill Schanen IV

Cont. →
next
page

Trees: Port police launch crackdown on vandals

FROM PAGE 1B *cont* 8-19-10

Fire Commission last week, Thomas said he wants to sell his idea of using cameras for limited periods of time, primarily late at night on weekends, to business owners before a decision is made to install permanent cameras. In the interim, however, the city may use the Ozaukee County mobile surveillance vehicle as soon as this weekend to deter vandalism.

"At this point, I'm afraid that I'll drive through downtown on Sunday morning and see more trees down," he said. "When I saw that two more trees were destroyed last weekend, it literally made me sick to my stomach."

"We're at the point where we need to do something quickly."

The latest acts of vandalism occurred between midnight and 12:19 a.m. Saturday during the short amount of time an officer on patrol downtown was called away to assist another officer, Thomas said.

"The officer was gone for only about 15 minutes, but that's all it took," he said.

Two trees immediately to the north and south of Schooner's Pub, one of which was planted in (July) to replace a tree that had been destroyed by vandals, were snapped in half and left lying on the sidewalk.

Officers interviewed people at Schooner's, the nearby Harborview Holiday Inn, Foxy's tavern and George Webb's, a restaurant on the south side of the city that is frequented by bar patrons, according to a police report. None of the people interviewed said they saw what happened to the trees.

Nine downtown trees have been destroyed by vandals and several other attempts foiled by police since the trees were planted as part of the downtown improvement project in 2008.

Thomas said the culprits are typically bar patrons who strike between 11 p.m.

and 2:30 a.m. on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

The response from other city officials to the latest destruction of trees was a mix of bewilderment and disgust.

"You wonder if these bars are serving a bunch of drunks," said Public Works Director Rob Vanden Noven, who has championed the cause of landscaping city streets with trees. "Personally, I think Schooner's and Foxy's are responsible and that it's up to other businesses to hold them accountable."

"This is taxpayers' money. We budget money for trees and once it's gone, that's it."

It costs the city about \$250 to buy and replace a tree.

Police and Fire Commission Chairman Rick Nelson said the latest acts of vandalism strengthen the argument for surveillance cameras downtown.

"These people (vandals) are just rubbing our face in this. We can't just sit by and watch this destruction happening," he said.

"The business community has been divided on the issues of cameras, but if we keep seeing this sort of vandalism, I think that opinion is going to shift in favor of cameras."

"If it were up to me, I wouldn't only put cameras downtown but at other places like the marina and Possibility Playground (in Upper Lake Park)."

The board of directors of Port Main Street Inc., the organization working to revitalize downtown, has not taken a position on the idea of downtown surveillance cameras.

Cameras may be a part of Thomas' plan to stop downtown vandalism, but more immediately he said he will put more officers on the street.

"Overtime patrols could get a little ex-

stand that we are going to do what it takes to arrest and punish the people doing this and ultimately stop it from happening," he said.

The order to treat vandalism as a significant crime by requesting state criminal charges is also significant. Typically vandals are issued municipal citations, which are civil, not criminal, charges, and pay a fine if convicted.

State misdemeanor charges, which are requested by police and issued by the Ozaukee County District Attorney's office, are criminal charges punishable by jail sentences and significant fines.

"Upon conviction of a misdemeanor state charge, these people will have criminal records, not just a municipal fine to pay," Thomas said.

The other measures he is proposing, metal tree protectors that cost \$200 each and a so-called crime stopper hot line, are relatively inexpensive ways to fight vandalism, he said.

"In Wausau, they have very nice, attractive trees guards on some of their trees to protect against vandalism," said Thomas, who was in Wausau this week for a conference. "I don't see putting them on every tree, maybe just the ones outside Foxy's and Schooner's. I think they would go a long way toward preventing this type of vandalism."

"Our first goal is to arrest the people doing this. Then we need to take steps to prevent this from happening again and again."

It's taverns' responsibility to deter drunken vandals

To Ozaukee Press: 8-26-10

Regarding the vandalism of trees in the downtown area: We all know who is doing this—intoxicated bar patrons. Why should the taxpayers ante up for added police patrols and cameras and the like to solve a problem caused by the establishments that choose to serve alcohol to anyone with the cash to pay for it whatever their condition may be?

The answer to the problem is to require any downtown establishment that is open after 9 p.m. to provide exterior security around the area of their buildings from that time until one-half hour after closing time. A few bouncers watching the streets can deter destructive behavior, not to mention perhaps preventing some intoxicated driving.

Since it is their patrons that are the problem, the bars need to be a significant part of the solution.

Ray Meyer
Port Washington

Port official irresponsible in blaming bars for vandalism

To Ozaukee Press: 8-26-10

I never write letters to the editor, but after the comments made by Rob Vanden Noven, the director of public works, reported in last week's Ozaukee Press, I felt that it is necessary to respond to what he said about Foxy's, the Schooner Pub and other Port Washington taverns. His remarks are insensitive and he

needs to be reprimanded by his superiors or the mayor.

I have been in both places, as well as other bars in the city, many times. I have lived in the city for more than 20 years, and when I go to the places he refers to, there are no drunks being served. I am 62 years old and I go there with my wife to socialize with friends and their families. Both places create a good place to sit and talk with friends that you have not seen for a while, or just to have a drink and talk.

I even bring my parents who are in the middle 80s and enjoy going whenever they

come from Milwaukee to visit us. Perhaps Mr. Vanden Noven has been at bars where drunks are served, but the ones he mentioned don't. Whoever did the damage to downtown trees should be made to pay for it. But to say that Schooner or Foxy's are serving a bunch of drunks who are causing the vandalism is irresponsible and slander against good businesses.

He should issue an apology for having misspoken and check both places and see for himself that nice, family people are being served there.

I believe that Mr. Vanden Noven should spend more time fixing all the holes in the streets of our city than slandering tavern owners.

By the way, Foxy's is owned by my son, and if I knew that they were serving "bunch of drunks," I would be the first person to stay away from that place.

Ben La
Port Washington



Nine trees along Franklin Street in downtown Port Washington, including this one in the 100 block, have been destroyed. None were planted in 2008.

Police establish hotline aimed at vandalism

■ *Port department steps up crackdown on crime spree, issues citation to Grafton man*

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff 8-26-10

Port Washington police on Wednesday announced the start of a hotline and reward intended to prompt people to report vandals in downtown.

That comes just more than a week after a tip from someone led police to cite a 25-year-old Grafton man for breaking a downtown tree in June.

The written statement received by police at the end of July was from someone who said he had seen the man snap the tree in front of Schooner Pub early June 13, authorities said.

When police contacted the man, he admitted being at the tavern that night but denied breaking the tree.

However, after an investigation, officers on Aug. 13 issued a municipal citation for destruction of property. The ticket carries a maximum fine of \$208.50.

The police department is still seeking the

Vandalism crackdown leads to arrest

■ Saukville man, 51, nabbed by Port police after trying to destroy tree on Franklin Street in front of tavern patrons

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

Ozaukee Press staff 9-2-10

Port Washington police, who began a crackdown on downtown vandalism this past weekend, arrested a 51-year-old Saukville man early Saturday for trying to destroy a tree on Franklin Street.

The man was one of two people arrested and three cited for various violations during the expanded downtown patrols, according to police.

Seven trees in downtown have been destroyed by vandals this summer, frustrating residents, merchants and police and prompting the crackdown.

"I feel really good about this," Police Chief Richard Thomas said. "We are not going to tolerate anyone damaging our beautiful downtown."

The Saukville man was arrested about 2:30 a.m. Aug. 28 after two officers saw him bending over a gingko tree in the 200 block of North Franklin Street, according to police.

Lt. Eric Leet, one of the officers who witnessed the incident, said the man had been

at a downtown tavern and was intoxicated. He didn't offer a reason for his actions, Leet added.

"The explanation he offered was that he didn't do it," Leet said.

The man wasn't shy about his actions, he added.

"The street was full of people," Leet said. "It was probably witnessed by 40 to 50 bar patrons leaving downtown."

That may work in the city's favor, Leet noted.

"These people got to see a guy pulling on a tree arrested. To me, that would make an impact," he said.

Police have asked the Ozaukee County district attorney's office to charge the man with a misdemeanor count of attempting to destroy property, Thomas said.

"What a jerk," Thomas said of the man.

If the district attorney declines to press charges because he does not believe he can meet the burden of proof required, Thomas said, police will issue the man a municipal citation for attempted damage to property. Municipal citations do not require the same

burden of proof as a criminal charge.

That same hard-line stance will be followed for anyone who commits or tries to commit vandalism downtown, Thomas said.

"One way or another, they will be held accountable," he said.

Misdemeanor charges of disorderly conduct have been requested against the other man arrested early Saturday. The 27-year-old Port Washington man was screaming and tipping over construction barricades at the intersection of Wisconsin Street and Grand Avenue about 12:30 a.m., police said.

In addition, three men were cited for open intoxicants during the early hours of Saturday and Sunday. One of the men was also cited for littering.

Leet said police have adjusted their traditional north and west patrol areas so that each one overlaps downtown on weekend evenings, allowing these officers to spend time downtown.

He also patrolled downtown, as did the bike patrol officer, all of whom were visible to people downtown, Leet said.

"There were times this weekend when we had two squads downtown as well as (the bike patrol officer)," he said. "We wanted to make a point. I, like everyone else in town, See Vandals on page 4B



FRUSTRATED WITH THE wanton destruction of trees along Franklin Street in downtown Port Washington, such as this gingko that was destroyed by vandals Aug. 14, police increased their night patrols beginning last weekend. It paid off when early Saturday, they arrested one man who officers say was trying to break a tree in the 200 block of Franklin Street. Photo by Bill Schanen IV

Vandals: Police maintain surveillance

FROM PAGE 3B

Cont.
9-2-10

get tired of seeing the trees destroyed."

In addition to the increased police presence, he said, two reserve police officers were posted in downtown storefronts conducting surveillance Friday and Saturday nights. If they saw anything suspicious, they radioed the officers on duty.

"We didn't want to give up completely on our visible presence," he said, noting that it is an effective way to prevent problems. "We'd rather prevent (actions) than catch (violators after the fact), but if we can't prevent, we'll settle for catching."

The crackdown will continue as officers are available until the vandalism abates, Leet said.

"Until we start to see signs the patrons down there are willing to act responsibly, we'll have to keep this up," he said, noting that the program will be evaluated in a month.

"We never like to have to do the zero-

tolerance thing. Discretion is part of good policing. But what we've been doing so far hasn't been working, so this is the next logical step."

Thomas said the department is in the process of creating signs for downtown businesses to post warnings of the crackdown and the fact police are watching for vandals.

In addition, he said, the city has ordered special tree guards to place around the trees near Schooner Pub and Foxy's, where most of the trees have been broken this year, in an attempt to protect them.

In addition, anyone who witnesses vandalism is encouraged to report it via the city's new vandalism hotline at 268-7682. A \$50 reward is offered for tips leading to the arrests of vandals.

Both Leet and Thomas praised business owners who have offered their storefronts for surveillance.

"We've got to give the business community a big hand," Thomas said.



Tree armor to combat vandals 9-16-10 Ozaukee Press

City workers are installing steel cages to protect young trees in downtown Port Washington. Dennis Didier (left) and Jeff Doll fastened one around a ginkgo tree in the 200 block of Franklin Street, where trees have been damaged. Cages have also been placed in the 100 block, the site of repeated tree vandalism. Talk of installing surveillance cameras downtown to thwart vandals has quieted since police have started patrolling the downtown more aggressively around tavern closing time and the tree-cage project has begun.

Photo by Bill Schanen IV

City cites man for trying to destroy tree

10-7-10 Ozaukee Press

A 52-year-old Saukville man who was arrested by Port Washington police in August for trying to destroy a tree on Franklin Street has received a municipal citation in the case, Police Chief Richard Thomas said Tuesday.

Jeffery Keller was cited for attempting to destroy public property, which carries a fine of \$208.50, Thomas said.

"As I said from the start, this is what we're going to do if we get a case back from the district attorney," Thomas said. "He has to be held accountable."

The citation was issued after District Attorney Adam Gerol declined to press criminal charges in the case, saying his office did not have enough evidence to charge the man with a misdemeanor count of attempting to destroy property, the charge sought by police.

Keller was arrested Aug. 28 during a police crackdown on vandals in the downtown, a campaign prompted this summer by the repeated destruction of trees planted along the city's main street.

"SWEEPING FRANKLIN STREET"

POSTERS/SIGNS

GOT A TICKET DOWNTOWN?
WE'RE TELLING!!

Who's going to know if you get a ticket downtown?

- ✓ Parents
- ✓ Siblings
- ✓ Friends
- ✓ Neighbors
- ✓ Co-Workers
- ✓ Bosses

The names of all persons cited/arrested downtown will be released to the Ozaukee Press



**YOUR NAME...
IN THE PRESS!!**



The names of all persons CITED or ARRESTED downtown will be released to the **Ozaukee County Press**, along with a summary of the violation, for all to see!

**THINK TWICE
BEFORE YOU ACT!!**
A message from the Port Washington Police Dept.



WE'RE WATCHING!!

This block may be under police SURVEILLANCE!

**All violations of city ordinances or laws will be enforced
with citations or arrest!**

A message from the Port Washington Police Department



PHOTOGRAPHS OF FRANKLIN STREET



PHOTOGRAPHS OF FRANKLIN STREET



"SWEEPING FRANKLIN STREET"

Project Contact Persons:

Name: Officer Jason Bergin
Rank: Police Officer
Address: PWPd
365 N Wisconsin St
Port Washington, WI
53074
Phone: (262) 284-2611
Fax: (262) 377-9648
Email: jbergin@pwpd.org

Name: Officer Jerry Nye
Rank: Police Officer
Address: PWPd
365 N Wisconsin St
Port Washington, WI
53074
Phone: (262) 284-2611
Fax: (262) 377-9648
Email: jnye@pwpd.org

