

Crime, violence, cop technology dominate forum

Corbitt: follow East Orange

By Chris Sykes
Staff Writer

The issues of crime and violence were in the forefront Tuesday night as Councilman Elroy Corbitt conducted his second community forum on the topics.

"We're such a small town, but with our crime rate going up we certainly do need to free our officers up to do the job of fighting crime," said Corbitt. "The Orange Police Department has been understaffed for years. Even though we have begun to address those manpower issues, we still don't have enough on the job now to cover the entire city and do everything that they are required to do, including writing tickets."

Tuesday's meeting was Corbitt's second attempt at organizing a citywide discussion on issues such as youth crime, gangs, police tactics, response times, and the Police Department's role in handling crime-related problems.

Tuesday's forum was hosted by Bethel Baptist Church. The first citywide forum was in May with the "Summit On Violence" at St. Matthew AME Church.

Corbitt said he was concerned about the lack of technology in crimefighting in Orange. He said any weaknesses in that area has become particularly pronounced since the town's neighbor, East Orange, has been well known for its use of technology in reducing criminal activity.

"The question is: what are we really doing? Do we have any undercover sting operations in place to catch drug dealers? Do we have undercover officers actually purchasing drugs as part of their effort to get all illicit substances off the streets? Do we have state-of-the-art, modern technology in place to help officers apprehend suspects in robberies, carjackings, killings and other crimes that are happening?" Corbitt asked. "Surveillance cameras, computers in patrol cars, and better communications and coordination systems are known as 'force multipliers' because they help officers become more efficient and do more things. The bottom line is now is the time for some action."



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