



TOWN OF RIVERHEAD NEWS

Office of the Supervisor
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DOWNTOWN ADVISORY: STATEMENT FROM SUPERVISOR SEAN M. WALTER

With the recent robbery of a young couple and the tragic death of a pedestrian on East Main Street occurring so close together, both geographically, and in it time, I feel it is important to comment on these unfortunate events both as Police Commissioner and as Town Supervisor.

Providing for the public's welfare and safety is the highest responsibility and first priority of town government and this administration. We are ever diligent in our efforts to police all of Riverhead and we maintain an intense police presence downtown. The fight to stay ahead of crime is a constant struggle. Our police cruisers roll from downtown, our station house is downtown, our court is downtown, the day-to-day comings and goings of police vehicles alone give our police department strong visibility on Main Street. With all the pedestrians walking downtown, the foot traffic to and from area businesses and our deep police presence; this crime still occurred. There is a certain arbitrary nature to crime. Crime is a random act.

I want every resident and visitor to Riverhead to know that our downtown is statistically safer than many of our neighboring downtown districts. Crimes upon person are rare downtown and we just finished a very safe year in downtown Riverhead. I recognize that if you are a victim of crime, dry numbers are of little comfort, but I am happy to say that downtown we are managing to hold back the tide.

My heart goes out to the family of the victim of the tragic accident the other night downtown. An innocent man, on his birthday, simply crossing the street, was struck down as he went to move his vehicle. This accident reminds us of how unfair life can be. This tragedy teaches us to be ever mindful of what can happen in the most simple act and to be alert at all times.

A few things worth noting:

- It is difficult to ask private companies to invest in our downtown when we aren't willing to do the same. Therefore, effective immediately we have doubled the size of the squad for downtown.
- I am requesting that the DOT restripe the crosswalks and outline them so they are more visible to drivers.
- As part of the sidewalk grant monies and under our BOA grant, I am asking for appropriate traffic calming devices to be installed on Main Street.
- I've instructed our Street Lighting Department to assess any lighting shortfalls within the downtown area.
- At its kick-off meeting with the NYS Department of Transportation in September, the Town requested that sidewalk improvements also include different color pavers be used to create safe and inviting walkways from the back parking lots on to Main Street. This connection will allow for a more prominent crosswalk at the newly renovated Suffolk Theater.

In response to these recent events, Riverhead Chief of Police David Hegermiller reminds everyone of the following:

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- When parking, look for well lit areas and have your keys ready before you enter your vehicle.
- When crossing the street use crosswalks. Do not step into the roadway from between vehicles. Do not operate under the belief that you will be seen. Assume you will not and you will be safer.
- Report any suspicious activity to the police.

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