Camera deployed to catch crooks

Neighbors praise Tabares for cop camera at 53/Harlem

By Tim Hadac

Burglars and other criminals fleeing the north end of Garfield Ridge may want to cover their faces as they pass 53rd and Harlem, now that a Chicago Police Department camera has been installed on a light pole there.

"This is what we requested from [23rd Ward] Alderman Silvana Tabares, a few months back at one of our public meetings," said Garfield Ridge Neighborhood Watch President Al Cacciottolo. "She said she would get on top of it, and she did. This is a promise made, a promise kept, and we are grateful to her."

Cacciottolo made his remarks at the January meeting of the GRNW, held Jan. 14 at the firehouse at 56th and Narragansett. Nearly 100 people turned out.



Tabares

He added that funding for the camera came from Tabares' aldermanic discretionary "menu" fund, "not something automatic" from the Chicago Police Department budget.

Burglars and others fleeing Garfield Ridge's north end typically try to get onto the Stevenson Expressway as quickly as possible. To do that, they sometimes drive to 53rd and Harlem—mere seconds from the entrance ramps.

At other times, they flee east via 51st and Central, and head north on Central five blocks to the expressway entrance ramps.

Cacciottolo has said that he hopes that 14th Ward Ald. Edward M. Burke and his staff can work to get a CPD surveillance camera at 51st and Central.

The request for the camera was made shortly after two separate armed robberies of women in Garfield's Ridge's north end last summer.

- A 61-year-old Garfield Ridge grandmother was robbed at gunpoint as she stood on the front porch of her home in the 5200 block of South Newland at 12:33 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 11.
- A 35-year-old Garfield Ridge woman was robbed at gunpoint in her garage near 51st and Newcastle, at about 2:20 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 9.

Both crimes remain unsolved.

Cacciottolo said that the GRNW continues to encourage homeowners and business owners to install security cameras that show the outside of their property—and when possible link those cameras to the Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications.