

May 20, 2004

Honorable Mayor and Members of
The Hermosa Beach City Council

Regular meeting of
May 25, 2004

DEPLOYMENT OF POLICE PERSONNEL FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY HOLIDAY

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council:

1. Receive and file this report

BACKGROUND

The 4th of July continues to be a very popular holiday for Hermosa Beach. Thousands of people come from out of town to party in Hermosa. The fireworks show in Redondo Beach serves as an added attraction as many people come to Hermosa to watch the show from the beach. Traditionally, the police department encounters large crowds at neighborhood parties especially along the Strand. The most active part of the day begins around 3:00 PM and continues till midnight. The largest concentrations of people are found along the Strand to Hermosa Avenue running the full length of the City. Officers are running from call to call and officers initiate a number of subject stops issuing citations and making arrests primarily for public intoxication and fighting.

Last year July 4th fell on a Friday. Officers handled 341 calls for service on the 4th last year many of which were officer initiated. There were 38 total arrests for the weekend with 22 on the 4th. Officers issued 221 citations mostly for possession of alcohol and fireworks. Our parking officers issued 838 parking citations for the weekend with 457 issued on July 4th.

Since July 4th, 2001 the police department has deployed all available officers to work in uniform on the 4th. This includes detectives and the command staff (including myself). Additionally, the police department has enlisted the services of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the California Highway patrol. A request has been made already for a total of 15 deputy sheriffs and 2 CHP officers to augment our existing staff. The strategy has been and continues to be the visible presence of a large uniformed force on the July 4th holiday. The strategy is two fold. First, it is our desire that law abiding citizens see the large number of officers and feel safe as a result of that presence. Second, it is our hope that rowdy and disruptive individuals seeing the large number of officers might think twice about causing problems or even staying in Hermosa Beach.

Many officers are deployed along the Strand and the Plaza to monitor activities while other officers are assigned in squads as rapid deployment groups. If a problem develops, the tactic is to flood the area with officers, stop the problem and make arrests as necessary. This flooding of officers into an area has a real calming effect upon the crowd and dissipates tensions from escalating further.

The police department also monitors the traditional "Ironman" event usually held in the northern part of the City around 11:00-12:00PM in the morning. While the event draws a certain amount of media coverage and is controversial in nature, it has been the experience of the police

department that the ironman does not cause any major problems. The organizers of the Ironman seem to run the event well, are cooperative with the police department and even clean up after the event is over. The practice has been to monitor the event and make sure that people are safe.

This will be the fourth year that the police department has deployed large numbers of officers on the July 4th holiday. It has been our hope that this practice has slowly modified the behavior of the crowds for the better.

Respectfully submitted,

Concur:

MICHAEL LAVIN, CHIEF OF POLICE
HERMOSA BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

STEPHEN BURRELL
CITY MANAGER