

Charles County Commissioners Meeting – June 25, 2024

Angel Riley Public Comment

Good evening, commissioners, my name is Angel Riley. I live in the Stonehaven community located in District 4 and am a member of the Neighborhood Watch.

I am speaking today to ask the county commissioners to act quickly in addressing a quality-of-life problem that is quickly escalating into a public safety issue. Over the past year, we, in Stonehaven, have seen a significant increase in teen and young adults gathering in large numbers in different areas in our community, including a toddler playground outside the garage entrance to my home.

While I know and welcome the youth enjoying the amenities our community offers, those who are gathering are gambling, smoking weed, littering, playing loud music, looking inside of residents' cars parked in the lots, and basically have no respect for homeowners asking them to disburse or show more respect for the community. To make matters worse, the initial petty behavior has escalated into congregating in our community areas to fight, storing stolen vehicles, and more severely, destruction of property.

I've personally witnessed last fourth of July holiday a young man throw an illegal firework into my neighbor's trash can causing damage to her property. In fact, I was on the line with the CCSO non-emergency dispatcher hysterically detailing what was going on. At that time, the crowd was at least 20 teens and young adults.

To add even more to my safety concern that evening, a car parked in my private driveway in front of my garage, where three young men exited to participate in the activities of the large crowd. When CCSO arrived after numerous community calls, the three young men retreated to their vehicle in my private driveway, and one sat on the trunk of the car putting a hoodie over his head to cover his face. I called CCSO because they were indeed trespassing on private party by being parked in my driveway. I later learned my call was never dispatched to a patrol unit and no explanation other than CCSO received several calls that night. The young men did not leave my driveway until after I called our community's towing company to tow the car.

If I were not home that evening, I would have been surprised by these trespassers and not sure what type of encounter would have ensued.

Knowing a non-HOA approved 4th of July roman candle battle block party flyer is circulating on social media platforms has me gravely concerned for my personal safety, the safety of my neighbors, and the safety of our property, especially since CCSO will have the majority of the force at the county's annual fireworks show.

I am asking you, our elected commissioners, to move swiftly by implementing a Charles County curfew zone. While the MD juvenile curfew law is limited to age 16 and under, it allows CCSO to create and enforce zones where large groups gather in the community. Let's not be mistaken, several of these large group participants are young adults. The juvenile curfew zones will hopefully give CCSO more authority to ID these large group participants, return the juveniles to their parents helping the HOA identify who lives in the Stonehaven community, and give any civil assessments or press criminal charges to the young adults.

This may not be a permanent or only solution for this problem, but a start to rectifying this growing number of delinquencies by these large groups not just in Stonehaven but throughout the county.

Thanks for the opportunity to speak.