

# THE ADVOCATE

NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES

## **Put officers back in Melrose East area**

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B-G&G Investors LLC is saddened by the act of violence that took place in the late evening hours of June 11 at Cezanne Square Apartments. It is our understanding that the incident was precipitated by a "family" dispute.

We are concerned by the increase in crime since Police Chief Jeff LeDuff made a decision to remove all community police officers from Melrose East. Since the removal of the community police officers, there has been a murder, a significant act of child abuse, the June 11 shooting and several "out of control" parties in which residents and property owners were threatened and the community disrupted. In each of these cases, off-duty police officers hired by apartment owners in the area were the first to respond, gain control of the situation and left to deal with the necessary follow-up to the area residents.

The Melrose East Community Association has addressed the reinstatement of community police officers in the Melrose East area with the Police Department through the officers assigned to attend two MECA meetings and Mayor-President Melvin "Kip" Holden. Both the Police Department and mayor are aware of the progress that has been made to the community and the residents' and property owners' commitment to move the community forward - there is no desire to maintain the Mall City reputation which most of Baton Rouge equates to the area. We have been assured that both the Police Department and mayor support the goals of the Melrose East community and will receive equal treatment (response times, patrolling) as is given to the remainder of Baton Rouge.

B-G&G Investors LLC and other apartment owners in the area currently employ off-duty police officers to patrol Melrose East from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. on a daily basis. We have requested the return of our community police officers. Further, we are aware that the reduction in crime in the area gave the police the confidence to remove the officers. Our urgent requests to reinstate the community officers have been refused. We wonder how many more shootings and deaths must take place before the mayor and the chief of police return the community police officers that we had before to Melrose East so that the violence will be controlled and the neighborhood will again become peaceful.

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