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MAYOR HORNIK PROPOSES INCREASED PENALTIES FOR VEHICLE THEFT

MARLBORO TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY (November 3, 2022) – In order to further deter criminals from pursuing car thefts in Marlboro, Mayor Jonathan Hornik has proposed a local ordinance to levy fines and penalties or imprisonment for anyone who trespasses on private property for the purpose of stealing a motor vehicle.

Mayor Hornik stated, “We have taken multiple steps in Town to address the increase in motor vehicle thefts and they have made a difference, but we will not have an end to this concern until people are penalized for this illegal activity.” He continued, “For this reason, we have crafted local legislation to ramp up penalties for entering someone’s property in order to steal a vehicle. Let the word get out...stealing vehicles comes with consequences in Marlboro.”

The ordinance carries with it a penalty of up to \$2,000 or imprisonment of up to 90 days for each vehicle theft attempt. Trespassing in attempt to steal a motor vehicle, even if the individual fails constitutes an offense under the ordinance. The penalty for the first offense shall be \$1,000 and \$2,000 for each subsequent offense.

Mayor Hornik’s ‘See Something. Say Something. We Will Do Something.’ initiative was launched in Marlboro in 2018 in response to school shootings throughout the country. In March, 2022 this program was expanded to include home and vehicle safety due to the uptick of vehicle thefts. Township emails, social media messaging and Police SWIFT 911 texts reminded residents to lock their car and take the key fob.

The initiative was again expanded in May of 2022 as Mayor Hornik and Chief Peter J. Pezzullo asked residents to take an on-line pledge agreeing to take basic steps to keep their home and vehicles safe. In return, an officer delivered a lawn sign that serves as a reminder to neighbors, and sends a warning to potential thieves to stay out of Marlboro. Another program was implemented in September with the “Neighbors App”, allowing police to request doorbell video from residents within particular geographic boundaries to aid in police investigations.

Chief Pezzullo stated, “We have a stellar police department, but with 32 square miles and 14,000 homes we cannot do it alone. Public participation and vigilance, as well as the use

of technology will continue to be critical to our success in apprehending those responsible for theft in our community. We have made over 30 arrests and successful vehicle thefts have decreased by more than 40% March, but there is obviously still more work to be done,” said Pezzullo.

“There is nothing more important to me than keeping Marlboro residents safe,” said Mayor Hornik. “Everything we have been doing, with the active participation of our residents is clearly making a real difference.” He continued, “The heart of the matter is that the criminals see no real downside to stealing. While this problem cannot be solved at the local level, this Ordinance, in conjunction with our other efforts, will send the message to criminals that we mean business.”

The amendment to Township Ordinance Code section 150 will be sent to the Township Council for consideration for first reading at the meeting scheduled for November 10, 2022 at 7:00pm. The second reading and consideration for adoption will be presented to the Township Council at the December 15 meeting at which time Mayor Hornik will submit a resolution to Council to make the Ordinance effective immediately upon second reading and adoption.

Mayor Hornik explained, “As this is a matter of public safety and so to have this ordinance take effect at the earliest date possible, I will be submitting a resolution to Council to make the penalties outlined in the ordinance effective on the date of the second reading and adoption.”

A fact sheet and download instructions for the Neighbors app and links to Take the Pledge and request a lawn sign are posted on the top of the Township website homepage at www.marlboro-nj.gov.

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