

April 24, 2013

BOSTON MARATHON FOLLOW-UP EVENTS IN WATERTOWN, MA



We all know about the two horrible bombing events which took place at the Boston Marathon on Patriots Day, Monday, April 15, 2013. The area of Boylston Street in Copley Square, near the Boston Public Library and Trinity Episcopal Church, at the usual finish line of the Marathon, has just re-opened today, Wednesday, April 24.

Shopkeepers are cleaning up, damage is being assessed. There was a minute of silence last Monday, a week to the day and time of the first blast. A huge crowd witnessed the silent time.

I would like to share the sequence of events which we witnessed or knew about in Watertown. The bombing suspects had absolutely no connection to Watertown, except that they drove in a high speed chase into our town after hijacking a car in Cambridge.

We – I think all residents of Watertown, or at least those in the east end of town – got a ‘robo’ phone call from the police at

1:30 AM Friday stating that there had been an incident in town, with no further description. We were asked to call the police if we saw anything suspicious. (No mention that this might be connected to the Marathon bombings.) We went back to bed. **Our HOME is H on the attached plan. This incident was at SITE # 1.**

This is where the car chase ended, and the two suspects got into a gun fight with police. The older brother was killed in this exchange, and the younger brother drove off, left the car, proceeded on foot, and got beyond the hastily established police perimeter.

Very early Friday morning, it was announced via TV, that Boston and several surrounding communities, including Watertown, were in ‘lockdown’. Residents were directed to ‘shelter in place’ (stay in homes). At about 6:00 AM, a police car with two officers parked across

the intersection from our house, and there was another cruiser visible up the street. The car near us was relieved by two motorcycle police about 11:00 AM. They stayed until 3PM.

At about 1:30PM, SWAT teams showed up in four black armored vans – one from Falmouth, Cape Cod. One vehicle with a machine gunner on the top, arrived. So we had 35 to 40 guys on the street, with a dog, going from house to house.

They parked directly in front of our house and approached our front door – all 12 of them, wearing protective vests, helmets, boots and carrying automatic rifles with scopes. They asked if all was ok in our house, and we answered that all was fine. We asked if they needed to come in – and they did – politely – two on the first floor, two on the second floor, two in the basement, two in the garage. They were in the house less than 10 minutes.

We provided hiking type water bottles which they requested. They drank the water, thanked us and left. By 2:30, it was like they had never been there. All quiet, except for helicopters! By 4 in the afternoon, the Governor stated that folks no longer had to remain 'sheltered in place' (as all businesses were closed in a number of towns, including the City of Boston, the MBTA – buses and subway was closed, etc.). We did not hear this announcement, as we were watching TV intermittently. Helicopters were overhead all day, flying in ever present circles over Watertown, just west of Cambridge.

Things got calmer, so I decided to take a walk around the block about 4:30. I had just made it to the sidewalk when I heard about 20 to 25 gunshots. **This incident was at SITE # 2. Both Sites 1 & 2 are within ½ mile of our home!**

From then on, into the dark, a large number of emergency vehicles roared through town to the site where a home owner had reported the remaining suspect hiding in the owner's boat, under white plastic wrap – winter protection. The owner, when it was announced that it was safe to leave one's house, saw the torn wrap, blood, and a person lying in his boat. After calling the police, the house was evacuated, surrounded, and the suspect finally captured and taken to a hospital, due to several gunshot wounds. (He has been charged and is currently recovering and in communication with police, under very intense guard.)

To conclude the events of the day, a number of Watertown residents went down to the intersection of the major street, MT. Auburn Street, and Bailey Road, which leads into our neighborhood. We all (40 or more) applauded the numerous 'first responders' as they drove by, following the ambulance with the single remaining, wounded suspect. Several newspaper photographers were present. I was interviewed by a reporter from the BBC! Asked when the story would be on the radio, he said it was live! About 2:00 AM UK time!

The following morning, Saturday, opening her e-mail, Webb found a reference to photos on CNN, and there she and Elizabeth stood with some of our neighbors smiling and

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applauding! The events of the day in Watertown were over by 10:00 PM. (Things calmed down quickly, and we went ahead with a dinner party for 10 in our home Saturday night.)

One interesting local story just developing is that Watertown residents are actively raising money to purchase a new boat for the family whose boat held the suspect, and got shot up during the arrest. The City of Boston, urged on by Mayor Menino to contribute to a ONE FUND for victims of the two blasts at the Marathon, where 4 people were killed and close to 180 people injured, some critically including the loss of limbs, has raised, as of tonight, 21 million dollars – 7 M from individuals, and 14 M from businesses.

Luckily, the London Marathon went off without any difficulties of this kind. AND the runners in the UK seemed very determined to 'run for Boston'. Remarkable! Boston, Watertown and the region seem to be getting back to more normal conditions! Perhaps a 'new normal'.

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