Officer Paul Bishop, EPD Crime Prevention Officer, presented crime statistics from the geographic region that includes the Somerset Hills III HOA. There were 88 calls for service from February 2017-present. The majority of calls that generated police reports were for vandalism, vehicle thefts, and burglaries. Officer Bishop stated that the number of reported crimes may not reflect the actual amount of criminal activity within the HOA due to under-reporting by homeowners. Officer Bishop offered several tips and recommendations for homeowners to consider:

- **NEVER** talk yourself out of calling the police. If you see something unusual, then please call the police to report the information. What may appear to an individual to be one suspicious incident could be part of a larger pattern of criminal activity in the neighborhood.

- You can also call CAHOOTS if you suspect that a new person you see in the neighborhood may be experiencing a mental health crisis. CAHOOTS staff are trained to intervene and connect that person with appropriate services. It is becoming more common to see homeless individuals in the neighborhood and the police recognize that some homeowners may not want EPD to be their first point of contact.

- The new construction at the top of Timberline may be creating an attractive nuisance that invites burglars to our neighborhood in search of tools and materials that may be left at the construction site. It is then easy to head back down the hill looking for other homes that might be easy targets with unlocked doors and windows.

- The #1 deterrent for crime at night is light. Use exterior lighting to deter burglars. Many of the thefts and burglaries in the HOA occurred at night or in the early morning hours. If choosing between standard lights and motion-detecting lights, then use standard lights to keep the area around your home well-lit at all times.

- Invest in web-based technology that links an alarm/camera system to your smart device. Monitored alarm services, such as ADT, cannot guarantee a police response because any alarm triggered must be visually verified as a burglary, either in-person or via camera. Many products on the market offer motion-activated cameras that can be easily installed and allow you to remotely monitor who is at your door.

- **DO NOT** engage in conversation with people you did not invite on your property. This includes door-to-door salespeople. Tell the person they are trespassing on your property. If they do not leave immediately, call the police. You may also post “No Trespassing” signs on your property.
• Phone and email scams are common. The people who perpetrate these frauds are very good at what they do and can sound very professional and convincing, even to crime prevention officers! Never give out personal information by phone or email. The IRS and law enforcement agencies will never personally call or email you to ask for payments on delinquent taxes or fines.

• You can contact Officer Bishop directly if something happens in the neighborhood and you have questions about why the police were called. While he cannot divulge confidential details, he can let you know what type of service call the police were responding to and the outcome.