

City of Gainesville

City Hall
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601



Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, January 8, 2013

1:00 PM

City Hall, Ground Floor, Room 17

Public Safety Committee

*Commissioner Yvonne Hinson-Rawls, Chair
Commissioner Lauren Poe, Member
Commissioner Todd Chase, Member*

Persons with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this meeting are requested to notify the Equal Opportunity Department at 334-5051 or call the TDD phone line at 334-2069 at least two business days in advance.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted as submitted by a vote of 3-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

120678. Approval of November 29, 2012 Public Safety Committee Meeting Minutes (B)

RECOMMENDATION *The Public Safety Committee approve the minutes of the November 29, 2012 meeting as submitted.*

The minutes of the November 29, 2012 meeting were approved as written by a vote of 3-0.

DISCUSSION OF PENDING REFERRALS

120349. Vehicles Speeding in Neighborhoods (B)

This item is a request to review the City's Traffic Calming Program and discuss traffic issues in specific neighborhoods. Public Works, Fire Rescue and Police staff will provide an informational presentation to the Public Safety Committee.

RECOMMENDATION *Staff recommends that the Public Safety Committee: 1) hear a presentation from staff on the status of the traffic calming program; and, 2) discuss the status of the traffic calming program.*

Public Works Traffic Operations Manager, Phil Mann began the discussion with a PowerPoint Presentation that explained the different types of traffic calming devices and how they are used. Mr. Mann told the Committee that at the present time, Public Works is not installing new traffic calming devices.

Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) shared results of a study indicating that traffic calming devices can significantly increase response times plus the trucks and equipment can be damaged when going over speed bumps. There have also been employee injuries due to speed bumps. GFR believes that speed cushions are preferable to speed bumps.

Commissioner Poe would like a comparative analysis on the significant drop in accidents by using traffic calming devices: 1) car on car; 2) car on bikes; and 3) car on pedestrian accidents. Commissioner Chase questioned whether we need a traffic calming program. Mr. Mann stated that meeting with the residents of a neighborhood often helps come up with solutions to speeding through their streets.

When Public Works receives a request to reduce speed or for traffic calming devices, they do a traffic study to see if the area qualifies for action and survey the residents of the neighborhood to see if they are in favor of the traffic calming devices so that just one or two neighbors cannot make the decision to affect the entire neighborhood. Speed data is collected by GPD radar units mounted on a power pole; with specific parameters set. The units give the time, speed, and count and are more accurate than using road tubes. Drivers can see the road tubes and often slow down, thus not giving a true view of the problem.

Commissioner Chase expressed support for the digital signs on NW 22nd Street that tell the motorists how fast they are going indicating that it slows drivers down without any harm to large vehicles and does not slow down emergency units. Mr. Mann said that a set of those digital signs costs \$15,000, plus the monthly electricity costs. To date, those units have not required any repairs.

There have been numerous complaints regarding NW 31st Drive where residents have expressed concerns about drivers are cutting through the neighborhood and often speeding. Commissioner Hinson-Rawls feels getting the information out to citizens is important. Commissioner Poe will ask the neighborhood for a meeting to discuss the issue. Assistant City Manager Paul Folkers will look for a meeting to tie in to this problem with the neighborhood.

This item will be held in Committee and the Committee will receive feedback from Staff as more data is gathered.

120508.

Creating Buffer Zones Around Medical Clinics (B)

RECOMMENDATION

The Public Safety Committee 1) hear a report on First Amendment Rights from the City Attorney's Office and a report from GPD on any recent problems they have had around these clinics; and 2) discuss the issue of drafting an ordinance creating a buffer zone around medical clinics.

Police Chief Tony Jones began the discussion by summarizing the research his staff has done on reported incidents at the specific clinics in Gainesville. Police reports showed that the last documented incident was back in 2005. The Chief's position on the buffer zones, based on staff recommendations as well as the historic number of reports generated regarding disturbances at these clinics, is that the Public Safety Committee not move forward with any further discussion of a medical clinic buffer zone ordinance within the City of Gainesville.

Senior Assistant City Attorney Stephanie Marchman spoke on First Amendment issues regarding the buffer zones. Courts would look at whether or not there are significant problems in a community and if so, have they developed restrictions to address these problems. The City would need evidence of a problem and it does not seem as if Gainesville has that evidence. She gave examples of cities where court rulings have been upheld for some buffers and denied for others, depending on the situation. West Palm Beach had a short ordinance where the buffer zones have been adjudicated to twenty feet of the clinic building, but in 2006 a court voted down the ordinance because it was too broad, even though there had been many problems, arrests, arson, and

trauma to the clients. Pensacola's ordinance has not been challenged in court, but they had a doctor murdered, arson, and other significant incidents.

Citizens from both sides of the issue spoke. Safety issues for all concerned were a top priority for those who spoke. Chief Jones said his officers must follow State Statutes when responding to calls at the medical clinics. Officers must make the determination if probable cause can be upheld when the cases reach the State Attorney's Office. Protestors cannot trespass on private property or impede anyone from entering the business. The officers can take action on those violations through City Ordinance. Commissioner Hinson-Rawls would like a way to track how many calls a clinic makes to the Combined Communications Center (CCC). Chief Jones commented that can be tracked. He will get data from the CCC on the clinic's call history.

Commissioner Poe stated that it appears reporting problems at the clinics is an issue. The buffer zone for polling places is one hundred feet away; people have fundamental rights. He is not ready to make a decision on this issue. Commissioner Chase commented that there is a reasonable expectation that a citizen can enter a business and expressed concerns about City regulation on this issue.

The Committee agreed to keep this referral in Committee at this time.

MEMBER COMMENT

CITIZEN COMMENT

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next scheduled meeting is January 24, 2013 at 1:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.