

# **City of Gainesville**

*City Hall  
200 East University Avenue  
Gainesville, Florida 32601*



## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, April 21, 2005**

**9:00 AM**

**City Hall, Ground Floor, Room 16**

## **Public Safety Committee**

*Commissioner Tony Domenech, Chair  
Commissioner Ed Braddy, 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

*Commissioner Domenech called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.*

Present: Edward Braddy and Tony Domenech

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

*Commissioner Braddy moved and Commissioner Domenech seconded adoption of the agenda as presented.*

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Commissioner Braddy moved and Commissioner Domenech seconded approval of the minutes as presented.*

## DISCUSSION OF PENDING REFERRALS

### **040424 Bar Closing Times - Discussion with University of Florida Student Government**

*The committee heard presentation reports from the UF SAFE Committee, the Gainesville Police Department, the City Attorney's Office and University of Florida officials.*

*Joe Goldberg, UF SAFE Committee advised that surveys were sent about two weeks ago to twelve bars/nightclubs asking their reaction if bars were allowed to stay open to 3:00 a.m. The survey query asked bars if they.: would stay open, would not stay open, would like the option to stay open. Only 4 surveys were returned, with three indicating they would stay open and one choosing the option to stay open. He hopes to receive more responses and offered to take the remaining results to the full City Commission, when the referral gets reported out to them.*

*Daniel Nee, Assistant City Attorney spoke to the report for Ron Combs who was out of town. The peer city survey results on bar closings and bar serving times showed that the only two outliers were Bloomington, Illinois and Tampa, Florida where sale and consumption is allowed from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. Commissioner Domenech asked about the student ratios to total population. (This information was provided from a previous meeting and included the peer city breakdown by Eric Bredfelt, which was used for this survey).*

*Captain Ed Van Winkle summarized the Gainesville Police Department report on staffing, also included in the agenda packet. GPD has a shift overlap from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. (Shift 3 works 5 p.m. to 3 a.m. and Shift 4 works 10 p.m. to 8 a.m.) With the current bar closing at 2:00 a.m., it takes approximately one hour to clear everyone out of the downtown area, as patrons may stop at fast food restaurants, convenience stores, etc. on the way out. There are approximately 14-15 officers who are made available to pull from different zones in the city or who are on Shift 3 and 4 during*

that overlap period up till 3:00 a.m. They work crowd control, traffic, noise complaints and other bar-related issues. The report shows that if the bar hours were extended to 3:00 a.m., GPD would not have that double number of officers, therefore, having to pull up to 9 officers off the road, from their designated zones to assist the downtown and University corridors areas. If the department moved the shift hours back to accommodate the hour change, the department would basically have to change all shifts for the entire city, ultimately creating two midnight shifts. Cpt. Van Winkle added that there are more bars today (approximately 24) than in the past when this issue was last discussed.

Additional personnel costs for the extension of bar hours to 3:00 a.m. would be approximately \$55,600 per year. Other intangible costs include the potential for more noise complaints, additional traffic congestion and the additional time that zone officers would not be covering their assigned zones until approximately 4:00 a.m. or later, which ultimately could result in greater opportunity for crimes.

Commissioner Braddy asked Alachua County Sheriff's Lieutenant Jim Troiano if the county allowed an extension, how that would impact ASO. Lt. Troiano advised that their overlap shift goes home at 3:00 a.m. and that they would also experience the need to re-evaluate, including the need for more deputies if the bar hours were extended. He noted that ASO has 12 hour shifts, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.

Lohse Beeland, UF Reitz Union Student Activities Assistant Director read a statement that she will email to the staff liaison to be included in the official record. In summary, she stated that the University of Florida does not support the proposal of extending bar hours from 2:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. She acknowledged that there is an issue with crowding into the streets and buses, however, believed the City should consider other alternatives. They do support the SAFE committee's recommendations for an anti-abuse marketing campaign done in conjunction with existing UF campaigns and support the roundtable discussions. She noted that Dr. Machen has three subcommittees established that are reviewing the alcohol issues - Enforcement, Access and Marketing, and Social/Environmental. She introduced Dr. Doering, UF Pharmacologist who spoke to the science of alcohol in the bloodstream and the variable effects and peaks. He suggested that if the decision to extend the hours is to let people sober up in bars, then the science is flawed.

Dr. Barkley, Director of UF Student Health Center reiterated earlier meeting statements that in his extensive conversations with Emergency Room directors and others from the medical profession, he has never heard one medical professional support this.

Tavis Glassman, UF Student Health Center advised that at one of the alcohol subcommittee meetings yesterday, a Forensic Examiner spoke to the group and commented that mixing alcohol with prescription drugs is on the rise and, suggested that adding that extra hour could increase that concern.

Florida Bridgewater, UF Community Relations Coordinator stated that this is not an administrative decision against the students, but that UF is concerned about the safety of the students.

*Mr. Goldberg spoke to the Later Gator issue and indicated that they currently run from 8:30 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. and that SAFE conducted a straw survey on ridership which showed very low numbers at 8:30. He suggested pushing the start time back to 9:30 and extending the run to 4:00 a.m., which would allow for no additional costs.*

*UF Student David Duncan commented that he has not seen any safety facts presented yet, that for the majority of students, this issue is not an issue, and that he sees nothing good from extending the hours.*

*Commissioner Braddy heard from Mr. Combs earlier that the city has the ability to put a time limit on consumption, but it would be the bar owners' responsibility to make sure there is strict enforcement of that. For example, if last drink is called at 1:59 a.m., you are still looking at continued consumption for at least a half hour. Mr. Combs also advised that the City does not have the authority to specify no last calls.*

*Lt. Don Dennis Traffic Commander advised that officers spent an average of four hours completing the required paperwork when investigating DUI's.*

*Commissioner Braddy asked whether the extension of time affects orderly dispersal or would lead to more DUI's, and also if it would increase the likelihood of Raves. Captain Van Winkle expressed his opinion, from serving on midnight shift years, that there is no orderly progression, that most patrons will still stay until the drop dead time, and that certainly traffic issues will always be there. Chief Botsford reminded that in the past, Gainesville had people coming from 100 miles away and with the new Ocala Ordinance restricting no one under the age of 21 entrance to a bar, that will and already has increased the number coming to Gainesville.*

*Stan Flowers, Scan Technology addressed the committee regarding his ID scanners and their efforts in assisting the community in keeping underage drinkers from the bars. Chief Botsford mentioned this was discussed during the Enforcement subcommittee meeting held at UF earlier this week. Commissioner Braddy suggested Mr. Flowers get invited to a future meeting.*

*Dan Burkhardt, Anhauser Busch Distributors stated that he has no position on the hours, but wants the community to be safer.*

*Mr. Goldberg spoke again about the difficulty of getting a cab or the Later Gator when bars close at 2:00, still feeling this extension would allow patrons to leave sporadically up till 3:00 a.m. Mr. Duncan expressed that he has never experienced any problems with either at 2:00 a.m.*

*Commissioner Domenech began conclusions of the discussion and stated that he has remained neutral on the issue while gathering the facts. The facts that were presented today include that it will cost the city more money - between \$55,000 and \$60,000 in overtime per year, it will cost the officers and their families who have to work and extend their shifts and it will have an impact on the quality of life in certain areas of Gainesville, such as boom box noise, that is just not possible to control. He questioned if the crowd dispersal problem (which he reflected that in his estimation is most compelling between 1:45 and 1:55) rises to the level that the City should change*

*the ordinance. The Ocala ordinance change will have an impact in Gainesville as noted. All that being said, Commissioner Domenech stated his recommendation is that the Public Safety Committee report this item out of Committee and recommend to the City Commission that the ordinance remain as it is.*

*Commissioner Braddy stated that he has not seen information that rises to the level of changing the ordinance. He expressed that while there may still be more information that could be gathered such as impact costs to Public Works and RTS, he agreed that with good back-up provided in the report out, he would also recommend no change to the ordinance. He added that it does not appear fair to citizens in Mile Run who would have to pay for additional officers to handle downtown bar crowds and take from their neighborhood zones. Commissioner Braddy asked Dr. Doering, Dr. Barkley, Director Beeland and Mr. Goldberg to provide their comments today in writing to the staff liaison so they can be included in the back-up presented to the City Commission.*

*Commissioner Domenech asked that the report out include an expression that the committee is cognizant of the crowd dispersal problem between 1:45 and 1:55 a.m. and it would be beneficial if that could somehow be addressed.*

*Mr. Goldberg recognized, with appreciation, Commissioner Domenech.*

*This item will be reported out at the earliest, the last Commission meeting in May, in order to receive the requested reports.*

**RECOMMENDATION** *The Public Safety Committee continue discussions, receive the requested reports, hear citizen and staff comments, and take action as appropriate.*

#### **Discussed**

**040872**

#### **Comprehensive Enforcement of Running Red Lights (NB)**

*Chief Botsford stated that the Gainesville Police Department puts a lot of effort into traffic enforcement. He noted that the Cameras for Red Light Enforcement initiative is still a City legislative priority that has not in years past, nor probably will, receive any legislative interest. Lt. Don Dennis, Traffic Unit Commander advised that the Traffic Unit priorities are on speeding and loud stereos, however they also focus details on red light violations. He pointed out that statistics do not show there are a lot of crashes as a result of running red lights, but instead, most are the result of following too closely. The Traffic Unit conducts details as a result of citizen and management referrals. If there are a lot of violations in a targeted area, the Unit will stay for up to a week, but generally the details are conducted for 3-4 days.*

*Noting that GPD has a dedicated Traffic Unit, is focused on priority enforcements and the above information, the Committee recommends reporting this item out to the full City Commission. A report from GPD on their efforts, what triggers a detail, and the additional tools that the City has tried to get through legislation will be included in the report out.*

*This item will be placed on the May 23, 2005 PSC consent agenda, recommending no action.*

**RECOMMENDATION** *The Public Safety Committee begin discussions of this referral.*

**Discussed**

**MEMBER COMMENT**

*No member comment.*

**CITIZEN COMMENT**

*No citizen comment.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

**DISCUSSION OF SCHEDULING PENDING REFERRAL ITEMS**

*Dangerous Dogs #040547 will be discussed when Ms. Mese advises she is ready to bring back her report. Note that the Committee was provided information from Ms. Mese at today's meeting.*

*City Co-sponsorship of Events #041097 - Hold until new committee assignments have been made to coordinate joint meeting with Recreation and Cultural Affairs Committee.*

*Private Property Booting #040703 - Holding for Mr. Rainbow to determine if he would like to approach the committee again, although the PSC is ready to report this item out with no action.*

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

*May 19, 2005 (pending committee assignments and Sine Die)*

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.*