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Submitted ED Book



Panhandling, Soliciting, Peddling & Canvassing In Medians and In or Near Traffic



Panhandling & Solicitation

- Feb 26th - CC Discussion: Expressed concern regarding this behavior and referenced numerous solicitors and panhandlers which seemed to recently increase greatly
- Feb 28th - All permitted groups were sent written notice and asked for feedback related to median solicitation. None responded.
- March 26th - CC approves pilot "donation meter" program
- April 23rd - CC Discussion: Panhandling / solicitation, who solicits & citizen concerns, legal changes & restrictions, & options. As result, CC asked City Attorney's office to draft ordinances & revisions related to banning median solicitation & solicitation to vehicles.



Who Panhandles & Solicits?

- March of Dimes
 - SpringHill Suites by Marriot
 - Wachovia Bank
- Schools
 - Car Washes
- Children's Miracle Network
 - UF Dance Marathon
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Faith Based Organizations & Churches
 - New Life Church of Louisville
 - New Life Church of Detroit
 - Cited Saturday, July 7 for City Ordinance Violation at 3400 SW Archer Road
 - Deeper Life Christian Church of Tampa
- Muscular Dystrophy Association
 - City of Gainesville Firefighters
- Individuals
 - Groups Currently Need Permits - Individuals Do Not



Recent Events

- March - Domestic Battery Arrest. Two intoxicated (2) solicitors at I-75 and Newberry Road get into argument resulting in minor injuries to the victim. Incident called in by witnessing driver waiting at light.
- April - Aggravated Assault Arrest. One (1) frequent solicitor at the median in front of Burger King, SW Archer Road confronts several juveniles soliciting for a car wash. Suspect tries to push child into traffic, threatens children, and tells them to get off her corner / median. One adult intervened and several witnessing drivers called. Suspect fought with and threatened police.
- April - Aggravated Assault. Panhandler in median on SW Archer Road approaches vehicle that is blocking traffic. Driver threatens panhandler with a pipe and drives off. Another driver witnesses. Driver is located later and charged.



Recent Events

- May - Robbery / Battery. One panhandler at the intersection of 1300 West University Avenue is robbed of approx. \$5 in change by another chronic panhandler. A witness who confronted the suspect is also battered.
- May - June - Panhandler & Solicitation complaints from continual problem locations.
 1. Waldo & East Univ Ave
 2. Church solicitors complaints at the intersection of SE 8th Avenue & SE 15th Street
- July - Trespass Arrest. Frequent panhandler threatens clerk at Lil' Champ, 926 West University Avenue & is arrested for trespass after warning.
- July - City Ordinance Violation to New Life Church of Detroit issued at 3400 SW Archer Road



Citizen Concerns

- "...we've noticed a significant increase in vagrants pestering & intimidating our customers both inside & outside the store.... when the traffic is sparse, the panhandlers come out... it's hard to ignore the fear in our employees' voices." Referral to GPD from Mayor 5/24
- "The streets are inundated with panhandlers, freeloaders, junkies, & the idle from all over the country, looking for handouts. You try to ignore them, but they brazenly come up to your car & tap on the window to get attention...." Gville Sun Editorial 3/29
- "Panhandling in Gainesville has reached epidemic proportions... No where in my travels do I encounter/observe the numbers of persons at intersections or interstate exchanges soliciting donations as I do in the Gainesville, FL area.... Panhandling further impedes traffic flow & is potentially dangerous.-I'm waiting for my wife to get rear ended as drivers either gawk at, or stop to talk/give donations to panhandlers. Frankly, I don't think even bona-fide civic organizations or church-affiliated groups .. should be allowed to solicit donations on/along public roadways." Email to City Commission 3/20
- "It is getting bad & dangerous to stop at red lights. The church group with buckets on the weekends... They now tap on windows & cross in front of cars. ... It is not safe anymore." Gville Sun Sound Off 3/19
- "...the proliferation of fundraising groups, aggressively waving posters on medians, weaving in & out of traffic lines, & collecting buckets of money at busy intersections is far more distracting and dangerous." Gville Sun Editorial 2/26
- "Dr ___ spoke to GPD recently regarding panhandlers in the medians around 13th Street, 34th Street, Newberry Road and including off ramps of I-75....This is a dangerous situation.. These panhandlers pose a tremendous hazard to themselves & they do obstruct the flow of traffic." Referral to GPD from City Commission Staff 2/12. Also TV 20 broadcast segment - March.

Primary Purposes of Amendments to Peddling,
Canvassing, Soliciting and Panhandling Ordinances

- The overall purpose is to promote public health, welfare and safety
- Safety - it is dangerous for persons to engage in transactions with occupants of vehicles while they are in traffic:
 - Such transactions distract drivers from their primary duties of watching for hazards in the road, observing traffic signals and warnings, and moving through the city's streets in a safe and lawful manner.
 - It is also unsafe for persons engaging in such transactions to stand on medians and public streets in use by vehicular traffic, property only meant for the use and control of vehicular traffic, not peddling, canvassing, panhandling or soliciting activities.
- Traffic flow and congestion - transactions with occupants of vehicles while they are in traffic impedes the public's free flow of travel on the city's streets

Questions / Comments

