

Public Safety Committee

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

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 21, 2006

4:00 PM

City Hall, Ground Floor, Room 16

*Commissioner Jack Donovan, Chair
Commissioner Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Member
Commissioner Rick Bryant, Member*

Persons with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this meeting are requested to notify the Office of Equal Opportunity 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****060748. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (B)**

RECOMMENDATION *The Public Safety Committee approve the minutes of the November 15, 2006 Public Safety Committee meeting as presented.*

Approved

DISCUSSION OF PENDING REFERRALS**060242. Roam Towing Safety Issues (B)**

The Public Safety Committee discussed the referral multiple times and recommended to remove this item from the referral list.

The Public Safety Committee recommends the City Commission remove this item for its referral list.

Sgt. Keith Kameg updated the Committee on the methods used to get the towing information out to the public. Using GPD's Police Beat, the Gainesville Sun, Gator Boosters, UF Student Services, GRU's billing system, and SFCC Sgt. Kameg estimates that the towing information has reached a soft estimate of 640,000 citizens, tying to Gator football and reissuing the information each game day.

Nora Kilroy, UF Dean of Student Services spoke to looking into other ways to get the message out to students. They now use their web site, student guide and emails to students off campus.

Commissioner Donovan asked if GPD would be able to track the differences between this year and next year to determine if our efforts have made an impact. Chief Botsford stated that GPD should be able to provide that information. Commissioner Donovan thanked the Chief's staff for their efforts on this project.

RECOMMENDATION *The Public Safety Committee receive an update from staff on GPD's tow campaign in the media.*

Discussed

060483. Single Family Neighborhood Issues - Yard Parking Enforcement (B)

The Public Safety Committee recommends that the City Commission remove this item from its referral list.

Lt. Ed Posey gave a Power Point presentation on the training provided to GPD officers by Codes Enforcement. There is now a form on GPD's Intranet that can be completed by the officers and sent directly to Codes Enforcement for action. All GPD officers are receiving this training. Chief Botsford stated that a formal procedure has been finalized.

Commissioner Mastrodicasa asked if the officers had any feedback or concerns regarding this training. Lt. Posey said they were concerned with the context area. Expanding the form may help.

James Cellon, Codes Enforcement Supervisor, represented Codes Enforcement for this meeting. Mr. Cellon said his department was looking into starting weekend shifts. Hopefully, there will be more Codes Enforcement officers in January, 2007. This will aid in this problem. Mr. Cellon also stated that Codes does investigate complaints and generates letters to landlords about the parking complaints.

Commissioner Donovan commented that this may be similar to when we increased police presence at the downtown plaza. Incidents appeared to increase as a result of awareness. He requests that at a future date we let the City Commission know if there is a reduction in citations.

Commissioner Mastrodicasa hopes this will prevent future problems.

RECOMMENDATION *The Public Safety Committee receive an update from staff on Code Enforcement's training of GPD officers regarding yard parking issues.*

Discussed**060276. Funding Sources for Police Services Downtown (B)**

Continue discussion at the January meeting with refined thinking from GPD staff and take a report back to the full Commission asking what the need may be and where to they want the Committee to head next.

Sgt. Rob Koehler reported on his research of this issue over the past two months. Some cities use specific taxing districts for funding downtown areas. This option shows a lot of promise. Other cities use security programming, philanthropies (golf carts, segways), impact fees, federal grants (for video cameras), ambassador programs and increased bar cover charges. A suggestion from GPD staff was a joint ambassador program with the University of Florida.

Commissioner Mastrodicasa complimented staff on the good research. She thinks there are two primary issues: 1) the ambassador program and 2) should bars have impact fee.

Chief Botsford suggested the Committee share the research with full Commission and to keep this item with Public Safety. Some actions or initiatives may require legislative action at the state level.

Commissioner Donovan would like to come up with a strategy after the City Commission hears a presentation and for staff to ask for the City Attorney's comments and perhaps comments from the City Manager.

Commissioner Mastrodicasa reminded the Committee that any neighborhood improvements or taxes have to be voted on. She is not sure they will vote to tax themselves.

Chief Botsford suggested that the Committee see what direction is given from the City Commission. Other cities are pushing video cameras. Live feed would reduce the number of officers needed in the area and if there were an incident, we have documentation.

Assistant City Manager Lee Ann Lowery asked if staff found in their research that any cities have businesses putting cameras on their buildings. Captain Rick Hanna said yes and some businesses do this as a joint effort. She suggested staff quantify the need and provide a cost so the Commission can assess during their review of possible options.

Commissioner Donovan asked if other cities had concerns about citizen's civil rights. Sgt. Koehler stated that often the media sees this as a problem, but that citizens don't see it as a problem. Captain Hanna will have staff do more in-depth contact with cities using cameras.

RECOMMENDATION The Public Safety Committee receive an update and recommendations from staff on funding sources for police services downtown and take appropriate action.

Discussed

060725. Citizen Proposal - Monitoring Yard Parking Violations (B)

Begin discussion and take action as appropriate. Assistant City Attorney Ron Combs will look into the legalities of this issue and report back when research is complete.

The questions asked of the City Commission by citizens are 1) can citizens participate with police in monitoring neighborhoods themselves and 2) can they give citations.

Ron Combs stated that the statutes which defines who can issue civil citations does not include citizens.

Commissioner Mastrodicasa said that citizens are frustrated when they wake up on Sunday morning and have a lot of cars in a yard and no one to report it to since Codes Enforcement is not on duty.

James Cellon, Supervisor for Codes Enforcement stated that the department generates complaints and citations when they receive pictures or complaints forwarded from the

City Commission.

Ron Combs said this process would compare with noise violations in that the weight on the prosecuting the complainant - - the burden of proof is on citizens.

Capt. Rick Hanna suggested the mechanism for citizen reporting could exist on the City, GPD and Codes Enforcement web sites. The noise ordinance allows citizens to sign as complainants in cases where no violations are observed by officers. In these cases, the burden is on the citizen to prove, but allows officers to warn and cite. Ordinance review and revision would have to occur regarding yard parking as it pertains to citizen reporting being the sole basis for warning and citing.

Commissioner Donovan asked Mr. Cellon what the fines were for yard parking. Mr. Cellon stated that 1st is a warning, 2nd is \$125, 3rd is \$250, 4th is \$500 and then it is sent to court. Mr. Cellon also stated that when Codes Enforcement increases its staff and has weekend officers on duty, this will help the situation. The department is also working on more parking plans.

Commissioner Donovan has requested that the City Attorney pursue further information from the legal side, if the City Commission were to decide to proceed with implementing an intervention. What is allowed? Would leeway be given for special events? After the Committee has discussed these findings, it would report to the City Commission to ask if this is something they to implement.

Commissioner Donovan has requested staff to invite David Chalmers and Mac McEachern to attend the appropriate meeting when the City Attorney's findings are discussed.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Commission refer the proposal of allowing citizens to monitor, document and attest to yard parking violations to the Public Safety Committee.

Discussed

MEMBER COMMENT

None

CITIZEN COMMENT

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

Janurary 18, 2007, 4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 5:00 p.m.