

City Graffiti Referral Agenda / Minutes

Referral # 100198

Date/Time: Monday, August 9th, 2010 @ GPD

Present:

Ed Book	Gainesville Police Department Captain
Chris Cooper	Codes Enforcement Manager
Erin Friedberg	Cultural Affairs Visual Arts Coordinator
Steve Joplin	Public Works / Solid Waste Manager
Kevin Kedgley	Keep Alachua County Beautiful (KACB) Graffiti Abatement Coordinator
Mickie MacKenzie	Keep Alachua County Beautiful Executive Director
Todd Martin	Codes Enforcement Officer

Objective: Discuss graffiti issues, concerns, and initiatives, and ideas related to abatement in preparation to report to the City Commission Public Safety subcommittee (PSC). Referral was made via City Commission on July 15th.

Discussion:

KACB – Identifies & removes graffiti but has problems with owner accountability when a property owner does not want it removed or does not want to give access. Most business owners are cooperative when they are able to be located. Often a run around going from, e.g. a clerk to manager to business owner to property owner. Provides example of graffiti at the old Jack's location downtown. Example of uncooperative business – 400 South Main street convenience store area. Another highly tagged area is the Stadium Club unfinished building at 1700 West Univ Avenue. Concerned about graffiti removal in unsafe areas such as where there are gang tags. Challenging surfaces like brick, blocks etc are difficult. KACB gets paid as City subcontractor to remove graffiti. In Daytona, there is a project where Salvation Army residents have litter clean ups & conduct graffiti removal. These residents in essence get room & board in return as trade for this community service. KACB is in contact with City Asst City Mgr Murry about establishing a similar project under KACB supervision. Has limited paint colors to paint over graffiti. All paint used is recycled & provided by the Leveda Brown Center. Question: Are there other places willing to donate paint that may more closely match areas they paint over?

Cultural Affairs visual arts – Traffic & utility boxes artists project a possibility & has positive economic impact. (Tampa West Shore Business Alliance has a map of their painted boxes.) Orlando has a program similar to Tampa with a public art CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) program. In Gainesville, the Art in Public Places is in support of a project like this. CRA has concerns about the quality of any projects. One concern – is there any health hazard in painting these boxes. Other public art – Santa Fe College breezeway project. Programs like this may tie into grants & tourism. All murals would be covered with graffiti guard.

Codes – Lakeland ID's gang graffiti offenders by looking at graffiti within the schools. (Ofc Martin has a PPT presentation on this.) There appears to be about 5-6 main graffiti taggers around town currently. Gang graffiti should be given less time for removal than other forms of graffiti. Lot of graffiti at the Kangaroo's, along the West Univ Avenue corridor, & behind 8 Seconds. Repeat problem locations are dumpsters & stop signs. Need to be able to deal with persons who refuse to remove graffiti. Graffiti is easily removed on City / government buildings. Reviewing other ordinances like in Tallahassee / Tampa – typically business has about 72 hours to remove graffiti & owner & property/ business manager can be fined. Current commercial building codes says surfaces must be painted. In April, Codes presented potential ordinance to a downtown coordination team. This will be presented at other forums in the future. Feels that most business owners would be cooperative. Question: Are there CRA monies that would pay for renewal?

Solid Waste – Exploring adding an additional inmate crew which will focus on graffiti removal in public

places. To start though, will use the current inmate crew & see if they can split some of their time between litter pick up & graffiti removal. In favor of giving some time for business owners to remove graffiti aton their businesses. For dumpsters, City ordinance requires waste haulers to keep their dumpsters maintained. Solid Waste Manager recently sent letter to the 3 main haulers telling them to clean up their dumpsters. Public Works handles stop sign graffiti. Question: Is there a portable color matching system which would help when graffiti locations are painted over?

Police – Infrequent arrests for graffiti / vandalism which is known as “criminal mischief” in Florida State Statute. Civil citation process with a potential written warning & grace period to clean up may be the way to go for private properties that fail to remove and/or paint over graffiti. Civil citation process could hold both owner & tenant accountable.

Follow up: The group agreed to send representatives & report on efforts & answer questions at the next City Commission Public Safety subcommittee meeting.

PSC Meets: August 25th meeting has been cancelled & has yet to be rescheduled. Graffiti will be on the agenda of the next PSC which will likely be in September.