

CITY COUNCIL

Public Safety Committee

Monday, February 7, 2011

Agenda

5:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – Presentation by Olivet Boys and Girls Club

Committee Members: D. Sterner, Chair; J. Waltman; M. Goodman-Hinnershitz

Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted. However, citizens are encouraged to attend and observe the committee meetings. Comment from citizens or professionals during the meeting may be solicited on agenda topics via invitation from the Committee Chair.

I. Update - FEMA & COOP re Preparedness (J. Conrad)

III. Report re Services Center Implementation

IV. Report on Field Testing of Quality of Life Ticketing

V. Housing and Zoning Permits & Approval (CE01 & CD01)

- a. Zoning permit backlog
- b. Review Ordinance re Expedited Zoning Approval
- c. Update on Zoning Attorney

VI. PS Goal 10: Support Public Safety at City Schools

1. Update – meeting held January 19

VII. 2011 Budget Follow-up Topics

1. Review and define application of trades/construction permits for all parties
2. Housing Registration & Inspection – draft ordinance allowing billing for inspection as per Maximus
3. Transiency policy & housing strategy - Jan Finance Meeting
4. Explore purchase of bullet-proof shields for street lights

It is possible that members of and possibly a quorum of members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above-stated meeting to gather information. No action will be taken by any governmental body at the above stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice.

Public Safety Goals

Goal 1: Coordination of Police, Codes and Zoning Services

Goal 2: Support Problem Oriented Policing

Goal 3: Surveillance Camera Project - *underway*

Goal 4: Support Consolidation of Fire Departments - *underway*

Goal 5: Support Update of Emergency & Pandemic Plan (including NIMS Training for all required personnel) - *underway*

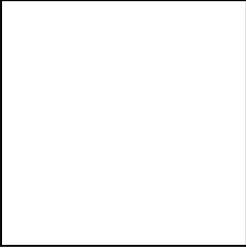
Goal 6: Support Health and Safety Review Ordinances

Goal 7: Support Cops and Codes Sweeps

Goal 8: Support Implementation of Sidewalk Café and Sales Ordinances - *complete*

Goal 9: Support Implementation of Sidewalk Vendor Ordinance -*complete*

Goal 10: Support Public Safety at City Schools



CITY COUNCIL

Public Safety Committee

Monday, January 3, 2011

Council Office

5 p.m.

Committee Members Attending: D. Sterner, chair, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, J. Waltman

Others Attending: V. Spencer, C. Younger, L. Kelleher, J. Guckin, C. Geffken, D. Kersley, F. Denbowski, H. Tangredi, R. Robinson

Interim Plan for Fire Department

Mr. Geffken announced that First Deputy Kevin Kulp will be the Interim Fire Chief, while the continues its search for viable candidates. He stated that employment outreach is being conducted by Nehr, out of West Sacramento, California, and they obtained a good response, including two (2) local individuals.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz complimented the Fire Department for their handling of City fires in East Reading over the past weekend. She noted the dangers associated with the aging housing stock.

Mr. Waltman inquired how the new manning rotation will work financially for 2011 and what impact the lack of a contract will have on Fire overtime. Mr. Geffken expressed the belief that at the desired 56 hour manning schedule will work in Reading as it has been used successfully in Easton. He stated that 56 hour manning schedule is not common place; however it is used in southern states.

Mr. Waltman noted that the lack of control around Fire overtime due to arbitration may cause Fire overtime to exceed that projected in the 2011 budget. Mr. Geffken stated that \$700K has been budgeted for Fire overtime in 2011 and he expressed the belief that the City will be able to cover the variables. He stated that this amount is equal to that budgeted in 2008 for Fire overtime.

Mr. Waltman noted the need for the Administration to closely monitor various financial issues to avoid the many surprises uncovered in the Act 47 recovery plan.

Mr. Sterner requested an update in Executive Session on personnel and contractual matters.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the affect lack of Codes enforcement has had on fire prevention.

Transition of Codes to Community Development

Mr. Geffken stated that he has been meeting regularly with Chief Heim and Mr. Robinson regarding the transition of Codes from Police to CD. He stated that Mr. Natale is the Acting Property Maintenance Manager and asked Mr. Kersley to provide an overview on Codes initiatives.

Mr. Kersley stated that the quality of life ticketing has been further framed out and can show repeat violations at properties. He stated that the Administration is currently considering a case management model in Codes to allow the use of various remedies to resolve issues in designated geographic areas.

Mr. Geffken noted their continued work to develop a good transition plan and improve the oversight and performance in the Codes division.

Mr. Spencer questioned the fit of the Ricktown Manager within the CD Department. Mr. Geffken replied that the Ricktown Manager will report to the Mayor but will have oversight by the CD Director and others.

Mr. Sterner and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested a job description with an organizational chart showing the fit within the CD Department to provide clarity.

Mr. Spencer inquired if the salary of the Ricktown Manager will be covered by CDBG. Mr. Geffken stated that the salary will be covered 60/40 with CDBG funds.

The Committee next discussed the need to improve the performance of Codes as a whole from enforcement and education to employees handling issues discovered when in the field.

Mr. Waltman described the garage business located in the 300 block of West Windsor Street. He stated that this legal business has expanded it's scope and is now affecting pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed with the need for improved oversight and performance of Codes but also asked the Administration to consider collaboration beyond the City. She suggested coordinating with others in the field such as the County Sheriff, Children and Youth Services, Probation, etc.

Mr. Spencer inquired if Chief Heim has advised Mr. Robinson on the structure and organization

of the Codes division. Chief Heim stated that he provided input on the preferred structure and management of the division.

Transition of Call Center to Services Center

Mr. Geffken questioned the relevance of this topic on the Public Safety agenda. Ms. Kelleher stated that it is placed on the Public Safety agenda due to the number of Codes complaints that are referred to this area.

Mr. Geffken stated that City Hall was closed to the public this morning for training of Services Center staff, which will be composed of Treasury, Tax, and Call Center employees. He stated that temporary signage is in place. He stated that the training session with affected employees was successful and expressed the belief that this improved model will operate efficiently due to the cross-training of all employees.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz inquired about expediting complaints generated by City Council. Mr. Geffken suggested that Council continue to funnel their complaints through Council office.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need to improve the complaint reporting and the complaint follow-up to provide improved accountability. Mr. Sterner agreed with the need for improved performance and accountability in this new office.

Mr. Geffken stated that follow-up is difficult due to the volume of complaints referred to the Call Center due to its low staffing level. He expressed the belief that the improved staffing in the Services Center will assist in providing better follow-up.

Ms. Kelleher stated that problems with follow-up are also created when complaints are closed out before they're resolved. She stated that many complaints are closed out by receiving staff after Zoning Enforcement letter is sent or a Notice of Violation is issued; however, that complaint should not be closed out until the issue is resolved. Mr. Geffken stated that the managerial changes should correct those behaviors.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested regular reporting on the Customer Service Center by Council District and broken down into the various complaint areas.

Mr. Spencer also noted the need to provide reports to department directors where complaint calls are assigned.

Field Testing of Quality of Life Ticketing

Mr. Kersley stated that the quality of life system is built out but not tested. He stated that Codes supervisor Jim Orrs has been assigned this project, which will start tomorrow. He stated that during the testing period no fines will be issued; however the system will be checked to make sure proper documentation is provided. He reported that the municipal aides have not been hired yet as the quality of life ticketing has not been field tested. He stated that the ticketing system expects to go operational in February. He stated that every Property Maintenance

Inspector and Maintenance Aide can issue tickets. He noted the value of the paperless system which will improve mishandling and follow through. He also stated that this system will now provide live data to inspectors while they are in the field and more robust reporting options.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the deteriorated conditions in the 1300 and 1400 blocks of Perkiomen Avenue. She stated that there various Codes violations easily visible and suggested using the neighborhood as a target for the field testing.

Mr. Waltman noted the need to correct enforcement and improve education to resolve many communication problems with property owners.

Mr. Robinson noted that the quality of life ticket ordinance will be amended to move the appeal powers over to the Community Development department.

Housing and Zoning Permit Backlog

Mr. Kersley stated that the City is seeking assistance from an independent attorney who will be making recommendation early in February. He stated that much of the research will be completed by Legal Specialist Mayfield which will offset the cost of the independent attorney retained.

Comprehensive Housing Policy

Mr. Geffken suggested referring the false advertising resolution to the housing strategy area.

Ms. Kelleher stated that this topic was placed on the agenda due to information obtained at the last Conditional Use hearing. The property owner provided documentation showing the listing sheet and listing agent where the property was advertised as a legal 3 unit when in fact it did not have zoning. She noted that the Law department last reported on this issue. They noted the need for the City to prepare legislation to opt into the State statute.

Mr. Younger agreed and noted that if the City opts into the State statute the realtor can be criminally charged by the Police Department. He stated that he will further research this issue.

Mr. Geffken agreed to move forward, as long as this area will not be handled by the Codes division.

Public Safety at Schools

Ms. Sterner suggested deferring this topic until Mr. Washington can attend the Public Safety meeting.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that as Reading School District board meetings often conflicts with the Monday night Council meeting schedule. Ms. Kelleher was asked to contact Mr. Washington regarding an alternative date or about forming the steering committee who can address the issue on a non-Council or School District Board meeting night.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that the Community Foundation is offering a \$1,000 grant to promote safety in streets.

The Public Safety Committee adjourned at approximately 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk

Safety at City Schools
Wednesday, January 19, 2011
Council Chambers

Attending: M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, V. Spencer, J. Waltman, J. Washington, S. Katzenmoyer, two Reading Police School Resource officers

Mr. Spencer stated his understanding that this group was coming together to begin working on re-establishing safe school corridors.

Mr. Washington stated that he requested that the City and School District begin looking at the issue of safety near school buildings. He stated that there are 17,000 – 18,000 youths moving back and forth to school buildings before and after school. He noted that there are problems with busing in addition to walking.

Mr. Washington stated that he has served on several disciplinary hearings where weapons were involved. In many of the cases, these are good students who bring weapons to school because they are tired of dealing with harassment and bullying. He stated that this harassment and bullying occurs both in and out of school.

Mr. Washington suggested that safe corridors be established on one of the major streets (Walnut, Franklin, Spring, 5th, 13th). He noted his willingness to request RSD grant funding to further this project and suggested utilizing video surveillance. He suggested that 13th St be the first corridor established.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the excellent timing of this meeting. She described a group affiliated with St. Joseph Hospital that is focusing on youth violence initiatives. She stated that one suggestion of this group is safe corridors. There is potential funding from this source as well.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the spike in crime in the northeast area of the City during the after school hour.

Mr. Waltman expressed his belief that both entities will support this initiative with the right plan. He noted that parental involvement should also be included. He suggested that Council and the RSD Board make suggestions about cooperative work to their respective Administrations.

Mr. Waltman suggested focusing on 13th, Spring and Washington Sts to begin so that there are east-west and north-south routes. He stated that the Reading Police already work to make these corridors safe and to decrease crime during after school time. He noted that adding parents and cameras (and possible escorts similar to DID) would assist them greatly. Sgt. Cafoncelli stated that kids should not need to worry all day about how to get home safely.

Mr. Washington noted the need to keep the plan realistic.

Mr. Spencer questioned if traffic at RHS has decreased since the Citadel opened. Sgt. Cafoncelli stated that the officers try to move students off school property and instruct them to go directly home. He stated that moving students to the Citadel has moved the problems to two locations. He stated that he has driven students home on occasion to prevent problems and be sure they are safe. He noted his support of a safe corridor.

Mr. Washington stated that he has been touring college campuses and has been impressed by their call box security systems. He suggested that call boxes be added to the safe corridor.

Chief Heim arrived at this time.

Mr. Washington stated that assistance is also needed at the start of the day. He stated that at this time students are scattered throughout the streets but that knowing a safe corridor may shift student routes. He noted his understanding that this project cannot increase police manpower. He questioned behavior in the RHS cafeteria. Sgt. Cafoncelli stated that there are still fights in the cafeteria but that they are more controllable. There are also fights in the Citadel cafeteria.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the age of students. Mr. Washington stated that if they have an IEP students can remain in school until age 21.

Ms. Katzenmoyer questioned if it was appropriate for these older students to be in mainstream classes. Mr. Washington stated that if they are following their IEP that they are to be mainstreamed.

Mr. Spencer questioned what the Reading Police does now. Sgt. Cafoncelli stated that there are two officers at RHS and two officers at the Citadel at dismissal. He stated that if there is a large problem, other officers in the platoon are called. He stated that many students use the officers as resources and do let them know about problems and potential problems. He stated that he has also met with parents.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the number of students in the probation program. Sgt. Cafoncelli stated that last school year there were approximately 100 students in the probation program.

Mr. Spencer questioned if fights occurred in specific areas. Sgt. Cafoncelli stated that locations vary and that locations can be changed quickly due to technology. If students arrange a location and arrive to see police they will text and change the location.

Chief Heim stated that the City is entering the second phase of surveillance cameras. He stated that he was willing to work with the district in regards to camera placement.

Mr. Washington questioned if the Chief had a map showing camera locations. Chief Heim stated that he did and would share this information but that it is not public information.

Mr. Washington stated his preference that the project begin at 13th & Spring. He again noted his willingness for the district to pursue grant funding and that the district has a full time grant writer. He stated that he will ask the district administration to price call boxes.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested involving businesses along the corridor as safe havens and to call police as necessary.

Sgt. Cafoncelli questioned if Mr. Spencer noticed a difference at dismissal time. Mr. Spencer stated that he has noticed fewer students during dismissal and that those students are well mannered.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz voiced her concern of problems that may occur at City Park when the weather is warmer.

Mr. Washington stated that the district already staggers dismissal times to the best of their ability. Sgt. Cafoncelli stated that dismissing the EXCEL school at 2:30 pm had been problematic as these students walk to RHS and cause trouble.

Mr. Washington expressed his belief that the EXCEL school building is not appropriate for its current use. He stated that he has been thinking about utilizing Central Catholic after it is vacant as a swing school to relocate students during extensive maintenance projects. He stated that it is estimated that it will cost the district \$25 million to build a school at Windsor & Ritter Sts. He stated that student involvement in extra-curricular activities also assists with staggering dismissal times and keeps students involved.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that discussions should also occur with Weed and Seed as they are potential partners and a possible funding source.

Chief Heim stated that he will map incidents in order to build a safe corridor. He stated that cameras and call boxes would be helpful in neighborhoods and suggested that cameras be placed near call boxes to deter vandalism.

Mr. Washington suggested involving crime watch groups.

Mr. Waltman suggested that cameras cover Spring St from 8th – 13th and Walnut St from 8th – 13th. He expressed his support of involving businesses along the corridor. Sgt. Cafoncelli stated that some store owners do not have a good repore with students.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that some stores also have security cameras.

Mr. Washington stated that there is a separate meeting scheduled to discuss traffic issues. Sgt. Cafoncelli stated that schools need drop off and pick up areas. He stated that not many students walk.

Mr. Waltman stated that there is a vacant lot next to Lauer's Park which would be a great location for a drop off and pick up area.

Chief Heim noted that buildings aren't open when students arrive and that students must wait outside. He stated that allowing earlier entry will decrease double parking and traffic problems.

Sgt. Cafoncelli suggested that 13th St from Walnut to Union be designated as a school zone.

Mr. Washington noted the problems created by those turning from Centre Ave onto Pike St at Riverside. He suggested that Pike St be changed to one way running east to alleviate this problem. This would move the problem down one block to Amity St. Chief Heim stated that this has been investigated in the past and the change was not recommended.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 3 at 6 pm to discuss traffic issues at schools.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Shelly Katzenmoyer, Deputy City Clerk