



CITY COUNCIL

Public Safety Committee

Monday, November 3, 2008

5:30 p.m.

Attendance: D. Sterner, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, S. Marmarou

Other City Staff Attending: J. Conway, W. Heim, B. Reinhart, C. Younger

Dennis Sterner, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:51 p.m.

I. Daytime Curfew Ordinance

Mr. Sterner stated that he believed the ordinance to be a good idea and that there was really no need for discussion.

Chief Heim agreed with Mr. Sterner and expressed his concern with children getting home safely after school. He also expressed his concern, not only with children in the Reading area, but with children from other areas as well.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz also noted that she approved of the ordinance.

II. Graffiti Ordinance Amendment

Mr. Marmarou stated that it would be a good idea to look at the Parental Responsibility Act. He also noted that it would help enforcement if parents need to pay for the act of the child.

Mr. Sterner commented on the amendment to the ordinance citing the addition of the enforcement procedures.

Chief Heim noted that as a result of the enforcement procedure an under age child would receive a citation as well as the parents.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that the ordinance be introduced as amended at the next meeting.

Mr. Younger was asked by the committee to look into the addition of the enforcement procedure to the ordinance. He agreed and will report back with findings.

Mr. Marmarou noted that as a result of the Gault Ruling a child can be treated as an adult.

Mr. Sterner requested that the Amendment to the Graffiti Ordinance be placed on the November 10th meeting agenda.

III. Coordination of Police, Codes, and Zoning Services

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that with this new process it was important to find out who is following up and who is in charge.

Mr. Reinhart noted that the addition of police to the process is a great asset because of police processes.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that there is most likely a large correlation between Codes violations and criminal issues as well.

Mr. Reinhart noted that he has met with Inspector Gery to discuss the new processes and procedures.

Chief Heim noted that upon researching the issue, he found that there are multiple areas in the United States where the Codes department is under the supervision of the Police Department. However, there are no such areas in Pennsylvania.

It was determined that there was no need for an official amendment to approve the reorganization. The Public Safety Committee approved of the reorganization and was happy with it.

Please Note: The reorganization must be approved with the 2009 Budget.

IV. Ordinance Review

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she has researched the public safety and legal issues related to the reporting of lost or stolen firearms. She noted that upon her research, she found that 25% of weapons involved in crimes are stolen.

Chief Heim noted that this type of amendment has been challenged in Philadelphia.

Mr. Younger noted, however, the ordinance was being enforced despite the legal challenge.

Chief Heim stated that it is a good idea. He recommended, however, that the decision be tabled pending further discussion on the enforceability of the amendment.

The Committee came to a decision to table the Amendment pending further discussion and resolution of the legal challenges.

V. Property Maintenance Code Amendment

Mr. Waltman had previously requested that the Property Maintenance Code be amended to reduce mandatory temperature of 68 degrees to 66 or 67 degrees due to the cost of heating.

Mr. Sterner stated that he does not agree with changing the temperature.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the lack of enforceability with this amendment.

Mr. Sterner stated that he would discuss the issue with Mr. Waltman.

The Public Safety Committee meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by
Jennifer Conway, City Council Office Staff Intern*