



CITY COUNCIL

Public Safety Committee

Monday, April 7, 2008
Meeting Report

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

Others City Staff Attending: T. Butler, C. Younger, W. Heim, S. Katzenmoyer

I. Solicitation and Canvassing Ordinance

Police Chief Heim gave background on the creation of this ordinance.

Ms. Butler noted that this ordinance is modeled after the State College ordinance. The exceptions were discussed. There will be no fee for the permit but a fee can be added at a later time. The Chief of Police will process the permit application.

Mr. Sterner questioned how the public would be educated about this new requirement. Police Chief Heim noted that the media would be used along with citizens calling the Police Department to report solicitation in their neighborhoods.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if those listed in the exemptions ever need to apply. Ms. Butler stated that they did not. There was discussion of what a recognized youth organization is. Police Chief Heim noted that groups that are part of the fabric of the community are not the target of this ordinance.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if street vendors need to apply for this permit if they change locations. Police Chief Heim noted that they are covered by another permit application and do not need to apply for this permit.

Mr. Sterner questioned who needs to carry the permit. Ms. Butler noted that if there are multiple people involved they must each carry a copy. Mr. Sterner questioned if residents can request to see the permit. Ms. Butler noted that they can.

Police Chief Heim would like to send a message that those canvassing or soliciting cannot prey on Reading residents.

The Committee would like several changes made to this draft of the ordinance and recommends bringing the ordinance to Council for introduction.

II. Party Permit Ordinance

Police Chief Heim gave a background on this ordinance. He noted he does not have strong feelings either way in regards to the passage of this ordinance. He is unsure if there is a need at this time. This would also create another layer of bureaucracy.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if this would cause enforcement problems. Mr. Sterner questioned if this type of activity would be covered by the Bottle Club Ordinance. Chief Heim replied that the focus of this ordinance was parties in homes. He noted that mostly college towns enact this type of legislation.

Mr. Marmarou noted that this would assist his neighborhood. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that it may be difficult to enforce City-wide. Chief Heim noted that enforcement may prove to be difficult. He suggested the ordinance be prepared but no action be taken at this time.

The Committee agreed to take no action on this ordinance at this time.

III. Disruptive Tenant Ordinance

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that the Committee requested the number of DCRs be reduced to two per calendar year. Chief Heim noted that many properties have two DCRs but have not gotten the third. Mr. Marmarou noted that reducing the number to two should have a positive effect.

Mr. Sterner questioned if the committee felt the posting of names was a good idea. The Committee felt comfortable posting the names. Ms. Katzenmoyer questioned if the names would be posted on the City's website for access by landlords. Mr. Younger noted that it could be posted.

The Committee would like several changes made to this draft of the ordinance and recommends bringing the ordinance to Council for introduction.

IV. Funeral Parking

Michael Feeney appeared before the Committee to bring forward his concern about funeral parking. He noted the difficulty of parking vehicles if the procession begins at the funeral home and proceeds to a church located in the City.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned why this has become an issue at this time. Mr. Feeney feels it is because the Parking Authority has decided to enforce parking regulations on funerals. He also noted the need for more than eight parking spaces.

Chief Heim suggested a funeral director act as parking attendant. Mr. Feeney noted that this was not a feasible option. Chief Heim disagreed.

Mr. Feeney noted that Lancaster does not limit funerals to eight spaces per block. They also do not charge funeral homes for "No Parking" signs.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the situation at St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church. Mr. Feeney noted that in the past the funeral home was able to use the entire side of the block; now they are limited to eight spaces. He noted this change has occurred within the last six months. He also noted that when he used parking that was available because of the sweeper program the cars were issued tickets.

Mr. Sterner reiterated that funerals cannot block streets or cause problems with traffic. He also noted that funeral directors should not pass the cost of the signs on to grieving families.

Mr. Sterner questioned the outcome that Mr. Feeney was hoping for. Mr. Feeney noted that he would like the number of signs for the number of spaces needed and that the signs be free of charge. He also suggested that funerals be planned in conjunction with the sweeping program to be sure there is ample parking available.

Chief Heim noted that he would call Larry Lee, Executive Director of the Parking Authority, to discuss this issue with him.

The Public Safety Committee meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer, Deputy City Clerk*