



CITY COUNCIL

Public Safety Committee

Monday, January 3, 2012
Council Office
7 p.m.

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

Others Attending: V. Spencer, L. Kelleher, C. Geffken, R. Natale, K. Kulp, W. Heim

Mr. Sterner called the Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

Citizen Service Center (CSC) Report

Mr. Geffken stated that Ms. Weidel was unable to attend the meeting this evening.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the status of the Citizen's Service Center due to the recommendation made in the Transition Committee Report. Mr. Geffken stated that the CSC will remain until its status is determined by the member's of Council after a proposal is provided by the Mayor.

Ms. Kelleher inquired when the Mayor will be making a proposal to Council. Mr. Spencer stated that the Administration plans to make its presentation on Monday, January 9th.

Quality of Life Ticketing Implementation Report

Mr. Natale stated that approximately 16,000 tickets were issued in 2011, 450 appeals were heard, and 191 appeals were granted. He stated that he believes that approximately 50% of the tickets issued were paid.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the issuance of tickets that are not at the heart of true neighborhood problems. She noted her preference to address neighborhood problems rather than ticket easily visible violations that do not create problems.

There was next a discussion on the policy beyond the Quality of Life Ticketing ordinance.

Mr. Waltman stressed the need to engage rather than disengage the City's residents.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that an education outreach via a warning followed by ticketing occur instead. She did note, however, that neighborhood appearances have improved since the start of the Quality of Life ticketing.

Mr. Natale noted that the Codes office has started its second time around with Quality of Life sweeps. He noted that the Quality of Life violations are greatly reduced at the front of properties. He noted that the largest recurrent problems are in alleyways. He noted that the City's Codes require property owners to be responsible for their property to the midpoint of the alley way.

There was discussion on residents being unsure about their responsibility for the cleanliness and maintenance of alleyways. Mr. Geffken noted that most residents believe that they are not responsible. Ms. Kelleher agreed, as most residents often see alleyways as a public right-of-way but noted that property owners are required to maintain the front sidewalks which are also a public right of way.

There was next a discussion on a media campaign to educate the public on Quality of Life ticketing and the new City Housing ordinance.

Mr. Waltman noted the need for the City to complete an inventory of all City properties showing their condition and compliance with the City's Codes.

Chief Heim expressed the belief that the decision to warn or issue a ticket should be based on the historical issues at a property that can be obtained through the City's database.

Mr. Natale stated that the Codes office is moving to map compliance and allowing the City's Inspectors to have access to the City's database while they are in the field.

Mr. Natale stated that an upcoming campaign to educate the public about Quality of Life and the Rental Housing ordinance will occur in upcoming water bills and a newspaper ad.

Mr. Natale stated that he will supply a report on the year-end Quality-Of-Life ticketing at the February Public Safety meeting. He noted that his monthly report covers all these details. Ms. Kelleher stated that Council does not currently receive the monthly Codes report and suggested that the report be provided.

Year-to-Date Review of Codes Services

Mr. Natale stated that this report will be provided at the February Public Safety meeting.

Outcomes of MDJ Rulings

Mr. Natale stated that this report is provided on the City's website. He stated that he has not seen any major changes in the decision making by the Magisterial District Justices.

There was next a discussion on outreach to the MDJ's to educate them and increase the Codes Office success rate in the courtroom.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested a community court watch to place additional pressure on the MDJ's. Mr. Natale stated that this has worked in certain circumstances. Mr. Natale also noted that a Lunch and Learn is being coordinated by the Codes Office and President Judge Schmehl.

Housing Update

Ms. Kelleher stated that with the enactment of the amendment to the Zoning Ordinance and the enactment of the new City Rental Housing Permit, letters will need to be issued to two (2) groups of applicants; those who comply with the application process and will receive a Zoning Permit and those who do not comply. Mr. Geffken stated that Mr. Kersley is working on the analysis of this issue and drafting the letters.

Mr. Waltman noted the need for the City to prepare to close down those property owners who refuse to comply with the City's ordinances. He noted that the City has given away too much Zoning through the previous process.

Mr. Natale stated that he is currently working with IT to automate the Housing process so that it's ready for the February 1st effective date. He promised to provide a Housing ordinance update in March.

Police and Fire

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked the Police and Fire Departments for assisting with the New Year's Eve events at the Pagoda.

Chief Heim noted the arrest of someone who fired a gun into the air on Maple Street on New Year's Eve.

Chief Kulp reported on the outfitting of Fire apparatus for snow events.

The Public Safety Committee adjourned at 6 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk

Issues for Follow-Up:

- February 2012 – Plumbing Code Amendment
- January 2012 – Property Maintenance Code Amendment
- February 2012 - Update on Zoning Backlog