

Minutes of the City Council's Public Safety & Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee held on Tuesday, February 12, 2008, 3:30 p.m., at the Tempe City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 31

Minutes City Council's Public Safety & Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee February 12, 2008

E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Member Present:

Councilmember Ben Arredondo, Chair
Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian

City Staff Present:

Debbie Bair, Mgmt Asst, Fire
Kathy Berzins, Dep Comm Svcs Mgr
Angel Carbajal, Asst. Police Chief
Travis Dray, Dep Mgr, Recreation
Kim Hale, PD
Shelley Hearn, Comm Relations Mgr
Cliff Jones, Fire Chief
Jan Koehn, Code Compliance Admin
Jan Hort, City Clerk
John Osgood, Dep Pub Works Mgr
Bob Pohlit, Park Planning & Design
Mark Richwine, Parks & Rec Mgr
Nikki Ripley, Media Relations Director
Tom Ryff, Police Chief
Scott Smith, PD
John Valenzuela, EMS Coordinator
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Svcs Dir

Guests Present:

Stephanie Salazar, ASU
Tiffany Miner
D. Kent Olson, Alta Mira NA
Amanda Rutledge, Student
Judy Tapscott, Alta Mira NA
Ruben Valenzuela, Landscape Architect

Councilmember Ben Arredondo called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Boys and Girls Club

Police Chief Tom Ryff summarized that he recently attended a meeting at the Boys and Girls Club and heard concerns raised by citizens regarding their perception of criminal activity both inside and outside of the facility, as well as concerns regarding some of the children who attend that facility. He met with Police staff following that meeting to determine what was happening. Some of the information related during the meeting regarding criminal activity was inconsistent with information he had. The area has a very low crime rate and has a high presence of police resources at that park, the same as at the other parks. He has met with staff and asked that efforts be redirected with park rangers to put more visibility in Jaycee Park and the neighborhood.

Assistant Chief Angel Carbajal summarized that the Police Department has taken a proactive response to the Boys and Girls Club. The Crime Prevention Unit met with the Boys and Girls Club staff and Mark Richwine and his staff to make sure the Police Department is doing everything possible. The Boys and Girls Club staff has been responsive and training will be provided for response to emergency situations.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that this is an important process and he asked Chief Ryff to work with the Parks and Recreation staff. He asked whether Jaycee Park is a safe park.

Chief Ryff responded that it is

Councilmember Arredondo asked if the Boys and Girls Club is a healthy environment for our boys and girls.

Chief Ryff responded that it is.

Councilmember Arredondo noted that the park lights seem brighter.

Mark Richwine responded that the lights have been repaired.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that he had visited the facility and noted that there is a bus stop right outside. He asked if it should be natural that the public will go into the facility.

Mr. Richwine responded that it is a public center just like any of our other centers.

Councilmember Arredondo added that he saw a busload of kids arrive and they were not gang members. He asked if there were organized sports leagues there.

Mr. Richwine responded that there are.

Councilmember Arredondo asked about park rangers in the area.

Chief Ryff responded that they do have patrols in the parks, and they are evaluating increased patrol of the parks. Tempe has experienced a lower crime rate and violent crime is down 19%. Auto theft is down in the range of 20% to 30%. It is important to point out that quite often what is reported as being criminal activity may be an isolated incident, such as the Boys and Girls Club. Many times, the way information is reported does not accurately reflect what has happened. For example, there was information about graffiti at the facility. In reality, in the last three years, there has been only one incident and it was removed immediately. He is very comfortable with the amount of police services there and the Club is working diligently with his department and it is a safe place.

DIRECTION: Councilmember Arredondo directed Nikki Ripley to work with Chief Ryff to prepare a press release as soon as possible. He asked that he and Councilmember Shekerjian receive a copy of it.

Councilmember Shekerjian noted that she had stopped at the Boys and Girls Club and had noticed that the kids were pretty wound up at times and to an older person that could be intimidating. She is not concerned about criminal activity there. She would hope the

conversation about behavior would continue so we can make sure older adults will feel comfortable. There has always been good communication.

Agenda Item 2 – Police Department Update on Neighborhood Policing Efforts

Angel Carbajal summarized efforts currently underway within the Police Department that have a direct impact on the neighborhoods.

- For calendar year 2007, there has been a 16.3% reduction in Part I violent crimes compared to 2006. There has also been a 33.9% reduction in auto theft.
- From 9/17/07 to 1/26/08, the Party Patrol has answered 744 calls for service, issued 349 Public Service Notices, issued 41 criminal citations, and contributed over 830 staff hours to this issue.
- For calendar year 2007, party-related calls for service have decreased 7.1% compared to 2006.
- From 7/17/07 through 1/25/08, ACTION teams made over 596 arrests for a variety of criminal offenses ranging from minors in possession of alcohol to armed robbery.
- For 2007, the SEMS unit issued 411 complaints, issued 1,418 citations and provided over 736 staff hours.

Agenda Item 3 – Abatement Process

Sgt. Ken Harmon summarized that an apartment house has been targeted for abatement. Abatement applies to any privately-owned property that facilitates or ignores crimes being committed on the property. Tanglewood Apartments at 740 W. University, has numerous crimes being committed and the property appears to cater to fostering criminal behavior. Letters have been sent to the owners encouraging them to contact staff. Should they choose to ignore that, staff would get a temporary restraining order which binds them into the City's solution process. Staff provides the court with solutions and the court chooses which solutions to enjoin to the property. The solutions will be mandatory. If that is ignored, the Class 5 felony comes into play and it goes to Superior Court. He hopes it will never get to the point of filing the restraining order or prosecution. It is an easy process to resolve, and Crime Prevention will assist. Part of that process requires posting a notice that the property is being abated. The signs are ready to go, but he wanted to give the committee advance notice. Once that is posted, there might be some phone calls.

Asst. Chief Carbajal added that there are many tools to use, and this is one tool for a chronic problem.

Agenda Item 4 – Goodwin Park Master Plan

Mark Richwine summarized that staff has worked with the Alta Mira Neighborhood Association on a master plan for Goodwin Park for about a year. The project started as a grant through the Neighborhood Grant Program. Judy Tapscott, Chair of the Alta Mira NA and Ruben Valenzuela, Terrano Design Group, are in attendance. The master plan reflects the consensus of the neighborhood through neighborhood meetings and it has also been reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Board and is recommended for Council consideration as the adopted master plan for this park. The park is located east of McClintock and north of Knox.

Ruben Valenzuela summarized the conceptual plan.

- Currently, the park does not have many amenities and is basically a retention basin.
- It was never well developed.
- The final concept involves a playground and ramadas in the center of the park.
- A pathway skirts the perimeter and runs across the center of the park.
- There will be added basketball and volleyball courts.
- A change in the slope will make it steeper and provided added usable space.
- There are 19 homes on the east side that have to retain water on their property, and with the added capacity of the park, they will not have that burden.
- Enhanced lighting will be done.

Councilmember Arredondo asked if the team had an opportunity to meet with the neighborhood.

Mr. Valenzuela responded that there have been three or four meetings.

Councilmember Arredondo asked if there will be a water hookup on the volleyball court to cool it in the summer.

Mr. Valenzuela responded that he was sure that will happen. This is just the conceptual plan and details will be developed.

Kent Olson, citizen, who lives near the park, stated that the conceptual plan represents a great improvement over the existing park. It is functional and aesthetically pleasing. It is important that the master plan represent the conceptual layout and not be modified later to save money. It is his understanding that it calls for the basketball courts to be retained at their current location. That is a problem from a traffic standpoint. That corner has a lot of traffic and it might be unsafe. By doubling the courts, the problem will increase. If the courts are centrally located as Mr. Valenzuela has stated today, then the intersection will be safer. He is in favor of the plan as drawn, and he asked that the basketball courts be centrally located to improve safety and aesthetics.

Councilmember Arredondo directed Mark Richwine to investigate that.

Mr. Valenzuela added that the intent is to leave the court where it is and add two half courts.

Councilmember Arredondo added that Council will need to approve this plan. This is the very beginning of the process.

Councilmember Shekerjian added that even with retaining the court where it is, there are a lot of trees and barriers in that corner and that should help shield the sound.

Mr. Valenzuela added that the intent is to reduce the amount of turf, so the perimeter will be landscaped with trees and shrubs.

Judy Tapscott thanked Mr. Valenzuela for developing the master plan. This is a nice plan. She thanked Shauna Warner for her assistance and Parks and Recreation staff, specifically Bob Pohlet, who attended every meeting.

Agenda Item 5 – Nuisances and Property Enhancement Code Enforcement Update

Jan Koehn summarized that 2007 was the first full year of implementing the part time code enforcement program and the numbers were favorable. More complaints were generated, but most were proactive complaints which means inspectors are actually getting to the problems before citizens call them in. Almost 60% were generated proactively. About 90% of the properties in Tempe are in compliance even though 7500 code violations are generated per year.

Agenda Item 6 – Fire Department Medical Support Unit Update

Fire Chief Cliff Jones summarized that historically Tempe has enjoyed outstanding cooperation between the Fire and Police departments. That is not typical across the country. Asst. Chief Carbajal has been working toward this goal for a long time. This past year, the Fire Department brought on a staff member who has a unique set of previous experiences. He is the EMS Transportation Coordinator, John Valenzuela. He is retired from the Phoenix Fire Department. He has also put in six years as a police officer. He has put together a program to better support our police officers in the field from a medical and health standpoint. The better we support the police officers, the better they can support us.

John Valenzuela provided an overview of the Medical Support Unit. In November of 2006, the Police Department asked for two paramedics to assist them with their SWAT operations. This is not a new concept, but it was new for the Tempe Police Department. Staff determined there were five areas where the Police Department could be vulnerable and could use specialized medical support. The Medical Support Unit (MSU) was formed on June 29, 2007. It is a group of eight paramedics highly trained to support police in their unique medical needs. He summarized the five areas of vulnerability.

- When administering tests to monitor potential recruits, if someone does not have a good cardiovascular status, they could collapse. It could be three or four minutes before paramedics could respond to a 911 call. The MSU could be on site to monitor and be proactive. The purpose of the Unit is to monitor. We would take vital signs before the recruits begin the test and watch the participants. Several people have been identified over the past few months that could have had a problem and the City could have been liable.
- For special events, when it is 110 degrees, police are put at risk simply due to their uniforms. Even in long investigations, they are at risk for heat exhaustion or heat stroke. At the 4th of July event, 26 officers were monitored and there were no problems. The previous year, there were 3 to 5 who had problems. The Unit provides fluids and a misting system.
- Performing tactical entries during SWAT operations is risky without medical back-up.
- Warrants can be served outside the City. The Unit can relieve concern about planning for medical emergencies in unfamiliar areas.
- Proactive education is being conducted for the Police Department. The Unit has united the Police Department and Fire Department to an even better level.

He continued that the Unit has raised the relationship to the next level. It serves as a model for any other police and fire department and it has improved the safety and well being of the officers. As a result, it has also improved the safety of the fire department members. It also contributes to recruitment and retention and helps make Tempe the best place to be. In the last six months, the Unit has had 59 deployments and has intervened where a potential outcome could have been bad.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that it is comforting in public safety to know that in Tempe there are highly trained paramedics right there with the police. He suggested bringing a presentation to the Council.

DIRECTION: Directed Shauna Warner to agendaize at the next available IRS.

Agenda Item 7 – Review New Fire Department ladder Truck

Chief Jones summarized that the new ladder truck better prepares the Fire Department for fire emergencies, and shows strong support of the Mayor and Council for the Fire Department. Fire apparatus is an expensive proposition and keeping it up to date is expensive. The new ladder truck is available for viewing at the 6th Street cul-de-sac. This truck has a 100-foot aerial ladder compared to a 75-foot ladder on the unit it is replacing. This equates to two more floors of reach. The truck put in service three years ago has a 114-foot ladder and it replaced a 90-foot ladder. Tempe only has two ladder companies and it is important that the ladder companies be as good as they can be and provide as much protection for firefighters as possible. The new ladder is a platform type unit compared to the traditional straight ladder. This allows firefighters to have a sprinkler system and has built-in breathing air.

Councilmember Arredondo asked what the new truck cost.

Chief Jones responded that it cost \$851,000. It needs to last for fourteen years. Since it is specially made, it took two years to get it. The department hopes to have it in service in April.

Agenda Item 8 – Future Agenda Items – Next meeting April 8, 2008

No agenda items were noted.

Councilmember Arredondo thanked staff for their assistance with the NFL experience. The NFL provided a great entertainment venue and the City provided a free concert and fireworks. It took a lot of planning and effort.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell

Reviewed by: Shauna Warner

Jan Hort, City Clerk