

**PUBLIC SAFETY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2011

1:30 PM

MUNICIPAL PLAZA ROOM C

Members Present: Councilmember David Medina, Jr., *Chair, District 5*
Councilmember Jennifer V. Ramos, *District 3*
Councilmember Elisa Chan, *District 9*
Councilmember Carlton Soules, *District 10*

Members Absent: *None*

Staff Present: Erik Walsh, *Assistant City Manager*; William McManus, *Police Chief*; Charles Hood, *Fire Chief*; Janae Florance, *Deputy Police Chief*; David Martinez, *Deputy Fire Chief*; Earl Crayton, *Assistant Fire Chief*; Robert Mikel, *Assistant Fire Chief*; Oscar Gonzalez, *Assistant Fire Chief*; Mike Walsh, *Assistant Fire Chief*; Dennis Rosenberry, *Police Department*; Paul Wendland, *Assistant City Attorney*; Savita Rai, *Assistant City Attorney*; Samuel Garcia, *Assistant City Attorney*; Brandon Smith, *Office of the City Clerk*

Others Present: Bobby Perez, *Shelton & Valadez*; Milton Guess, *Tourism Council*; Marco Barros, *Tourism Council*; Nancy Hunt, *Paseo del Rio Assoc.*; Lola Desmond, *Vidorra Condo.*; Tom Netting, *Hyatt Hotels*; Bill Brendel, *Crockett Hotel*; Linda Winchester, *Tourism Council*; Davis Phillips, *Phillips Entertainment*; Tom Duff, *Riverwalk Int.*; Martin Bozer, *Six Flags Fiesta Texas*; Kyan Anderson

Call to Order

Chairman D. Medina called the meeting to order.

1. Citizens to be Heard

Citizens addressed the Committee during corresponding item.

2. Approval of minutes of the May 25, 2011 Public Safety Council Committee Meeting

Councilmember Chan moved to approve the minutes of the May 25, 2011 Public Safety Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Soules seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Staff Presentation and Consideration of the Downtown Solicitation Free Zone

Presented by William McManus, Chief of Police

Deputy Police Chief Janae Florance provided an overview of two City Ordinances currently used by the Police Department to enforce and investigate complaints of panhandling and soliciting. She stated that neither of the two ordinances were used to deter illegal panhandling or possess an ascending scale of punishment for prior conviction or habitual offenders. Additionally, she noted that they do not include a procedure to deal with property seized as a result of panhandling activities. She added that in addition to enforcement efforts, a Public Education Campaign had been implemented to encourage donations to Haven for Hope and other providers rather than to panhandlers. She stated that staff recommended to amend the current Aggressive Solicitation Ordinance language by expanding the 25-foot prohibition to 50 feet, and expanding the list of prohibited areas to include: 1) Charitable contribution meters, parking meters and parking pay stations on the street and in public parking lots; and garages, and 2) The entrance and exit of any restaurant, as well as the eating areas of any outdoor dining establishment.

Citizens To Be Heard

Joan Korte, Downtown Residents Association, addressed the Committee in support of the proposed amendments. She spoke of her negative experience with panhandlers and asked to Committee to consider the rights of the citizens being harassed by panhandlers.

Davis Phillips, Alamo Plaza Merchants & Tourism Council and Davis Entertainment, spoke in support of the proposed amendments and expressed concern with the negative impact of panhandlers.

Marco Barros, Tourism Council, spoke in support of the proposed amendments and noted the importance of enforcement through signage. He provided a letter of support from downtown merchants and residents and stated that ordinances should be posted.

Milton Guess, Downtown Resident, thanked Chief McManus for the process and spoke in support of the proposed amendments.

Bill Brendel, Crockett & Menger Hotels, spoke in support of the proposed amendments. He stated that Hotel Industry best practices provide for the elimination of panhandling for successful businesses. He noted that the current ordinances do not eliminate solicitation and that a stronger ordinance was needed.

Lola Desmond, Vidorra Resident, spoke in support of the proposed amendments and cited confrontations with panhandlers while entertaining guests downtown. She expressed concern that the proposed amendments would force panhandlers just beyond the 50-foot boundary.

Nancy Hunt, Paseo Del Rio Association, spoke in support of the proposed amendments and cited the negative impact of panhandlers to the Riverwalk experience.

Councilmember Ramos expressed concern with the safety of non-profit organizations/children soliciting donations on center medians in traffic and requested further discussion regarding the issue.

Councilmember Soules spoke of the vulnerability of gas station patrons and requested that gas station panhandling be addressed in the proposed amendments. Chief McManus replied that staff would explore the inclusion of gas stations and confer with the City Attorney's Office.

Chairman D. Medina requested that staff explore addressing panhandling at car washes in the proposed ordinance. He asked if there was a signage requirement informing the public of the revised ordinances. Chief McManus stated that there was no signage requirement and that public outreach would be addressed through the media and downtown partners. Councilmember Ramos requested that staff work with VIA to include public service announcements at bus stops.

Councilmember Ramos moved to forward said item to the full Council for consideration. Councilmember Chan seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Staff Presentation and Consideration of Changes to the International Fire Code

Presented by Charles Hood, Fire Chief

Assistant Fire Chief Earl Crayton reported that due to extreme drought conditions, the City of San Antonio had imposed a fireworks ban of all displays effective immediately and until further notice. He stated that Six Flags Fiesta Texas and Sea World opposed the ban and requested an exemption from future restrictions. He provided an overview of the proposed revision to the Fireworks Language in the 2012 International Fire Code and noted that the proposed language would allow theme parks to continue fireworks displays during extreme conditions, provided that approved safeguards were in place.

Councilmember Soules moved to forward said item to the full Council for consideration. Councilmember Chan seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

At this time the Committee addressed Item 7.

7. Briefing on the Urban Wildland Interface and Local Brush Fires

Presented by Charles Hood, Fire Chief

Fire Chief Charles Hood introduced Assistant Fire Chiefs Robert Mikel and Oscar Gonzalez, and Assistant Fire Chief Mike Walsh. He reported that on September 29, 2011, there would be an Assistant Fire Chief dedicated to each shift to coordinate emergency activities. Chief Hood provided an overview of the San Antonio Fire Department's (SAFD) response to the Urban Wildland Interface and Local Brush Fires. He stated that the San Antonio area was experiencing one of the worst droughts in its history, resulting in an increase in the number of brush fires. He noted that the SAFD Wildland firefighting capabilities had been enhanced in the past five years with the department's Wildland Strike Team. This enables the SAFD to fight fires in extreme conditions.

Councilmember Soules spoke of a blind resident that had to be evacuated by his family during the Wetmore Fires. He requested further discussion regarding the evacuation process to better address similar issues in the future. Chief Hood indicated that the following emergency notification warning systems utilized by the SAFD: 1) Door-to-door neighborhood notification in coordination with the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD); 2) Mass-media; 3) Emergency Alert System; 4) Emergency Notification System; 5) Social Media; and 6) Weather System. He stated that there was an accessible Hazard Alert System specifically for the deaf and the blind that could be considered. Councilmember Soules stated that there should be a listing of residences requiring special notification efforts.

5. Briefing on Towing Services Contract

Presented by William McManus, Chief of Police

Dennis Rosenberry reported that the current Municipal Wrecker Service Agreement became effective on December 1, 2008; was divided into six service zones (East, West, South, Central, North, and Prue); and awarded to three companies under the competitive bid process. He stated that the contract was awarded as follows: Allied Towing (East); Assured Towing (West); and Associated Transportation Services (Prue). He noted that Texas Towing was contracted to perform towing services in the North, Central and South Zones through a separate process conducted by the City Attorney's Office. He added that Associated Transportation Services was suspended for 20 days in February 2010; 40 days in June 2011; and terminated on August 26, 2011. Mr. Rosenberry stated that Assured Towing was assigned to cover the Prue Service Zone and has maintained a current performance rating of 98%.

Discussion ensued and Councilmember Ramos asked for a copy of the Towing Services Contract for review. Mr. Rosenberry stated that staff was reviewing the performance of the remaining two towing companies to determine which company would be awarded the Prue Service Zone. Mr. Walsh confirmed that Assured Towing had been servicing the Prue Zone for approximately 90 days and that Allied would be provided the same time period.

6. Staff Presentation of the January – September 15, 2011 Preliminary Crime Statistics

Presented by William McManus, Chief of Police

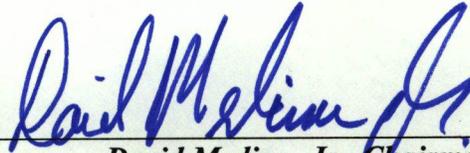
Said item will be addressed at the next meeting.

8. Consideration of items for future meetings

There were no items discussed.

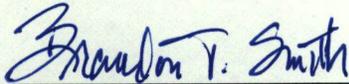
9. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.



David Medina, Jr., Chairman

Respectfully Submitted,



*Brandon T. Smith
Office of the City Clerk*

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