

SUMMARY OF MINUTES

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

5:52 P.M., MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2008

COMMITTEE ROOM

ROOM 239, CITY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Council Member Vivian H. Burke, Chair
Council Member Molly Leight, Vice Chair
Council Member Wanda Merschel

MEMBER ABSENT: Council Member Nelson L. Malloy, Jr.

OTHERS PRESENT: Council Member Evelyn A. Terry (out at 6:45 p.m.)

Chair Burke called the meeting to order and stated that the Committee would first consider the Consent Agenda. Chair Burke and Council Member Leight requested to pull Item C-3. No other items were removed for discussion.

Council Member Leight made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was duly seconded by Council Member Merschel and carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

- C-1. ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 42-122(f) OF THE CITY CODE RELATING TO 25 MILES PER HOUR SPEED LIMITS ON CITY STREETS - *Stanton Drive, Torrance Drive and Lynn Dee Drive.*
- C-2. ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 42-229 OF THE CITY CODE RELATING TO ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES.
- C-4. ORDINANCES RENEWING THE CERTIFICATES OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY OF FIVE LIMOUSINE SERVICES AND ONE TAXICAB COMPANY IN THE CITY OF WINSTON-SALEM - *Banner Transportation, Heritage Carriage, Piedmont Executive Transportation, Travel Aid Special Care Transportation, Fly P.T.I. Transportation, and Yellow Cab.*
- C-5. CONSIDERATION OF SUMMARIES OF MINUTES:
 - a. APPROVAL OF PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF MINUTES - *September 8, 2008.*
 - b. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SUMMARY OF MINUTES - *November 10, 2008.*

C-3. RESOLUTION APPROVING A CHANGE TO THE RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING ZONE POLICY.

In response to Council Member Leight's question, Mr. Gregory M. Turner, Assistant City Manager/Public Works, stated that with permit parking, there is a requirement to demonstrate residency in the area and requirements to meet for a permit parking zone. This proposal would relieve the specific requirements for a location where a permit parking zone would be appropriate and will ease the requirements for demonstrating residency. He also confirmed that the area in question is along Holly Avenue and Peters Creek Parkway.

Council Member Merschel noted that this type of parking has been successful around Wachovia West End Center, R.J. Reynolds High School and Baptist Hospital and is beneficial to area residents.

Council Member Leight made a motion to approve the item. The motion was duly seconded by Council Member Merschel and carried unanimously.

GENERAL AGENDA

G-1. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE WINSTON-SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT TO AMEND THE BONNER-REDD-SURRATT-DAVIS SCHOLARSHIP WITH WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY.

Mr. Scott Cunningham, Chief of Police, stated that this scholarship is currently awarded to students of the Criminal Justice Department at Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) who will join the Winston-Salem Police Department (WSPD) for three years upon graduation. This request will allow any student in a degree-seeking program at WSSU to participate in the scholarship. This will increase the potential pool of police officers and help to provide a more well-rounded officer, as any degree can be beneficial to the community.

Council Member Leight made a motion to approve the item. The motion was duly seconded by Council Member Merschel.

In response to Council Member Leight's question, Chief Cunningham stated that Criminal Justice is a narrow field of study and although it is a viable program, there was only one member of the program to submit for this year's scholarship opportunity.

The motion carried unanimously.

G-2. REPORT ON SUMMER 2008 YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUMMER 2009.

Mrs. Martha Wheelock, Assistant City Manager, stated that in 2007, staff implemented summer youth activities. She also stated that the 2008 report shows that basic needs for the activities were met, but noted there are still demographic needs and recommendations for improvement. She further stated that it has been recommended to use various recreation centers within the City instead of one location, as well as alternative activities to enhance community involvement.

Chair Burke expressed her thanks to Mr. Tim Grant, Recreation and Parks Director, as well as to Mr. Ed McNeal, Marketing Director, for their efforts in this program. She expressed concern that there was not more interest or involvement from local churches that could have served as mentors or chaperones. She requested that Mrs. Wheelock, Mr. Grant and Mr. McNeal attend an upcoming meeting of the Winston-Salem Ministerial Alliance to address this need.

In response to Council Member Leight's question, Mrs. Wheelock stated that in November 2007, a public forum was held to determine community interest and while there was participation, funding for the program is an obstacle as well as staffing at the location.

Council Member Terry stated that she was disappointed in the lack of community support and suggested that staff create a competition for volunteers to demonstrate that they would be winning an opportunity to volunteer and serve youth within the community.

Mrs. Wheelock noted that the funding for these programs will be presented to Council in future budget requests.

Council Member Merschel stated that the lack of community support demonstrates the critical need for youth programs within the City and urged staff to locate funding sources for this program. She also requested that a prize be purchased or donated to raffle off to volunteers.

In response to Council Member Leight's question, Mrs. Wheelock stated that staff worked with the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System and determined that middle school aged teens and up would provide the most response to these programs.

Council Member Terry suggested that the One Economy Program is a potential funding resource for this program.

G-3. REPORT ON POLICE PATROL REDEPLOYMENT.

Chief Cunningham stated that new police patrols will begin in January 2009. He stated that the patrol division occupies the bulk of the City's officers, calls and citizen contact and that there are currently 18 patrol beats of five shifts per day. The new deployment will increase to 24 beats, whereby each beat will be reduced by two square miles, providing the officers with more time and understanding in their specified area. He also stated that patrol officers will be switching to permanent shifts instead of rotating shifts, so their focus will be in one beat, at the same place, all the time. With the increase in beats, there will only be three reporting times for officers and they will have more accountability for their area. Additionally, there will now be nine sergeants and two lieutenants supervising each shift. He further stated that police officers were involved in this change and 88% of the affected officers received their first choice patrol. Chief Cunningham noted that an overlay map will be provided to show where the individual beats will be located within the City. A master map will be developed for each Council Member with ward information, names of the lieutenant and sergeant assigned to that area and the squad assigned to that zone. Patrol squads will serve in one zone for the next calendar year.

Council Member Leight noted that neighborhood groups like knowing who their local police patrol is.

Chief Cunningham noted that this restructuring will help to build trust within individual communities and the City as a whole. In response to Council Member Merschel's question, he stated that the downtown core will be primarily patrolled by one squad, along with the downtown bike patrol. He also stated that due to the restructuring, some areas have been spilt to balance the workload and may report to two different captains, providing more supervision in those areas

Council Member Merschel expressed concern that citizens enjoy continuity and even with the increased beats, there are some areas that lend themselves to walking patrols.

Chair Burke noted that this will help to increase the concept of a neighborhood, whereby police officers become familiar with citizens in the community and citizens feel comfortable with police officers.

Chief Cunningham noted that 45-50% of an officer's time is spent in response to calls, while 35-40% of their time is uncommitted, whereby they can get out of their police cars, interact with citizens and become more familiar with their patrol areas.

In response to Council Member Merschel's question, Mr. Garrity stated that this restructuring does provide the possibility of police districts or substations in the future.

Chief Cunningham noted that there are 22 new officers who will not become available to fill beats until April 2009, as well as 12 officers that are on military deployment, so the Police Department's sworn officer pool is low. The ultimate goal is to increase to 30 beats, when all the officers are available, with no extra cost to the City.

Council Member Terry noted that the annexed areas to the south of the City complain about response time, but the patrol zones and increase in beats will help to alleviate those complaints.

Mr. Garrity noted that staff will bring a status report once the redeployment has started, and also noted that the Police Department is training its officers in the area of customer service and the importance of engaging citizens.

Chair Burke requested that Chief Cunningham ensure that all Council Members are aware of the change and that he be available to answer any questions.

Council Member Merschel requested a drop-in meeting be scheduled within each of the new patrol beats in the neighborhood so citizens can meet their local officer.

Chair Burke requested this information be put on WSTV-13, and that the drop-in meetings be advertised.

ADDITIONAL ITEM

Council Member Leight noted that there has been ongoing graffiti on road signs within the Beth/Konnoak/Cloister/Buchanan area and questioned whether it was City or state responsibility to remove it, as it appears certain neighborhoods are being targeted.

Ms. Stephanie Stimpson, Neighborhood Services, reviewed the procedures and groups involved in graffiti abatement and noted that Property Management is responsible for removing graffiti from road signs, while Neighborhood Services is responsible for removing graffiti from private property. She stated that Property Management has an agreement with the Northwest Piedmont Council of Government and notifies their workforce crew to remove graffiti or replace the affected sign. Private property owners are notified that graffiti needs to be removed from their property, and if not in compliance within nine days, the City will abate. The City's environmental crew uses paint or a combination of chemicals and pressure washing to remove graffiti. Ms. Stimpson noted that she met with the Department of Corrections and the City has entered into an agreement with them whereby court appointed community service participants will be enlisted to aid in the removal of graffiti each Friday. She also noted that Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful has a pool of volunteers interested in helping. She further noted that in November, Neighborhood Services and the WSPD began a graffiti blitz, where the WSPD identifies a location with graffiti, it is determined to be public or private property, and crews will abate the graffiti. Once this list has been addressed, staff will revert back to the citation process.

Council Member Terry out at 6:45 p.m.

Chief Cunningham noted that this will provide a complete inventory of graffiti within the community, so problem areas are identified, prioritized and assessed. He also noted that there has been a localized increase in graffiti and charges have been brought against those individuals responsible.

Chair Burke noted that she has previously mentioned that the WSPD should seek out graffiti prone areas for assessment.

Ms. Stimpson noted that police personnel escort graffiti removal crews in the interest of safety if graffiti is determined to be gang-related, when a location is cited.

In response to Council Member Leight's question, Chief Cunningham stated that whether or not the graffiti is actually gang created or copycat, it is treated as gang created, whereby its removal is increased in priority and that information is shared with the Gang Prevention Unit.

Ms. Stimpson noted that staff has identified three levels of graffiti severity and met with City Link staff to share this information so they will correctly notify the needed response groups.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:53 p.m.