

Public Safety Advisory Committee
City of Greenbelt
September 4, 2018
7:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

- Committee Members Present: Stan Zirkin, Eunice Pierre, Dr. Kressler, and Cindy Comproni.
- City Liaisons Present: Captain Lee and Mary Johnson.
- City Employees present: Dale Worley, Director I.T., Jeff Williams, City Treasurer presence requested but absent.
- Council Present: Mayor Jordan, Councilmembers Silke Pope and Ed Putens
- Two members from GEAC were present

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chair, Cindy Comproni

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 2018 minutes approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

CAMERAS: GEAC sent a letter inquiring about the status of the security cameras, the budget for the cameras and the coverage for Greenbelt East. Mrs. Comproni forwarded PSAC recommendations for security cameras and a map of the cameras to Ms. Bacchus. PSAC recommended for the first phase that the existing cameras be updated; the second phase would be Greenbelt West and the third phase would be Greenbelt East.

GEAC is very concerned about the crime in Greenbelt East and the crime report which stated Greenbelt East was a high crime area. GEAC is concerned that it will take 5 years for the security cameras to be updated and/or installed.

Dale Worley, Director of I.T., said the City spent \$50,000 on upgrading the core system that records video images and \$10,000 for cameras at the Youth Center. Mr. Worley said they will be replacing the cameras at the Spellman Overpass tomorrow as the cameras are 10/11 years old. The new cameras are higher grade. Mr. Worley is looking at placing cameras at Springhill Hill Lake Recreation Center and the Elementary School. This will be done in the next 30 days.

George Matthews has been asked to assess the security of the City buildings. Mr. Worley said if crime is substantiated then the City will prioritize. Mr. Worley will be asking for \$15,000 each year for new cameras and making improvements with the present cameras. If it is determined that more funds are needed, Council will need to approve the funds.

Mr. Worley said there are no cameras in Greenbelt East. He said the camera system evolved to keep City employees secure. It then expanded to Roosevelt Center due to crime issues and then the Spellman Overpass due to its remote nature. The focus has always been City cameras watch City buildings or properties. Mr. Worley stated that

moving into neighborhoods completely changes what we do. He said getting the video signal back is the hard part and the costs are high. Mr. Worley said the City may need to piggyback with someone, i.e. Springhill Lake Elementary.

GEAC members understand the cameras are costly and it will not stop crime but cameras will aid in the prosecution.

Mrs. Comproni asked Mr. Worley what is the plan for the cameras? Mr. Worley said a solution is to get better retrieval for the Roosevelt Center Cameras, that may be the next step but he is not positive. As far as adding additional cameras, the City doesn't yet have a proposal for the costs. This fall, Mr. Worley will be receiving information from the vendor along with George Matthew's accessing the security. As funds are available, we will work from this assessment. Mr. Worley hopes to price 10 to 12 cameras this fall.

Mrs. Comproni said that 4 cameras are proposed for Greenbelt East. GEAC members stated based on the budget book Greenbelt East will have no cameras for 5 years. The members went on to say that Scout web-site is not recommending that people buy in Greenbelt East and labeled it as a high crime area. This is hurting their property value. GEAC members want expedited funds for security cameras on a yearly basis. Mrs. Comproni stated that PSAC was asked by Council to revisit the cameras on a yearly basis.

Dr. Kressler stated security cameras are helpful to the Greenbelt Police Department but there is no staff assigned to strictly monitor the cameras. Dr. Kressler stated that the Police need to address the crime report that GEAC refers to.

Stan Zirkin stated PSAC made recommendations based on the Greenbelt Police Department recommendations.

Members from GEAC sent the City Council the crime report. Mayor Jordan also lives in Greenbelt East and stated the issue of security cameras is something the City is grappling with. We don't have cameras in the community, is it ethical to have cameras on the streets to capture license plates. Mayor Jordan said we need to listen to the Police Department and the I.T. Department on how to proceed with security cameras, i.e. commercial crime versus parks and neighborhood crimes.

Councilmember Putens said cameras are a crime solver at the end of the crime. He stated there were 388 calls in Greenbelt Lake Village and this is just 1 of 11 homeowner associations. All are concerned about equity. Councilmember Putens stated that Greenbelt Station residents are paying \$6,000 to \$8,000 a year in taxes. Mrs. Comproni said there should be money in the budget and we are behind.

GEAC members stated they oversee 10 communities and they only hear things via the Greenbelt News Review. Mrs. Comproni suggested that there be a liaison between the two committees and said GEAC is always welcome. Councilmember Putens said it would be nice to have a Police Officer to come in and say "Hi" at GEAC, GHI meetings, etc.

Mrs. Comproni asked if GEAC has had any complaints about cell phone coverage. Dr. Kressler stated not much but perhaps GEAC is not participating in the Facebook group.

LETTER TO CITY ON CELL TOWERS – City working on due diligence.

NEW BUSINESS

Greenbelt Station Path Safety & Security – Mr. Zirkin stated the grass is high and it is a perfect height for someone to hide and attack someone. He said the path is far from finished, i.e. needs lights and mile markers.

Mayor Jordan said he was there on a bike tour and the vegetation is higher than in the picture from the PSAC visit. He stated this is an ongoing problem as it is a wetland and there are restrictions on cutting the grass. Mr. Zirkin asked if there can be fencing on the path and grass area, it is very concerning.

Mrs. Comproni stated the Planning Department said it is a trail and is not meant to be a park. She asked what the purpose of the path is. Is it a connection path to go to Beltway Plaza? Mayor Jordan said it is also a recreational path where you can walk thru the wetlands. If there was lighting, it would be solar lighting.

Dr. Kressler said a visually impaired person asked on Facebook if the City could print braille on the mile markers. Dr. Kressler will speak to the person for details.

OCTOBER 14TH Is the Advisory Board Dinner.

The Public Safety Dinner will be at the American Legion in October.

NEXT MEETING: Terri Hruby, Director of Planning and Theresa Smithson from CARES will be at the next meeting on October 2, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. We are also planning to hold elections for the Chair and Vice-Chair of PSAC.