

City of Greenbelt Public Safety Advisory Committee

February 07, 2023 Minutes
CORRECTED (list of attendees)
and Re-APPROVED April 13, 2023

ROLL CALL:

Committee Members Present: Peggy Higgins, Chair, Stan Zirkin, Eunice Pierre. Dr. Laura Kressler, Mary Thomas.

Staff Liaison: Dawane Martinez, Human Resources Director

City Council Liaison: Council Member Silke Pope

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm by Chair Peggy Higgins

AGENDA APPROVAL:

Eunice Pierre made a motion to approve the February 7th agenda. The motion was seconded by Stan Zirkin and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Eunice Pierre made a motion to approve the January 10, 2023 minutes. The motion was seconded by Stan Zirkin and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

a) Discussion of Report re Community Forums and Survey Responses

Committee members identified prominent issues raised by forum and survey respondents. The issues identified included car thefts, vulnerability of hearing impaired when interacting with police, need for police training, ongoing fights at dismissal among Greenbelt Middle students, the Plateau Place shooting. Following discussion about the Plateau Place shooting, all members expressed an interest in viewing the video of the shooting. Liaison Dawne Martinez will follow-up and make arrangements with the department.

As a forum suggestion to connect French Immersion School faculty with French-speaking residents is not directly a PSAC issue, It was decided to share that suggestion with the city's Community Relations Advisory Board for their possible engagement of that issue.

During the meeting, Councilmember Silke Pope read sections of the police website regarding current crimes. She said that the council gets an update each week in addition to the police website. It was noted that PSAC had previously received the weekly update and regular verbal updates when police department officials regularly attended PSAC meetings. Councilmember Pope suggested that liaison Martinez contact the department's Public Information Officer Hannah Glasgow to get PSAC on the recipient list for those reports.

In the preliminary discussion about community policing, the now largely dormant Neighborhood Watch program was raised. It was noted that the police department is not currently an active partner in the development and sustaining of the Neighborhood Watch program. Before he retired, Officer Matthews had been very active with Neighborhood Watch. However, that does not seem to be among PIO Hannah Glasgow's duties.

As a former Neighborhood Watch organizer, Dr. Laura Kressler noted that Neighborhood Watch is not just a police issue but also a community issue. She provided information about the ebb and flow of resident involvement in the program as well as describing previously different Neighborhood Watch patrol structures – dog walkers, in car, walkers as well as static patrols. She spoke to formal processes for the establishment of a Neighborhood Watch program that include police review. One of the benefits of the program was formal/official signs at neighborhood entry points noting the neighborhood as a Neighborhood Watch neighborhood as a possible deterrent.

Several other active police community engagement programs were described such as a cadet program, Shop with Cop, Trunk or Treat.

b) Security Cameras

Committee members generally discussed PSAC's recommendations in the 2017 security camera report that had been approved by the council. An identified priority at the time had been to upgrade the server capacity to improve the retention of camera footage and thus delay the override of the video. Footage is now kept for a year and a day.

At the time, the committee had also reviewed and identified the city's most persistent trouble spots and with the police department, identified those locations on the city map for eventual additional camera locations.

The 2017 reports will be again disseminated for review in advance of the next meeting to develop the questions such as where are the cameras currently located and where are the violent crimes occurring in order to update the report.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Stan Zirkin made a motion to adjourn. Eunice Pierre and Mary Thomas both seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

UPCOMING MEETING

Thursday, March 16

Thursday, April 6

Thursday, May 4

Respectfully Submitted

Peggy Higgins, Chair