

City of Greenbelt Public Safety Advisory Committee  
September 3, 2024 Minutes ADOPTED

**1) ROLL CALL:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Chair Peggy Higgins

Committee Members Present: Peggy Higgins, Chair, Steve Mirsky, Dr. Laura Kressler, Eunice Pierre, Kathy Reynolds. Absent with notification: Stan Zirkin; Absent without notification: Mary Thomas

Also in attendance: Councilmember Silke Pope, Police Chief Rick Bowers, City Staff Liaison/DEI Officer Tyra Smith, resident Bill Orleans

**2) INTRODUCTIONS**

**3) AGENDA APPROVAL:**

Steve Mirsky made a motion to approve the September 3, 2024 agenda. The motion was seconded by Laura Kressler and unanimously approved.

**4) APPROVAL OF JULY 2, 2024 MEETING MINUTES:**

Steve Mirsky made a motion to approve the July 2, 2024 minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Laura Kressler and unanimously approved.

**5) OLD BUSINESS**

**a) UPDATE: PSAC 7 pm community meetings on dangers in home of radon, carbon monoxide and preparation for severe weather events.**

Planning

Steve Mirsky reviewed details and tasks in preparation for the carbon monoxide, radon, emergency weather events (CREW) community meetings. He coordinated with Kathy Reynolds possible opportunities to connect Fire Department Chief Ray at an upcoming Fire Department meeting. He will send his slides to Laura Kressler and Peggy Higgins. Laura Kressler said she will review and add a sharper logo to the power-point presentation.

Chief Bowers said his department can help with advertising and with flyers. The Chief also will contact Chondria Andrews, Greenbelt Public Information Officer, to see if it is possible for the events to be recorded. Laura Kressler said she could design advertising. Steve Mirsky will write article on carbon monoxide. As a backup speaker system, Peggy Higgins will provide a portable block rocker/bluetooth speaker that has portable mics.

Advertising the events in the News Review two to three weeks before the first community meeting was also discussed.

### Community Meeting Presentation Schedule

Committee members signed up to assist at the community meetings. It was agreed that members would wear their PSAC shirt and arrive a ½ hour before the 7 pm meeting to assist Steve, manage the welcome desk and invite attendees to provide their contact information in order to receive possible additional information. Members will also stay afterwards to de-brief with Steve.

Thus far, coverage is:

October 10 – Greenbriar Community Center - Chief Bowers, Laura Kressler, Eunice Pierre

October 17 – City Community Center Room 200 - Chief Bowers, Peggy Higgins

October 24 – Springhill Lake Recreation Center - Chief Bowers, Laura Kressler, Peggy Higgins

#### NOTE FROM JULY 2024 PSAC MTG

*Steve anticipates his presentation will last about 50 minutes, which includes time for questions. The Chief or a Police Department representative and a Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department representative (invited) will also be invited to speak for about 5 minutes each.*

#### **b) PSAC's attendance/participation at August 6 Greenbelt National Night Out (NNO)**

Kathy Reynolds and Steve Mirsky reported that everything went well at their NNO locations. Steve Mirsky said that several people he met did not know about the Public Safety Advisory Committee.

Kathy Reynolds noted at the Beltway Plaza location, everyone was particularly excited with the Fire Department activity and when the helicopter arrived. Advisory Board liaison Tyra Smith, who was also at the Beltway Plaza location, said several members of the public spoke highly of the community police officers assigned to the neighborhood.

#### **6) NEW BUSINESS**

a) **PSAC election.** Peggy Higgins and Laura Kressler each submitted themselves for consideration as Chair. Peggy Higgins was elected.

b) **Fire Department staff coverage issue.** Kathy Reynolds announced that the City Council is hosting a town hall meeting to discuss the county's sudden pulling career fire fighters from Greenbelt's Fire Station with only a 30-day notice at the Fire Department beginning at 6:30 pm on September 12.

Additionally, there is concern that the county's sudden removal of career firefighters from the Greenbelt Fire Station will be a permanent decision and not just temporary. County representatives as well as District 22's state senator and delegates have been invited to the meeting.

Councilmember Pope was asked to provide questions to PSAC that she would like to be asked at the Town Hall meeting if county representatives attend. She said she would check with the City Manager.

#### **c) Review of Department's draft General Order re: License Plate Readers (LPR)**

The Chief reported that there will be 14 license plate readers and 6 dome cameras which together are fixed to a poll. The license plate readers only become activated when a car's license passes the LPR in real time and is registered in the police system as a license of interest. Triggering the LPR

alone is not probable cause for the police to take action. It does however begin a process of the officer confirming the information before any action is taken. The dome cameras will be attached to some of the license plate readers and will operate 24/7. The information from the dome cameras will be used for other crime/safety purposes in addition to the LPR initiative.

The Police Department will have direct access to the data accumulated from the LPR for 30 days, after which the data is maintained and secured by Maryland state. After 30 days, it can only be retrieved only with supervisory approval of an investigative purpose and in writing with a case number to the state police.

While the dome cameras operate differently as they are active 24 hours/7 days a week, after 30 days that data will automatically be deleted. Eventually the technology will be adapted so that after 30 days, that data will also be maintained and secured by Maryland state.

None of the Approved Mobile LPR uses are approved for new Fixed LPRs.

The Chief said that the city manager had directed that when the LPRs are installed, the city will be posting that there is video surveillance in the area. The city will do so even though there is no legal requirement to post information.

As part of the discussion, the Chief reported that the city already has 100 new cameras on city property throughout the city. That data is retained on the Police Department servers.

As several issues still needed discussion, Eunice Pierre made a motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. The motion was seconded by Laura Kressler and unanimously passed.

The Chief explained that there are 8 locations for the 14 LPRs and 6 dome cameras as in some cases, there are multiple cameras at one location so as to capture traffic coming from different directions. The locations were selected based on crime data and individual Council requests. He cautioned that locations currently identified are not yet confirmed and, in any case, will be moved as need changes.

Following review and discussion of the Department's draft Order, PSAC recommended:

- 1) Have approved uses for the fixed LPRs be specifically identified in the General Order especially as none of the approved uses for the mobile LPR are approved uses for the fixed LPRs.
  - a) Provide clarity by changing the heading Approved Uses to Approved Mobile LPR Uses.
  - b) Provide clarity by adding additional section of Approved Fixed LPR Uses.
- 2) Include information and details about dome camera operation and procedures.
- 3) Include measurable outcomes from LPRs fixed and mobile and the dome cameras
  - a) reduced # of vehicle hits
  - b) # of vehicles stopped
  - c) # of investigatory leads
  - d) # of recovery of stolen vehicles

The Chief identified the current list of initial locations for the equipment but said they are not finalized. Even so, the locations are subject to change, as needs change.

**7) Upcoming Meetings**

October 1, 2024 via zoom

November 5, 2024 via zoom

Zoom meetings through February

*Meeting adjourned*

Eunice Pierre made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Steve Mirsky and unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Peggy Higgins, Chair