

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
July 13, 2020
Online Broadcast Meeting

Present: Councilmembers Neff, Litten, Bullock (6:15 p.m.)

Also Present: Councilmembers Kepple, Rader, & Shachner, Mayor George, Acting Police Chief Wilkins, Police Captain Kevin Kauchek, Police Captain Gary Sprague, Police Captain Stone, Police Lieutenant Warner, Police Investigator Pat Fiorelli, Fire Chief Dunphy, Planning Director Shawn Leininger, David Baas, Spencer Tollefson, members of the public, Clerk Bach and Deputy Clerk Lascu taking minutes

Start time: 6:02 p.m.

AGENDA

Approval of the minutes of the June 29, 2020 Public Safety Committee

Chairperson Neff made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Litten to approve the minutes.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Yeas – Litten, Neff

Nays – None

Motion passed. The minutes were approved.

Communication from Councilmember Neff regarding parking issues on Edwards Ave. and other side streets impacted by business patrons. (Referred to Public Safety 7/6/20)

Chairperson Neff explained the reason behind the communication and shared some of the complaints that she's heard from residents on Edwards Ave. She also inquired as to why the city is waiting until fall to conduct a second parking study on the street. Mr. Baas of the Planning department indicated that the city was unsure when the truck park on the corner of Edwards & Detroit was going to open, as it had an initial launch date of the summer of 2019. The project went through a series of delays and the initial position of his department was to let the park get over its initial surge of business. He indicated that staff knew it was going to be a popular destination and did not want to get a false low count or false high count during its opening phase.

Chairperson Neff asked what possible parking solutions would entail, adding that it sounds like residents on the street are forced to compete against each other for street parking. Director Leininger stated that another study will indicate what the options are and that a reassessment of the situation will better inform staff.

Mr. Baas gave an overview of past parking data on Edwards Ave. It was found that the highest levels of on street occupancy were in the morning and late at night. He indicated that a potential goal would be to try to incentivize apartment dwellers in the area to park in lots off of the street. He expressed some concerns about residential on street parking passes, citing issues with enforceability and being replicable throughout the city.

Acting Police Chief Wilkins noted that the police department has not been receiving complaints regarding the parking issue. Chairperson Neff detailed complaints from residents about increased traffic on the street.

Councilmember Litten stated that the path to pursue incentivizing off street parking makes sense.

Councilmember Shachner spoke to the difficulties of balancing residential parking with commercial corridors and how creating residential street parking passes could make the parking problem worse.

Public Comment – John Hill of 1075 Lakeland Ave. – Mr. Hill expressed concern regarding the new format of parking to be implemented on Lake Ave., citing the presence of fire hydrants on the north side of the street potentially being blocked. Planning department staff indicated that fire hydrants alternate on either side of the street on Lake Ave. and directed Mr. Hill to online resources that give detailed information on the parking plan for the street.

Communication from Councilmembers Kepple, Rader, & Bullock regarding policing policy review & racial equity. (Referred to PS 6/15/20)

Chairperson Neff provided a brief recap of the last Public Safety Committee meeting where the Westshore Enforcement Bureau was discussed.

Councilmember Kepple suggested detailing the use of vapors in the city's use of force policy and asked to go through the "8 Can't Wait" strategies point by point.

Chief Wilkins spoke to how LPD does not instruct on or encourage the use of chokeholds. She indicated that one may have to be used as a last resort if officers find themselves in imminent danger.

Councilmember Kepple spoke about the notification of supervisors in the event of an application of a restraint device. Chief Wilkins indicated that a use of force investigation and cameras on scene would be reviewed if a restraint device was applied.

Councilmember Kepple asked how an officer would know how to use a chokehold safely. Investigator Fiorelli and Lieutenant Warner spoke to how damaging chokeholds can be and how the department does not want officers using that move.

Police staff spoke to how a duty to intercede has been put into the use of force policy, which compels officers to intercede in the event they see an improper use of force.

Chairperson Neff noted that of 31,670 contacts the police department made with the public in the past year, only 1 use of force investigation was opened.

The committee and police staff discussed the department's policy on shooting at moving vehicles. Lakewood officers are trained on the many downsides of shooting at moving vehicles. Police staff discussed the strategy involved in de-escalating and avoiding having to shoot at a moving vehicle.

Public Comment – Emily Brody of 1581 Wayne Ave. – Ms. Brody expressed dismay that bans on chokeholds and shooting at cars are not explicitly stated in the use of force policy. She added that based on her experience as a mental health nurse, she is more supportive of defunding the police and diverting the budget to other resources.

Steve Eisenberg of 12900 Lake Ave. – Mr. Eisenberg inquired as to what distributor the fire department is receiving its N95 masks from. Chief Dunphy indicated that he could get him that information.

Chairperson Neff adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.