



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

June 30, 2009

The Public Safety Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on June 30, 2009 at 9:04 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairman
Dina Higgins
Scott Somers

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Alfred Smith
Trisha Sorensen

(Items on the agenda were discussed out of order, but for purposes of clarity will remain as listed on the agenda.)

1. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

2. Hear a presentation, discuss and make a recommendation on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Chairman Kavanaugh stated that during a recent press conference, Police Chief George Gascón recommended that CPTED elements be incorporated into the City's Zoning Code, which is presently undergoing a major update. He said that Chief Gascón also noted the importance of reducing calls for service in commercial areas.

Commander Kathy Kirkham of the Superstition Springs Patrol District addressed the Committee and advised that her previous assignment was in the process improvement area. She introduced Crime Prevention Officer Patsy Gallagher, who is an expert regarding the CPTED requirements, and she noted that Development and Sustainability Director Christine Zielonka and Zoning/Civil Hearing Administrator Gordon Sheffield were also present to answer any questions.

Chairman Kavanaugh commended staff for the joint effort and cooperation that exists between the Police Department and other City departments in addressing the crime prevention issue.

Commander Kirkham stated that the goal is to build a safer community, and she advised that staff has researched other communities around the country in an effort to identify innovative concepts and partnerships. She noted that law enforcement traditionally focuses on detecting, apprehending and prosecuting offenders, which is very expensive. Commander Kirkham reported that when a community's Police Department and planners developed a partnership, CPTED practices were successfully adopted and some communities experienced a forty percent reduction in these types of crimes. She added that many of the CPTED practices have already been incorporated in Mesa's Zoning Code update.

Commander Kirkham said that the CPTED practices were well received when presented to several community advisory groups, and she noted that a presentation is also planned for the Development Advisory Forum.

Officer Gallagher displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) to provide an overview of CPTED. She reviewed the strategies as listed below:

- Natural Surveillance. The placement of physical features, activities and people in a manner that maximizes visibility.
- Natural Access Control. The placement of entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping and lighting that denies criminals access to the targets and limits the opportunity for crime.
- Territorial Reinforcement. Public spaces are clearly defined from private spaces.
- Maintenance and Management. Maintained property is less likely to attract criminal activity and becomes more inviting for the proper type of activity.

Officer Gallagher outlined the benefits (see Attachment 1) and the goals (see Attachment 2) of CPTED. She noted that the presence of positive activity in an area decreases the opportunity for criminal activity. Officer Gallagher stated that CPTED can improve public safety Citywide. She said that the responsibility for enforcement would include the Development and Sustainability Department, the Mesa Police Department and the City Prosecutor. Officer Gallagher reviewed the list of projects (see Attachment 3) that could be affected by the implementation of CPTED practices. She stated that in addition to incorporating the CPTED guidelines into the current Code rewrite, staff is exploring the possibility of creating security plans, similar to those required by the City of Tempe, for specific types of businesses that generate excessive Police calls for service.

Chairman Kavanaugh noted that the level of cooperation with regard to security varies with each organization. He said that although QuikTrip has been very cooperative, the Circle K Corporation has been resistant.

Officer Gallagher stated that QuikTrip incorporates the recommendations of Police Departments across the country into their security plans. She said that QuikTrips typically have a raised cashier platform, which enables a natural surveillance opportunity, and she noted that views of the cashier area from the outside are not obstructed by signage.

In response to a question from Committeemember Higgins, Officer Gallagher noted that a comparison of a Circle K store in Tempe with a security plan to a similar Circle K in Mesa

without a security plan indicated that the Tempe store generated significantly fewer calls for service.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the Target Corporation has been very responsive to recommendations from the Police Department; that most convenience stores operated by major chains already have security cameras; and that different businesses would have different types of security plans.

Responding to a series of questions from Committeemember Higgins, Mr. Sheffield advised that signage requirements will be similar to the existing Code. He also explained that a change allowing the maximum height of residential fences to increase from six feet to eight feet relates to the issue of noise attenuation.

Additional discussion ensued regarding the fact that a "control fence" behind a convenience store could prevent criminal activity from moving into adjacent residential areas; that many of the principles of CPTED are similar to good design elements; and that most of the design guidelines regarding landscaping would not apply to existing residential properties.

In response to a question from Committeemember Somers, Ms. Zielonka stated that the impact of a proposed State moratorium on code updates is unknown at this time. She noted that developers could voluntarily comply with the CPTED principles.

Chairman Kavanaugh suggested that CPTED principles could be included as Council stipulations for individual zoning cases.

Mr. Sheffield stated that the CPTED principles reflect good design practices and a common sense approach. He suggested that CPTED could be established as a Council policy and serve as the basis for interpreting the Zoning Code.

It was moved by Committeemember Somers, seconded by Committeemember Higgins, to recommend to the Council that staff's proposal to incorporate the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) concepts into the City's regulations be approved.

Carried unanimously.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked staff for the presentation.

3. Hear an update and discuss the Transitional Response Vehicle (TRV) Program.

Fire Chief Harry Beck addressed the Committee and displayed a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office). He reported that the Transitional Response Vehicle (TRV) Pilot Program, which proved to be very successful in providing a cost-effective response to Basic Life Support (BLS) and low emergency calls, began in July of 2006 with a unit assigned to Station 203. Chief Beck stated that Phase II of the Pilot Program was implemented in January of 2007 with TRV units assigned to Stations 202 and 205.

Chief Beck noted that although the Council authorized funding of the TRV Pilot Program for fiscal years 2007/08 and 2008/09, the national economic crisis that occurred in September of 2008 required the Fire Department, working closely with Fire Local 2260, to develop a budget

reduction plan that maintained existing service levels. He said that because the TRV Program was designed to improve efficiency and reduce the cost to respond to low emergency calls, their efforts were focused on this area. Chief Beck reported that in the period of January through May of 2009, TRVs responded to over 1,000 calls with an average response time of approximately five minutes and 30 seconds. He added that the response time for units that address higher level emergency calls has improved.

Chief Beck referred to a map indicating the location of TRV responses (see Attachment 4) and stated that the TRV response area has been increased from a radius of three miles to five miles.

In response to a question from Committeemember Higgins, Chief Beck said that the optimal efficiency for a fire truck is 2,500 high-emergency calls per year. He noted that prior to implementing the TRVs, some trucks were responding to more than 3,000 calls per year.

Chief Beck responded to comments by Committeemember Somers and reported that response times in southeast Mesa have improved by an average of 40 seconds, for a response time of approximately 4.5 minutes compared to the Citywide average response time of four minutes. He stated that the redistribution of resources has proven to be very successful. Chief Beck commented on the staffing levels and noted the staffing for Engine 218 has been reassigned to a TRV until Station 218 becomes operational in March of 2010. He noted that at that point the staffing for TRVs will again become an issue.

Responding to a question from Committeemember Higgins, Chief Beck explained that the "leave pool" is staffed by unassigned firefighters who fill in for individuals on vacation and when a temporary replacement is needed, which provides the necessary coverage without incurring overtime expense.

Chief Beck stated that reorganization of the Dispatch Center is very important, and he added that one of the changes implemented in January of this year was the installation of an automated vehicle location (AVL) device on each TRV, which facilitates a computer-aided dispatch of the closest unit and further improves response times. Chief Beck reported that beginning July 6th the Dispatch Center staff will include three Paramedic Captains, who will be able to triage incidents and coach dispatchers. He added that the Police and Fire Departments have cooperated during this transition, and he advised that the Fire Dispatch unit will occupy space on the second floor of the Communications Building, where they will be able to access all of the available technology.

Chairman Kavanaugh suggested that the Committee be invited to tour the Fire Dispatch unit when the reconfiguration has been completed.

In response to a question from Committeemember Higgins, Chief Beck clarified that although three Paramedic Captain positions are permanently assigned to the Dispatch unit, the individuals staffing these positions would change over time.

City Manager Christopher Brady responded to a question from Chairman Kavanaugh by stating that the purchase of additional TRVs remains on hold for the present time. He explained that staff plans to hold discussions with the City's medical transport services provider to clarify the role of each party.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the discount period for purchasing additional TRVs has expired; that the City has a contract with the TRV vendor for the purchase of other apparatus, which may enable the City to negotiate a discount; that utilizing the lighter weight TRVs reduces the maintenance costs on the larger trucks; and that physician assistants and nurse practitioners are able to address more medical issues than paramedics, which often avoids the need to transport the individual to a hospital.

Chief Beck advised that physician assistants and nurse practitioners participating in the Pilot Program were volunteers or were paid a very low wage for their services. He explained that the Fire Department's Medical Director, Dr. Smith, recruited many of these individuals to volunteer for the Pilot Program. Chief Beck expressed the hope that the hospitals would participate in funding the Program because of the benefit the hospitals would derive from the Program.

Chairman Kavanaugh noted that participation by area hospitals could alleviate many of the problems that exist in the East Valley because of the lack of a Level One Trauma Center.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that physicians may have several physician assistants reporting to them; that the TRV Program places the physician assistants at a higher risk with regard to malpractice insurance; that changes would have to be implemented to address the issue of malpractice insurance; and that physician assistants in the TRV Program are able to bill patients for their services.

Chief Beck said that dispatch procedures have been developed and efforts are being made to improve the data collection system. He summarized that each component contributes to the overall effectiveness of the Program.

Chairman Kavanaugh thanked staff for their efforts, and he stated the opinion that this is an important Program for the City. He noted that the Committee would continue to monitor the progress.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Public Safety Committee meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Public Safety Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 30th day of June 2009. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

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Attachments (4)