



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

October 14, 2010

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 October 14, 2010 at 8:11 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Dennis Kavanaugh, Chairperson
Dina Higgins
Scott Somers

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Debbie Spinner
Trisha Sorensen

1. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

2. Hear a presentation, discuss and make a recommendation on a Hotel/Motel ordinance.

Chairperson Kavanaugh noted that since the last discussion of a hotel/motel ordinance at the June 21st Public Safety Committee meeting, staff has met with representatives of the hotel/motel industry to refine the language of the proposed ordinance which is designed to address criminal activity in hotels and motels. He stated that staff was present to provide an update on the issue.

Police Chief Frank Milstead said that Commander Steve Stahl would make the presentation to the Committee.

Commander Stahl addressed the Committee and advised that Robert Brinton, President and CEO of the Mesa Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Gary Levine, General Manager of the Hilton Hotel, were also present to answer any questions. He displayed a PowerPoint presentation (**see Attachment 1**) and stated that as a result of discussions with industry representatives, the Police Department has a greater appreciation for the importance of the tourism industry to the City of Mesa and the importance of maintaining the quality of life for visitors staying in hotels or motels and for residents living in the area. Commander Stahl explained that the transitory nature of the hotel/motel industry makes them susceptible to criminal activity.

Commander Stahl outlined areas of agreement between the industry and the Police Department, such as verification of government-issued photo identification and the signature of the person renting a room, and in accordance with standard industry practice, obtaining the customer's complete name, address and signature and maintaining the information for one year. He added that the hotel/motel employees are also asked to obtain the license plate number and the make and model of the vehicle parked on the premises. Commander Stahl noted that the majority of the industry already obtains and maintains this type of information. He stated that the Police Department and the industry representatives have agreed to train employees on the manner in which to properly verify identification. Commander Stahl advised that the proposed Hotel/Motel Ordinance prohibits a guest from registering under a false name or providing false identification and establishes a Hotel/Motel Review Board with authority to review and resolve civil citations related to the ordinance. He said that the Board would have access to the Police Department's monthly reports of crimes and calls for service.

In response to a question from Committeemember Somers, Commander Stahl explained that a call for service initiated by a hotel or motel to report a guest presenting false identification or suspected criminal activity would not count against the property. He added that an action initiated by the Police Department to prevent or in response to criminal activity would count against the property.

Responding to a question from Committeewoman Higgins, Commander Stahl stated that the objective is to move poorly operated properties into compliance with the ordinance and industry standards, thereby reducing the number of Police calls for service. He explained that the ordinance would hold poorly operated properties accountable.

Chairperson Kavanaugh asked if the Review Board could provide recommendations to the Police Department regarding future changes to industry standards and/or technology.

Commander Stahl responded that this subject was discussed with the stakeholder group. He said that as paperless systems or other technology is developed, the Board could make recommendations as to the manner in which information is obtained and any proposed amendments to the ordinance.

Mr. Brinton said that the industry has a good working relationship with the Police Department. He reported that a notice of a new policy was received this week from the Hilton Hotel corporate headquarters stating that effective October 1, 2010, guests at all Hilton Hotels in this country are no longer required to sign registration cards or show photo identification when the reservation was made in advance with a credit card. Mr. Brinton stated the opinion that individuals participating in the Hilton Honors Program or other hotel rewards programs are not typically the people about which the Police have concerns.

Committeewoman Higgins suggested that even though a registration card is not required, guests could be asked for identification similar to the identification process required for air travel.

Mr. Brinton advised that the Hilton policy is intended to be nationwide, and he said that he is never asked for additional identification when registering as a member of the Hilton Honors Program. He added that tourism is a key business for the City of Mesa, and he suggested that the ordinance should be adaptable to advancements in technology. Mr. Brinton stated that the

identification requirement could discourage new hotels and motels from investing in the City of Mesa.

Commander Stahl reported that staff is working with the City Attorney's Office to develop an ordinance that encapsulates the objectives of the Police Department and the industry.

City Attorney Debbie Spinner stated that because this is the first time her office was made aware of the Hilton Hotel corporate policy change, additional time is required to review the information. She noted that the other issue to be addressed is "best practices." She suggested that the Committee and the Council determine the minimum requirements to include in an ordinance that is enforceable in the City of Mesa and that, in addition to an ordinance, the industry representatives and the Police Department work together to establish a "best practices" guideline.

Committeemember Somers stated that he would prefer an ordinance, and he noted that other communities have successfully utilized this type of ordinance.

Ms. Spinner clarified that the "best practices" guideline to which she referred would be an area addressed by the Hotel/Motel Review Board in addition to minimum requirements established by an ordinance.

Chief Milstead noted that Hilton and other hotels capture a great amount of information about their rewards program customers, and that the information could easily be tracked by the Police Department when necessary. He said that "lower end" motels operating on a cash basis do not typically have rewards programs.

Mr. Brinton noted that a majority of calls for service are generated by lower-end, budget properties that lack quality security systems and may have poorly trained employees.

It was moved by Committeewoman Higgins, seconded by Committeemember Somers, that staff continue to develop the language for a hotel/motel ordinance and that the proposal move forward with a recommendation for approval to the full Council for review at a Study Session.

Mr. Brinton expressed concern that the wording in the proposed ordinance is too broad with regard to the persons authorized to inspect industry records.

Ms. Spinner explained that the wording of the proposed ordinance was intended to allow for inspections by Code Compliance or Fire Department personnel in addition to the Police Department.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the public would be more comfortable if sworn officers were the sole inspectors of records; and that the authorized inspectors could be designated as Public Safety personnel (both Police and Fire).

Chairperson Kavanaugh called for the vote.

Carried unanimously.

3. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Public Safety Committee meeting adjourned at 8:44 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 14th day of October 2010. 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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Attachment (1)

HOTEL - MOTEL ORDINANCE

**Presentation to the Public Safety Committee
October 14, 2010**



1

PURPOSE

- **Public Safety Committee asked the Police Department (Department or MPD) to research the possibility of enacting a Hotel-Motel Ordinance for Mesa (City).**
- **The Department has researched similar ordinances in other cities and has held meetings over the past one and one-half years with representatives of the Hotel-Motel industry to jointly create a Hotel-Motel Ordinance for the City.**

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BACKGROUND

- Hotels, motels, and the tourism industry are very important to the City.
- Equally important is maintaining the quality of life through improved public safety for citizens living, working or visiting our City.
- The transitory nature of the Hotel-Motel business tends to increase their susceptibility to criminal activity.
- Currently, the City does not have a Hotel-Motel Ordinance to assist Police Officers as a crime-fighting tool.

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ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

- A Hotel-Motel Ordinance would:
 - × Reduce calls for Police Service, which would allow the Department to redirect its limited resources
 - × Discourage career criminals from utilizing these rooms for illicit and illegal activities
 - × Allow Hotel-Motel industry to self-regulate
 - × Improve conditions for Hotel-Motel industry customers and community members because of improved premises safety

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CURRENT SITUATION

- **Citywide, some hotels-motels generate repeated calls for police service and complaints of criminal activity.**
- **In 2009, 6% of all warrant arrests and 4% of all drug arrests in the City occurred at hotels-motels.**
 - **The Top-10 hotel-motel “problem” properties account for 49% of warrant arrests and 64% of drug arrests of all hotel and motels.**

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CURRENT PRACTICES

- **Some of the current practices that impact effective policing and encourage criminal activity in and around the hotel-motel area include:**
 - **not obtaining identification,**
 - **failing to maintain accurate records, and**
 - **renting rooms by the hour or monthly.**
- **Such practices have contributed to a variety of unlawful activities that negatively impact our community, such as prostitution and soliciting.**

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- **A City Hotel-Motel Ordinance is recommended that would assist police efforts to ensure that the quality of life of citizens living, working or visiting our City is not compromised by criminal activity**
- **The Hotel-Motel Ordinance seeks to balance the needs of the Hotel-Motel industry with the Department's responsibility to safe-guard the public**

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ORDINANCE ELEMENTS

- The Hotel-Motel Ordinance would require operators to:
 - + Verify identification of person renting room
 - + Obtain license plate number as well as make and model vehicle parked on hotel/motel premises.
 - + Maintain accurate and complete records for MPD inspection.
- Requiring identification will discourage persons who commit crimes from using these rooms for the purpose of committing crimes.

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ORDINANCE ELEMENTS

- The Hotel-Motel Ordinance would also require that a hotel or motel place certain obligations on a guest such as:
 - Prohibition from registering under false name
 - Prohibition from providing false identification.

- The ordinance would establish a Hotel-Motel Review Board
 - Option to send first time offenders to the board
 - Authority to receive and resolve civil citations related to the ordinance

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RECOMMENDATION

The MPD requests that the Public Safety Committee approve moving forward with the recommended Hotel/Motel Ordinance

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