

Minutes of Committee
Monday, February 9, 2009
7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

- 1) Trap-Neuter-Return of Feral Cats Policy
- 2) Draft Report: “No-Idle” Reduction Program
- 3) Elmhurst Wireless Radio Alarm Network
- 4) Other Business
 - A. Southside Robbery Update
 - B. Stop Sign Requests
 - C. Review of Pending List
 - D. Update of Bensenville Fire Protection District #1

Members Present: Mulliner, Bram, and Nybo

Elected Official Present: None

City Staff Present: Neubauer, Kopp, Bacidore, Doherty (part), Spiroff, Novak, Borchert (part), Panico

Guest: Jeff Houston, Mimi Black, Diane Wells, M.J. Dachtera, Kim Giazzar, Ted Semon, Tammy McAuley, Deb Ronnebeck

DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS:

1. Mimi Black was the spokesperson for the seven member group, the Trap-Neuter-Return feral cat (TNR) initiative. Black addressed the Committee providing an overview of TNR materials submitted to both Committee and Staff. Black explained the TNR initiative is a public private partnership and is a two phase program. The first phase involves the City creating and enacting a TNR Ordinance. The second phase would involve volunteers beginning the process of TNR with established feral cat colonies. Mr. Borchert asked a clarifying question regarding who would be responsible for the veterinarian costs associated with the program. Black advised for the pilot program they would be asking the City to finance the veterinarian costs, which is estimated at \$60.00 per cat. The groups' long term goal is to establish themselves as 501-C-3 status, allowing them to accept private contributions and donations to pay for veterinarian expenses. Black further proposed this financial support (seed money) for the pilot TNR program could be equivalent to the amount the City spent in 2007 in trapping stray cats. Bram asked about other municipalities who currently have a TNR Ordinance and program that could be reviewed. Black advised that New Jersey and New York City have established programs. Lake, Cook, and McHenry counties support the TNR programs and the group currently works with Bensenville, (however unofficially) also that LaGrange has a TNR program. Mulliner and Bram expressed some concern about starting a new program for the City to financially support when due to the economic crisis other well established City programs have been reduced or eliminated. Black suggests a reallocation of funds from the Animal Control account to finance the TNR program. The discussion then focused on the legalities of allowing unlicensed volunteers to trap in violation of State Law and any civil liability the City would incur, specifically the volunteers could be interpreted as City contractors. Those concerns were expressed by both City Attorney Spiroff and Chief Neubauer. Subsequent to further discussion, the Committee directed the TNR group to research other Illinois Municipalities who currently have a TNR Ordinance and an active TNR program that may have already addressed and resolved their concerns, to coordinate with Staff on their findings and report back to Committee for further review and analysis of those sample ordinances and programs.
2. Subsequent to a brief discussion, the Committee signed the report.
3. Chief Kopp gave the Committee a summary of the Wireless Radio Alarm Network detailing the benefits over the current direct connect system and the wireless network cost structure. The discussion then focused on the wireless network cost structure and the wireless infrastructure expenses. Subsequent to further discussion, the Committee directed Staff to rewrite the report reflecting a subscriber installation fee which would cover the initial wireless infrastructure cost. That this fee would be reviewed annually. The Committee advised they would phone in their signatures so the report could be on the next Council consent agenda.

4. Other Business

A. Houston was present and wished to address the Committee regarding a robbery which occurred the evening of February 6th at the Subway restaurant located at 1034 S. York Rd. Houston opened reviewing his concerns expressed during a public forum at the January 20th, City council meeting regarding business robberies in the 6th ward. Houston advised he is running for Alderman for the 6th ward and is dissatisfied with the police department's response to four (4) robberies over the past 10 months. He further related that residents have approached him regarding their fears and concerns. Chief Neubauer responded to Houston and the Committee by reviewing the police department's response including the February 6th incident. Chief Neubauer advised that the first officer arrived at the Subway restaurant in 40 seconds after being dispatched, along with a total of 9 officers including a K-9 unit. The police department followed up with Crime Hazard Alerts and individual visits to 30 south side businesses. Chief Neubauer also spoke to the three other robberies and those investigations revealed that those were random crimes with no direct relationship to one another or specific pattern; they were clusters of criminal activity. Nybo and Mulliner commented that a responsibility of an Alderman is to bring concerns of citizens to staff's attention. However, once factual information is obtained, it is also a responsibility to correct any misperceptions with factual and accurate information. The discussion ended with Houston thanking the Committee for their time.

B. Kopp advised the Committee of a couple of stop sign requests for the next meeting agenda.

C. Mulliner requested a review of the Committee's pending list be placed on the next meeting agenda.

D. Bram inquired about the status of the Bensenville Fire Protection District #1 issue. Kopp and Spiroff advised there are ongoing discussions.

The Committee was adjourned at 20:51 p.m.
Submitted by Dominic Panico, Deputy Chief