

Minutes of the Public Safety Committee Meeting
Thursday, June 24, 2010

This meeting was held in the City Hall auditorium and began a few minutes after 5:00 PM. It was called to order by Chairperson Wanda Doyle. Present were Frank Shuman and Shirley Sessions. In addition to the above elected officials, City Manager Diane Schleicher, Interim Police Chief Bob Bryson, Fire Chief Skip Sasser, Major Chris Case, Joe Wilson and Jimmy Brown were present. Jonathan Lynne arrived during the course of the meeting.

Under the topic of New Business, the Chairperson introduced Doctor Jerry Williams, a resident of Tybee Island and practicing medical doctor. In a short address, he expressed his desire to see an Emergency Medical Stabilization Unit be made available on Tybee Island for those times when normal medical transportation systems might not be available, or available in time, to save an injured person from dying. He reported that he had personally been called three times in the last year to assist with a medical emergency because the MedStar ambulance was late in arriving at the scene. He also noted that two-thirds of the times the Life Star helicopter had been requested in 2009, it had been unable for various reasons to respond. Chief Sasser voiced concerns over liability issues to the city, and pointed out that they had plans in place to handle such emergencies. Commander Brian Riley from MedStar spoke now, describing the resources available to that organization, and reiterating the fact that, by law, ambulances had to take their patients to a hospital. He pointed out that they provide an Advanced Life Support ambulance to Tybee twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Dr. Bromberg, a trauma surgeon from Memorial Hospital, spoke now, saying that an EMSU could not provide anything in the form of emergency services that was not already available. Shirley Sessions remarked that we needed a strategic plan in place to address this issue. The chairperson said that it would be brought before the council to see what direction we wanted to go on this issue.

Under the topic on Old Business, the following topics were discussed:

The chairperson asked for an update from the police department on the status of the desire to increase police presence on the beach and the south end business district. Interim Chief Bryson described the plans for police coverage of the July 3rd Fireworks Event, including the request for cooperation from Metro police and the Sheriff's Department. Chief Sasser described the preparations his department would take to ensure a fire-safe fireworks event.

On the issue of parade safety, it was put forth that there were now rules in place for the following problems: No alcohol consumption on floats, no throwing of items from floats, more volunteers from each parade organization to assist with traffic and crowd control, and the need for earlier starts to most parades. This last item generated discourse on the various parades and what was best for each one in terms of weekday and starting time. It was pointed out the Beach Bum Parade has been the most difficult to control, but that its problems would be addressed in the future.

Mr. O. R. Hunter now gave a Power Point presentation on the state of beach signage, describing how the current system could be greatly improved to increase public safety, particularly on the extreme south end of the island. It was generally agreed, after the viewing the presentation, that Tybee needed to invest in better signs, but that funds for such work might pose a problem. The Chairperson asked that more information and material be brought to the next PSC meeting, at which time the committee will make a recommendation to Council regarding this subject.

Jimmy Brown gave an update on the progress of planning for the July 14th hurricane evacuation exercise.

Joe Wilson described the issue of a sidewalk on 18th Street between Strand and Butler. He said that because of utility poles, the north side of the street would be best. The new walk could tie in with sidewalks already on Strand and Butler. He estimated a probable cost for the project as being between fifty and sixty thousand dollars.

The City Manager now gave an update on the project of crosswalks on Van Horn at the location of the nursing homes, and Joe Wilson stated that he wanted crosswalk signs on every intersection on Butler Avenue, and that this might be accomplished by the July 4th weekend.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at about 6:30 PM.