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Community Facilities & Services

Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Time: 7:00p.m.

Location: Daniel Boone Regional Library, Columbia

Facilitator: Louesa Runge Fine

Present: Dick Potter, Susan Marshall-Roberts, Ibrahim Khaleel, Steve Sheltmire, Ken Schneeberger, Melissa Carr

Guests: Randy Boehm, Chief of Police - Columbia Police Department  
Wanda Northway, representing the Downtown Topic Group

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 20 2007, 6:00p.m., Lange Middle School

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## **I. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting**

Meetings from the last meeting were not available, and so will be approved at the next meeting.

## **II. Key Meeting Discussion Topics**

- After responding to a couple of questions from guest Wanda Northway regarding law enforcement issues in downtown Columbia, Chief Boehm responded to the current goals and strategies, and responded to questions:
  - He noted that traffic engineers are part of the Public Works department, and have a role with traffic laws/enforcement as well as the Columbia Police Department.
  - He shared thoughts regarding the effectiveness of the radar trailers that are utilized as a means of reducing motorists' speed.
  - Susan inquired about why the traffic hotline number is not publicized more. Chief Boehm indicated this is partially due to staffing concerns, but expressed an openness to additional public education efforts.
  - Chief Boehm said the department is not severely understaffed, but are somewhat limited. He referenced the CPD shifts, and the number of officers working each, as well as total coverage for Columbia during the day and night (10 patrolling during the day, and 15-18 during a portion of the night – up to 3:00a.m.).
  - The traffic patrol has been increased and now is up to five: three handle traffic and traffic investigation, and two are full-time motorcycle patrol (part of the five).
  - Steve inquired about the "red light cameras." The Chief advised these are "pretty expensive" and legislation impacting the cameras has been a challenge (one bill would lead to revenue going to schools – due to the cost, revenue would be needed for administration/maintenance of the cameras). The cameras would only be used on certain high crash

intersections. Only five or six would be purchased initially. It would be a non-points offense for anyone cited as a result of the camera, which would go to the owner of the vehicle (another reason why the cameras are controversial). This is due to the cameras only clearly photographing the license plate (not able to identify drivers). He indicated the cameras are more educative and preventative – not the answer, but a part of the answer. Tickets would still have to be handwritten, so there would still be staffing needs. Dick inquired about the additional controversy due to contractors.

- In regard to the goal involving increased public education, the Chief referenced officers who work with public education efforts, and said that although he believes they do a good job, having additional staff would certainly help. However, if he had more staff, they wouldn't be devoted to educational efforts, but to working the road and addressing crime.
- When asked how many additional officers he'd like to have, Chief Boehm talked about the different methods to determine adequate staffing for communities. One common method is to have one officer for every 1,000 residents, but that formula isn't always effective. He noted that some communities close to our size have fewer officers but less crime, and others have more officers, but more crime. He said response times do concern him – these aren't bad, but he'd like the response times to be better.
- In regard to a Review Board, Chief Boehm said the current system can be improved, but he believes it works. He says the efficiency and transparency of the current response to complaints needs to be improved, but this is complicated by personnel issues. He hopes to have a new internal review process in another year. He wants to provide the community with information about discipline of officers and complaint issues, but doesn't want Human Resources violations. He recognizes that some in the community are distrustful how they police (monitor) themselves and wants to continue to work on this. He indicated the first question should be "Do we have a need for a review board?," not "what should it look like?" He doesn't want officers to "disengage" due to concerns about reviews of their actions by someone they don't know and who doesn't understand their job. Across the country, there are very few review boards; these are typically found in larger, metro areas. Those found in smaller areas were generally instituted as the result of major improper conduct, such as the use of force.
- Steve inquired about the formation of an Internal Affairs unit, and Chief Boehm confirmed that they are considering this. This was referenced in the Thompson Report, and would be titled "Professional Standards," handling not only complaints but also positive feedback. Today, if a citizen has a problem or concern to express, they can talk to any supervisor. With a "Professional Standards" unit, there would be clarity around who the complaints should go to, there would be one place of "intake," and there could be consistency in monitoring how complaints are handled. He hoped the above would alleviate the discussion regarding review boards. Major complaints would be investigated by officers who'd be removed from their other duties, would investigate, the supervisor would then make a recommendation,

and the Chief would make the decision regarding appropriate discipline.

- The current status of the Thompson Report is that the CPD responded to the City Council 90 days after the report came out, and will continue to respond every 90 days. Chief Boehm said Dr. Thompson had good suggestions, including things they'd not thought of. He indicated the CPD situation isn't unique. A Citizen's Review Board was not part of Thompson's report. He noted that any outside review board would still be looking at information provided from the department.
  - A budget request for additional officers/staff will be made (occurs in October). If the Professional Standards unit was established, new officers would replace experienced officer moved into that unit.
  - Chief Boehm noted that another option would be "Audit Boards," which are less powerful "review boards," but still allow citizen input. He said that any time a CEO isn't holding employees' feet to the fire, there are going to be problems. There's also a problem if a Review Board reverses the discipline a Chief has handed down, and again, there's a problem if officers begin disengaging ("that's a 'hot' call – I think I'll avoid it").
  - The question was raised as to whether there had been discussion about additional precincts due to geographical growth of the city. The Chief indicated the additional construction would require a bond issue, and there would be additional staffing tied to more locations. He indicated by this fall they'd be moving to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (Daniel Boone Building?), which will help with communication and other issues, but not eliminate all problems. Some of the CPD staff are currently located on the top floor of the old Lifestyles Furniture location. He indicated significantly larger communities (Springfield, MO being an example) still have their entire police department at the same location, vs. precincts. He agreed that geographically there are benefits, but financially, services have to be duplicated which creates budgetary issues.
  - Chief Boehm indicated a willingness to meet with us again, and/or to respond to questions submitted via email.
- Susan shared some additional information about contacts she's made to the CPD.
  - Ken had met with Melissa Carr, Library Director, and shared a handout to summarize their conversation.
    - Melissa responded to questions regarding the library board, and the law regarding the operating paid by residents located within the 1965 city limits. This affects all communities in Missouri, is an extremely complex law, and was a decision of the state legislature.
    - Melissa discussed what action the board is taking in response to the defeat of the recent ballot question which would have funded additional library services and new branch libraries. Ibrahim inquired as to whether meetings had/would be held for citizen feedback, and Melissa confirmed that meetings have been held, and input solicited. She shared that every location/branch wouldn't be able to provide what the main branch (Broadway) offers, yet many desire the same

services at any new location. The board intends to do another survey to determine why people didn't vote for the proposal.

- o Melissa shared information about services the library offers which many aren't aware of, such as bookmobile visits (including "Lunch in the Park" on Mondays), the availability of a smaller bookmobile, and working with Boone County Group Homes. The summer edition of "Cover to Cover," the DBRL publication, was distributed.

There was some discussion regarding whether additional guests/resources should be invited to our next meeting. City Manager Watkins or Assistant City Manager Paula Hertwig Hopkins were both suggested. It was decided that the next meeting should be devoted to work on action plans, but we might want to invite one of these individuals to the following meeting to provide feedback to tentative action plans, or respond to questions raised as the action plans are developed.

### **III. Motions and Votes**

No motions were made and no votes were taken.

### **IV. Actions to be Taken**

Louesa reminded the group that our action plan needs to be developed by next month. In order to accomplish this, she asked that the sample action plans, the Thompson Report, the websites Susan shared at the last meeting, and our own goals/strategies be reviewed.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 20, from 6:00-8:00pm, at Lange Middle School.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00p.m.