

Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting, March 8, 2017, 7 pm

Members in attendance: Felice Borisy-Rudin, Josh Sotos, Tim Crisp, Cara Silverman.
Staff in attendance: Karl Frantz; Police Chief Pine, David Sykes.
Various residents in attendance.

Minutes moved and accepted (Tim Crisp moved, Josh Sotos 2nd)

Item 5. Discussion of forum. Josh Sotos felt the feedback in the audience was fairly balanced, makes him feel that if this were to go further it should go to referendum, rather than just at the committee level. He thinks it is a hot topic, and would need the viewpoint of a larger audience. Tim Crisp spent a lot of time reviewing the emails and notes. It's clearly very controversial with many heartfelt views on both sides. He doesn't think there is a successful middle-ground that can be negotiated. He felt that there was a consensus of the experts on owned cats (as opposed to feral cats). He grew up in a rural community in the State of Oregon, where a number of cats brought "presents." So this was a very educational forum for him. From his standpoint, he heard of many more negative consequences of at large cats than he had been cognizant of, such as feces, worms, ineffectiveness of bells, and dangers to cats themselves. We don't as a Village condone dogs or other domesticated animals, or our children, or ourselves to roam around the Village onto other people's property. He believes that a compelling case has been made to change the ordinance. Although we won't have consensus, he believes we need to do the right thing. Tim also reviewed the ordinances of the County and neighboring Villages, cities and towns. With one or two exceptions, all of them outright prohibit at-large cats. We are truly the outlier in this. Cara agrees that it is a contentious issue, and people have strong opinions on both sides. If we go forward a more phased approach would be useful. Felice provides history of ordinance. Felice suggests that this committee focus on property & privacy rights, possibly treating cats similarly to dogs, plan commission on fences, and that parks focus on the environmental issues. Cara asks what would enforcement of this ordinance require? Karl says, it would be complaint driven. Tim asks how enforcement works elsewhere. Karl says he believes it is mostly complaint driven. Chief Pine says county people are not doing a lot of cat stuff. Humane Society is doing most of that. Tim said one rural village made an exception between treatment of dogs and cats, which had nuisance cats required to be under control of their owners. Felice discussed several related statutes, chapters 173 (Humane Officers), 174 (Dogs), and 951 (Crimes against animals). Tim recommends that we have a public hearing to allow people to express their opinions to the Board. Karl says in reference to the panel, that he had trouble finding an expert that would agree that cats should run at large. Tim responds that while an expert might provide information on health issues, the health expert isn't going to have much information to share about the property rights issues.

Josh Sotos moves, and Tim Crisp seconds to recommend to the Board that a public hearing be held on the matter, with the Board afterward providing direction on whether or not to amend the ordinance.

6. United We Stand. Chief Pine says that he will follow the examples of Sheriff Mahoney and Chief Koval, and provide cooperation with ICE only when legally required to do so. While our police are not calling ICE, ICE has come to our Village. ICE has taken 3 people from a construction site on a Sunday (ICE came out of Milwaukee). Currently, ICE is only getting involved when they people are involved in serious crimes.

9. Medians and safety issues. Chief says there have been as many as 5 people hanging out on the medians, including at the corner of Rose Place. The University Avenue and Midvale intersection is included in the Madison ordinance, which has been enacted, but will be enforced beginning April 10, 2017. One option is for us to mirror the Madison ordinance and insert our own street intersections. Chief recommends we do it for all our University Avenue intersections on the Shorewood Hills side. Tim says we have people out there who have a number of mental health and substance abuse issues. Chief says that mental health and drug addiction are separate issues. He thinks that most of the people who are staying on the medians are addicts, and one is an alcoholic. He also believes that 9/10 times there are mental health issues on top of it. Josh says that it is becoming a safety issue: he recently saw one person passed out on the bike path with a cart full of things; he's recently seen new graffiti by the bank wall; he's seen one person fall into the street in front of him. Chief says the homeless people are another problem. We have a lot of problems with homeless people. Resources are plugged up. If police have to deal with a mental health issue it can take many hours outside of the Village. On related issue, our officers are not Narcan equipped, because station 9 is so close, and because the department would have to have a medical director to back it up. Every time we have had overdoses, Station 9 has brought them back. Review of Madison sec. 12.325. Sent to Village Attorney to draft parallel ordinance for our University Avenue intersections.

7. Review of MFD reports and EMS reports. David Sykes presents and wants to know whether we like the format. It's a searchable Excel format. Appears to be typical, maybe a slightly larger call volume. We used to run 12 ambulance and an average of 3 or 4 fire per month in the Village. So we're running slightly higher. List includes Hospital and VA. Felice recommends that we keep the street number out to preserve privacy.

8. Police Reports and Incidents. Chief Pine presents summary for 2016. David suggests changing to "monthly activity summary." Chief says that there have been increases in shop-lifting and credit card thefts.

Next meeting, April 3, at 7 pm.

Agenda for next meeting: Panhandling ordinance; Opioids and Narcan -- risk management; Compare 2015 and 2016 policing activity totals; Bee-keeping ordinance.

Minutes drafted and submitted by Trustee Felice Borisy-Rudin.