

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY

July 26, 1993

Committee Members Present:

James Hayes, Michael Pollock, Marya Ryan, Clifford Singer (Chairman), John Taylor and Joseph Whelan

Committee Members Absent:

Joan Barr

Staff Members Present:

Bruce Walden, Jack Waaler, April Getchius, Willard Schlieter, Bruce Stoffel, Phyllis Clark and Mayor Satterthwaite

Others Present:

Members of the News Media

Meeting Location:

Urbana City Council Chambers

There being a quorum, Chairman Singer called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda and Staff Report

Mr. Whelan requested that added security at the Charter House Inn be added to the agenda as item 5a.

Mayor Satterthwaite commended the Police Department and all those who worked on the Charter House Inn investigation for their superior work.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Hayes moved to approve the minutes of the June 28, 1993 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ryan and carried by a voice vote.

Petitions and Communications

There were none.

Ordinance Granting A Special Use Permit To Establish A Parking Lot
(Plan Case 1509-SU-93 - 808 S. Lincoln)

Following a discussion of who would be able to rent the spaces on the left side of Lincoln Avenue, Mr. Pollock moved to accept the Plan Commission recommendation with the exception of the covenant preventing rental for spaces to be used by customers and those retail establishments. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried by a voice vote.

Mr. Pollock moved to send An Ordinance Granting A Special Use Permit To Establish A Parking Lot (Plan Case 1509-SU-93 - 808 S. Lincoln) as amended to the City Council Meeting on August 2, 1993. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried by a voice vote.

Report on Railroad Right-Of-Way Disposition

Community Development Director/City Planner April Getchius stated that there had been a neighborhood meeting at which Staff had explained the various options which are:

1. The City could do nothing.
2. The City could acquire the right-of-way, correct the grading and drainage and convey it to the property owners.
3. The property owners could approach the railroad as a group and acquire the property.
4. The railroad could be converted to bicycle trails.

The overwhelming response at the meeting was for the City to acquire the right-of-way.

Since all of the people concerned with the railroad right-of-way were not present at the meeting, a mailing with post cards enclosed containing the above options will be sent out the week of August 2, 1993. After those concerned have selected their response and returned the post cards, Ms. Getchius will return to the Committee with the results.

Review of the Police Department Positions and Expectations

Police Chief Willard Schlieter highlighted the items that are under progress in the Police Department. He pointed out that

the Community Policing Program has a very broad scope and one individual might have difficulty in achieving this position. He further pointed out that this is a learning situation for the police department and it might be uphill for awhile and the actual job duties may need to be modified and realigned.

Chief Schlieter indicated that department staffing is presently holding the department back from implementing the new programs, as it is five (5) officers below staff. The department expects to be back to full staff on or about the middle of January.

The Police Department recommends that a Community Advisory Panel be put into operation in September. These people would be appointed by the Mayor and should live in Census Tract 53. These people would help further define the goals.

Chief Schlieter indicated that he would like to have the Community Policing Officer identified by mid-August so that training can be started.

The Police Department will be sending three people to a training course in Washington, D.C. Bruce Stoffel from Community Development will also be attending that training.

Further discussion focused upon selection of the Juvenile Officer and the procedure involved. This officer would be mainly involved with the high school and middle school problems allowing more time for the patrol officers to be on the streets.

It is anticipated that the additional police officer will be put on the second watch, which is the busiest with calls for services and increased activity.

Lieutenant Fitzpatrick advised the Committee as to how the Community Policing Officer would be utilized during the second shift in Census Tract 53.

Further debate centered around the Juvenile Officer's duties and responsibilities as well as the physical location of that officer.

Following further debate, the discussion turned to the problems at the Charter House Inn. Mr. Whelan inquired about the possibility of staff investigating the security of the Charter House Inn or any other location that becomes a major crime problem, with some possibility of regulation through health and safety regulations or other City inspections; whatever it takes to maintain the safety of the people in the City.

Mr. Whelan moved to inquire of Staff to review the possibility of initiating some regulation that might improve security at locations where there is a great deal of police activity. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor.

The pursuant discussion focused on special security and other regulations which might help control the various problems at locations with extreme problems.

Following further debate, the motion for Staff review of regulations carried by a voice vote.

City Expansion Discussion/Elevator Decision

The question before the Council/Committee is whether or not it can afford to/and is in a position to embark on a construction project for the Municipal Building with which the elevator repair could be tied in?

The following discussion centered around the space needs of the City, focusing on the need for extra space in the Police Department, how much the City is willing to spend on the project and how the tax rate will be affected.

Further discussion was focused on how much money was available within the means that are available with the present tax rate and how to maintain an adequate level of reserves.

Mr. Pollock moved to forward the City Expansion Discussion/Elevator Decision to the Committee on Administration and Finance meeting on August 9, 1993. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried by a voice vote.

Discussion of Ordinance Violation Procedures

The question before the Committee is whether or not the City of Urbana should adopt procedures similar to those of the City of Champaign for ordinance enforcement.

City Attorney Jack Waaler reported that he had observed Champaign's procedures for a couple of years and it seems to be working well. This procedure gives the City the ability to handle more minor violations without going to court. This doesn't deprive anyone of the opportunity of going to court if they feel the charge is wrong. Legal staff favors this procedure and would like to have it put in place no later than October 1, 1993.

The discussion focused on the type of ordinances that would be covered under these procedures. Following debate, Mr. Pollock moved to send the issue of ordinance violation procedures

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to the City Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whelan.

Following further debate, Mr. Pollock withdrew the motion to restate it as follows - To ask staff to go ahead and draw up the ordinance violation system and bring with that a recommendation based on Legal and Police Department opinions on what the specific levels of violation should be and bring it back to review at the Committee of Administration and Finance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whelan. Following debate, the motion carried by a voice vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chairman Singer declared the meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Taylor
Secretary

*This meeting was taped.
**This meeting was broadcast on cable television.