



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes ANTI-GRAFFITI POLICY COMMITTEE

ALD. TONY ZIELINSKI, CHAIR
Ald. Robert Donovan, Vice-Chair
**Ald. Terry Witkowski, Michael Miller, Reggie Moore, and Dave
Rotter**

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Monday, March 1, 2010

10:30 AM

Room 301-B, City Hall

Meeting convened: 10:38 A.M.

Present 4 - Witkowski, Zielinski, Miller and Rotter

Excused 3 - Donovan, VACANCY and Moore

1. Review and approval of the minutes of the September 28, 2009 meeting

Ald. Witkowski moved for approval. There were no objections.

2. Department of Neighborhood Services Update

Sharon Blando and Tom Mishefske, Department of Neighborhood Services, provided graphs related to graffiti incidents (Exhibit 1). Graffiti incidents are actually beginning to decline and the Department has begun to do self-initiated inspections, which should increase the number of reported graffiti events. The Department will track which graffiti is reported by department staff versus that which is reported by citizens. As the nuisance/vector inspectors are working throughout the city, they report graffiti, which has resulted in a more timely clean-up. Most of the graffiti are smaller tags, rather than large tags. An individual who was previously doing large tags has been arrested. In Riverwest, a number of graffiti incidents have occurred that are anti-police on business buildings and street furniture, particularly from Humboldt to Locust and to Center Street. Because Wisconsin's felony level is \$2,500 worth of damage versus \$300 in Illinois, out-of-state taggers do come here to practice prior to returning to their home states.

Ms. Blando noted that that city had temporarily halted its outreach effort to students, but that is now recommenced. There is a jingle contest, poster contest and also cross-language efforts. National Ace Hardware is also providing coupons for graffiti-removal products and technical advice related to graffiti removal. There are 11 business improvement districts using city matching funds to remove graffiti and the city always encourages others to apply for these funds. The District Attorney's Office has been very good at providing the city with restitution forms so that it can submit its costs to the court and all the related information for the pending cases.

3. Police Department Update

Assistant Chief Gregory Habeck, Donald Gaglione, Tom Kopseck, Mike Lelinski and Peter Graber present from the Police Department. The Department has identified an internal communications gap related to MPD/DNS communication and a police officer has now been appointed as the point person to work on graffiti issues and will coordinate among all seven police districts. The most recent assessment of graffiti noted that over 50% of it occurs on the south side and lies within police district 2. Captain Gaglione is the police representative for this body and for Council members. The department believes that the taggers and the gang-related graffiti are separate entities and will be handled differently. The department tries to remove gang graffiti as quickly as possible through Operation Payback to minimize the gang's power.

The Department has been researching technology, particularly a program called Merlin. This technology can sense the sound and smell of graffiti and notifies the police through a Blackberry. The units cost \$1,500 each and are battery operated; the department is researching how to pay for this technology. The department is also working on how to identify taggers citywide and is looking at purchasing cameras and a service to analyze if specific graffiti events are related. The department's current technology just does not have the capacity to track graffiti and the use of a private company to analyze specific graffiti would be a stop-gap measure until the city can get that technology. The department is exploring different technological solutions to the city's graffiti problems.

Ald. Zielinski encouraged the department to review its current budget for ways to pay for the technology needed - an approximately \$7,500 cost.

Ms. Blando came to the table and noted that having a specific officer assigned to graffiti will be a boon to the city's anti-graffiti efforts and will result in increased cross-department cooperation. She noted that gangs don't do a lot of graffiti unless they're trying to move into a new territory. Approximately 85% of the graffiti is related to taggers and 15% is related to gangs. The most prevalent graffiti is done with markers and is small, according to Ms. Blando.

Ald. Zielinski said that he would like to be notified of any graffiti-related hearings so he can attend, particularly that of two individuals who came from Chicago to tag.

4. Municipal Court Update

Kristine Hinrichs present for the Municipal Court. She provided members with her report for 2009 (Exhibit 2).

5. Department of Public Works Update

Paul Novotny said that the Department isn't out on sweeps at this time of the year and they cannot do a lot of blasting due to the cold temperatures. There's presently a two week backlog, but with this week's warm weather, they'll be working on removing a lot of the tags in Riverwest. They've also added a temporary painter to free up other staff to remove graffiti.

6. District Attorney's Office Update on the status of graffiti cases

No one present from this office.

7. Milwaukee Christian Center Update

No one present from the Christian Center.

8. Update from business improvement districts related to their graffiti levels and graffiti removal efforts

Maurice Williams, Business Improvement District #37, said that he takes photographs of all the graffiti in his district and he then creates an e-mail work order that he sends to the Milwaukee Christian Center so they can remove the graffiti. Overall, he is seeing less graffiti in his district.

9. Update from private entities receiving city funds for anti-graffiti efforts

Joe Kabacheck from Community Partners/Safe and Sound, said that in 2009 Safe and Sound began working with Operation Payback, which has resulted in an expansion of the area where graffiti is removed. In 2009, the program removed 109,140 square feet of graffiti (490 graffiti items) and worked collaboratively with other agencies for both outreach and removal efforts. The program has offenders who need to meet their community work hours and they have them remove graffiti, as well as attach garage numbers and remove garbage. He provided information on Safe and Sound and Operation Payback to committee members (Exhibit 3). In 2010, they'll be working with the District Attorney's Office in victim impact meetings and will be providing updates to this committee on a standing basis.

10. Set next meeting date and agenda

May 3 at 10:30 A.M.

*Meeting adjourned: 11:24 A.M.
Linda M. Elmer
Staff Assistant*