



Committee on Public Safety & Neighborhoods

November 15, 2016– 7:00 PM - **Minutes**
Chambers of the City Council, City Hall, Room 214

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & NEIGHBORHOODS
DATE: NOVEMBER 15, 2016
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS DEBORA COELHO, CHAIRPERSON; IAN ABREU; HENRY BOUSQUET; NAOMI CARNEY; LINDA MORAD; DANA REBEIRO (7:06); KERRY WINTERSON

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS BRIAN GOMES, VICE-CHAIRMAN; JOSEPH LOPES; STEVEN MARTINS; JAMES OLIVEIRA

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Councillor Coelho called the Public Safety & Neighborhoods Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read Communications from Councillors Gomes, Lopes Martins and Oliveira explaining their absences. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Morad.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Coelho, Abreu, Carney and Martins, requesting, that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods, the Health Department and the Department of Inspectional Services look into the situation on North Front Street, there are sidewalk sales that last all day and block the entire sidewalk, tables and chairs put out, people congregating all day long, cooking on the sidewalk, there is an accumulation of garbage that people leave, they fix cars right on the sidewalk, which obstructs visibility; and further, some of the activity could possibly be used as drug fronts, there are quality of life issues that are not being addressed and the sidewalks must be cleared of pedestrians (To be referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods, the Health Department and the Department of Inspectional Services) (Ref'd 10/13/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney. (1)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillors Coelho, Abreu, Carney and Martins, due to the high increase in crime and the deterioration in the quality of life, requesting that Police Chief Cordeiro increase patrols and bring foot patrols to the area of North Front Street, from Coggeshall Street to Nash Road, to quell some of the issues the neighborhood is experiencing, due to the fact that many residents are afraid to call Police because of retaliation and also the language barrier (To be referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods and Police Chief Cordeiro) (Ref'd 10/13/16) was received and placed on file by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney. (2)

Without objection, both matters were taken up at the same time due to the similar concerns in the same neighborhood.

Deputy Police Chief Oliveira and DIS Commissioner Romanowicz were present to answer questions from the Committee.

Councillor Abreu asked what protocols have been put in place in rectifying the issues that were mentioned in the above mentioned motions. He was told over the past few months the New Bedford Police Department has conducted new initiatives. They have increase patrols using the Gang Unit and K9 Units. A uniformed patrol has been increased in the area during the night as well. Yard Sale issues to date have been taken care of and under control. They have stepped up patrols in the area and it has been working. Calls to service are down in the area.

Councillor Coelho complimented the Police Department on their work done to date; she has noticed the increase in police presence in the North Front Street area. The Deputy stated that Captain Flood, who is in charge of the area, has put into place a short term goal that is working and is structuring a long term goal as well. In the springtime they will increase K9 and Gang Unit patrols. The police would like to see an increase in cameras throughout the city; the ones currently in place are working well. The addition in foot patrols is part of the Department's long term plans.

Councillor Morad asked Commissioner Romanowicz if the Zoning Officer has been working with the Police Department in addressing these issues. He explained that the Police Department is doing an awesome job. They do have a control on the yard sales, but to truly correct the issue an Ordinance would be needed, but though the Council tried in the past it was not successful. They have also addressed automotive repairs taking place on city streets as well. They are able to provide enforcement by instituting fines.

Councillor Rebeiro expressed her support for the increase in foot patrols. The Deputy Chief hopes to have a full complement of officers by spring. Councillor Rebeiro suggested we look to fund foot patrols, that where the city just received a grant to improve on Union Street, funding should be used to create new foot patrol positions.

On motion by Councillor Bousquet and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To take "No Further Action" on items number 1 and Number 2, at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Written Motion, Councillor Gomes, requesting that the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods meet with Police Chief Cordeiro for the purpose of discussing the implementation of using drones to monitor high crime neighborhoods for surveillance across the city, adding another tool in fighting crime; and further requesting, that the drones be used for surveillance and security purposes when the city is holding major events, along with monitoring the city as a whole. (To be referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhoods) (Ref'd 10/27/16) (3)

Councillor Gomes had requested in his Communication stating his absence from the meeting, if this matter could be tabled, as he had a discussion with Police Chief Cordeiro and they would like more time to discuss the matter before formerly bringing it to the attention of the Committee.

On motion by Councillor Morad and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter at this time. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Bousquet made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Winterson.

This meeting adjourned @ 7:23 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees