

SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES
January 16, 2007

The Safety Committee meeting was held on January 16, 2007 at North Royalton City Hall, 13834 Ridge Road. The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chairwoman Lisa Uffman-Kirsch.

Present: Chairwoman Lisa Uffman-Kirsch, committee members Denise Bobulsky and Robert Stefanik.; Fire Chief Michael Fabish, Police Chief Paul Bican, Councilman Larry Antoskiewicz, and Resident Arleen Miciunas.

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 21, 2006 MINUTES:

Moved- Mr. Stefanik, Seconded- Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch. 2-0 in favor. Minutes approved. Mrs. Bobulsky abstained. She was absent at that meeting.

CALL FOR NEW BUSINESS: None

OPEN RESIDENT DISCUSSION

The resident in attendance was present to speak on a New Business Item already on the agenda.

UNFINISHED/ONGOING BUSINESS

1. Police Department Report

Chief Bican: No new news.

2. Fire Department Report

Chief Fabish: Regarding the reverse 911 program for our city to be able to contact people —He had been talking with a company, Swift Reach, but new company is called Code Red, out of Florida. It still works off computers, but he thinks it's more high-tech than Swift Reach. The city is mapped out on the computer, and the mouse is used to outline a section that you want to cover. It has the longitude and the latitude within that area, and all of the phone numbers which are assigned to that latitude and longitude. It can be an irregular shape. The computer automatically begins the calling. It is really impressive.

With the other one, we would have to do a lot of listing. This seems much more advanced, but it also is more expensive. Parma is using this, and a lot of cities in the southwest part of Ohio in the Dayton-Cincinnati area — some pretty progressive suburbs. They are supposed to send a quote. Then he will give it to the Chief, the Mayor, and other people to take a look. They'll do another computer simulation of it, and then make a presentation to us to see what we think.

The other one seemed more cumbersome. This one is remarkably fast...to evacuate for a spill, or for an ongoing search or just to alert people about down wires or a boil alert. We could call people and say, "we have a water main break. The water is expected to be off for the next 14 hours. Please boil your water." You can give instructions as to what people should do. The other is about \$5,000-\$6,000 a year, and he thinks this one is around \$10,000 a year.

Also, they are doing some of their recertification classes in house. They have personnel who are certified and Parma Hospital provides additional instructors. We have to buy books, but they'll give us all the other things we need.

NEW BUSINESS**1. Traffic light removal discussion**

Mrs. Bobulsky asked for this to be on the agenda because she had some questions and ideas for discussion. Mrs. Miciunas also had some questions to ask.

Mrs. Bobulsky: Down Ridge Road, Parma has removed several of their lights, and the traffic seems to flow much easier. Some of the lights we have added in the recent past, in particular by Tops on Sprague Road; Tops is no longer there. And Abbey and 82. She wondered if it would be better if we could remove some of these that are not all that necessary to keep traffic flowing.

Chief Bican: The studies were done to keep traffic flowing. That is why the lights are where they are. We didn't decide that. The State did the calculations where the lights were to go and determined whether they were warranted.

Mrs. Bobulsky asked if perhaps they should be looked at again.

Chief Bican: We're already down a traffic officer. When short of manpower, he can't start doing more studies. Regarding the one by Tops, he will leave it there in case something else goes in, and put in on flash for now. We wouldn't want to desert 82 and Abbey. There's a lot of traffic.

Mr. Antoskiewicz: There are a lot of people, and he thinks people have a problem getting out onto 82 during business hours.

Chief Bican: That's how the light got there in the first place, plus all of the development — Harbour Light, Somerset, and all the places that have gone in there over the years.

Mrs. Bobulsky suggested something may be wrong with the loop.

Chief Bican: There may be. If loops are broken, it will act like a car sitting there.

Mr. Antoskiewicz: A couple of residents on Abbey questioned it. They said that cars weren't pulling all the way up to the line. Obviously any traffic on 82 is going to have a longer green light than on Abbey. As far as he knows, the officer said everything was O.K., and it was just the way the cycle works.

Mrs. Bobulsky: Her complaint was for traveling on 82 and having to wait.

Chief Bican: It's usually the opposite, because of loop placement. The loop is in a poor spot, but he doesn't have the money to move it. There is one loop that affects both Abbey and 82. It automatically defaults to 82 as the main road. Theoretically, if a car doesn't pull up on the loop, it should stay green for 82. But if a car pulls up, or someone triggers it who sat there just long enough to get the cycle going and then made a right turn on red and wasn't there when you got there. Only so much of a delay can be put on loops.

Mrs. Miciunas: It is really imperative that we have the light at Abbey because the traffic for Royal Redeemer is unbelievable when the school dismisses the students. You do have to pull all the way up, and a lot of people don't do that, and it won't trigger unless you pull up. Can the sign be moved up, because people are stopping at the sign, and you really have to pass that sign quite a bit, to trigger the light.

Chief Bican: He doesn't see why we can't move the sign up and have a white line on the street, too. He would feel better if the loop were replaced, because we're supposed to keep signs back away from the intersection and not have cars nose up so close to the intersection because of semi(s) trying to make a left turn onto Abbey. But at \$2,000 to replace the loop, he will have Skip move the sign and see what it does.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: That is not addressing what Mrs. Bobulsky said about sitting on 82. East-west traffic is the priority. Is it supposed to be green unless there is a car around? This has been mentioned several times.

Chief Bican: Theoretically, now it just stays green for 82 unless a car pulls up.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: If it's turning red on 82 at night with no traffic around, something is awry.

Chief Bican: He will check it again.

Mrs. Miciunas: She was concerned about the light at Drake and Bennett. She believes this has impeded traffic flow, however, in the morning rush hour there are more cars; but any other time of the day it really doesn't make sense, because most of the time people are stopped at the light. If there was no light, many times they could make the left turn onto Drake, instead of sitting at the light.

Chief Bican: What actually caused the light to go there were complaints from people trying to come out of Drake during rush hour. Particularly in the morning, they couldn't get a break to get out.

Mrs. Miciunas: That probably is true. Is there anything that can be done the rest of the day?

Chief Bican: It's supposed to stay green on Bennett until there is traffic waiting on Drake. From what he's heard, it's functioning properly. Putting in a left-turn lane is probably the only solution.

Mrs. Miciunas: It's not a problem for people coming south because there is nowhere to take a left turn. It even affects the people coming out of Greenbrier, because cars stack up all the way to there.

Chief Bican: He will have the patrolmen watch it to see if they can come up with any solution.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: We'll get an update from the Chief at next month's meeting.

Mrs. Miciunas: She had one more thing to bring up which bothers her tremendously. Two years ago, she got a ticket parked in a cul-de-sac. There were no signs. She was told that it is a safety issue. Her point is how could it be a safety issue if no one knows about it?

Chief Bican: It has always been illegal to park in cul-de-sacs because they are fire lanes. Several years ago, we had all the cul-de-sacs posted with "No parking in the cul-de-sac" signs. Unfortunately, over the years our signs all have disappeared, and with the financial scrape we have been in, they never got replaced.

Mrs. Miciunas: She just hopes that people don't get ticketed if there are no signs.

Chief Bican: They actually do. Every new house built in Royalton gets the parking laws sent to them.

Mrs. Miciunas: It's not right that they ticket people in places that don't have a sign.

Chief Bican: Ignorance to the law is no excuse. We can't post signs for every law.

Mrs. Miciunas: If every city had that law, then we should know about it, but we don't.

Chief Bican: Because cul-de-sacs were designed to be fire lanes, most cities have that law.

Chief Fabish: People don't like the signs in their front yards.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: Maybe something could be in the Recorder. Also, if an officer runs the plate, and there's been a warning, then give a ticket...assuming that there's a tracking system on plates.

Chief Bican: He will check with the new system. There was a recent incident where people were parking over the sidewalks at night, and we gave a warning first, and the second time gave a ticket.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: Chief Bican will see if there is a way to track warnings. If someone has been warned, then the second time there should be no excuse.

2. House Bill 347 — Revisions of Concealed Carry Laws, by the last General Assembly

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: A bill summary from the Legislative Services Commission was attached to the agenda. The governor vetoed it, but the House and the Senate overrode that veto before the changing of the guard. Her understanding of this is that House Bill 347 is in effect and, according to the Ohio Municipal League, it attempts to override any local gun safety ordinances adopted by cities around the state. We should be aware of what local ordinances it changes. She and the Chief talked about this briefly and neither knew exactly what the scope of this would be locally, so we're referring this to the Law Department. There is a bill summary, but it is thirty pages long. She wondered where home rule comes into play and where it doesn't. Can we be more stringent locally?

Chief Bican: It sounds like they got rid of some of the more stringent rules.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: She thought with normal home rule rights, we have the ability to be more stringent than state law. Are there any provisions that this is not true on this particular legislation? We need to find out the impact, and see if our local codes would have to be adjusted accordingly.

Mrs. Bobulsky: Her interpretation was this House bill is taking away any stringency we may want to apply.

3. Open Burning Code

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: Also attached to the agenda. On the agenda at the request of Chief Fabish. There was communication to Lil in the council office from American Legal Publishing related to the Ohio Administrative Code for open burning.

Chief Fabish: Last year, we tried to change our open burning code. He told us there were changes coming to the state code, and suggested we wait until they made their changes. The state has. He thinks it's time to revisit ours. There are a few issues in the State code he has a problem with, but it does clean up some of the questionable issues we had about recreational fires and warmth. Currently, we are struggling with another issue this may help with. We have several residents starting to use smokers for smoking meat...curing it or cooking it at a very low temperature, and it's creating a lot of smoke all day long that some neighbor is getting bombarded with. The way this law is written, we could say the emissions are more than a clean-burning fire. We're wrestling with some of the nuisance issues we have. Somebody is finding it to be a nuisance or we have a neighbor feud that has existed and they are trying to use it against each other. With a little work, we might be able to adopt nearly all of what the state has, add those ones we are aware of now and clear up some issues.

We also have a problem with some people who are not burning openly but through a stack or chimney with a noxious smell coming out of it. We can't prove they are burning garbage, but if wet wood is burned, it will smolder and smell bad. Now it is perfectly legal because it is coming through a stack out of the house. We don't have a noxious odor ordinance that is pertinent to burning. We might be able to include something that gives us discretion. If anyone has input, send it over to Legal and they'll try to incorporate it, and then come up with a rewrite. Our existing ordinance was written off this state ordinance.

Mr. Stefanik: We're talking about burning a lot without notification. Nothing is in there about near a dwelling, deck, awning or accessory building.

Chief Fabish: We have to put some kind of restriction on how close it is going to be.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: Compared to the prior State code, did they relax some of these requirements?

Chief Fabish: In comparison to our ordinance, it is relaxed. We hadn't been able to enforce some of the things that have been occurring; so we said we'll just wait and see what the state does.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: Maybe they realized it, too.

Chief Bican: Mostly they have been forced to realize that people have recreational fires, period.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: In references where prior notification is to be made to Ohio EPA, would that be us?

Chief Fabish: He would like Tom O'Donnell to go over that with him.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: Regarding "Open burns should be allowed for the following purposes: Disposal of ignitable or explosive materials." Assuming we can be more restrictive so we don't have to allow that?

Chief Fabish: He thought that should definitely be culled out of there.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch: Anybody with input, send it to the Law Department with a copy to Chief Fabish. She will let Mr. O'Donnell know that is what we are doing. We can try to have it before the next meeting.

Motion to adjourn-Mrs. Bobulsky: Seconded-Mr. Stefanik. 3-0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm.