



**PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**February 15, 2006 Meeting Summary**  
Suite 525, City Hall  
Anchorage, Alaska

**ATTENDANCE**

**Present:**

Precyous Council  
Mark Mew  
Sam O'Connor  
Mike Smulski  
Chuck Springer

**Members Absent:**

Lynda Zaugg (excused)  
Tony Piper (excused)

**Others Present (in order of participation):**

Capt. Ross Plummer, Anchorage Police Department  
Michelle Weston, Anchorage Fire Department  
Young Suenram, Anchorage Fire Department  
Paula Harrison, Employee Relations Department  
James Gray, Anchorage Fire Department  
Heather Handyside, Office of Emergency Management  
Catherine Curtis, Office of the Municipal Manager

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**1. Consent Calendar**

*Meeting called to order at 6:08PM. Mike Smulski chaired the meeting, as Chair Lynda Zaugg was out of town and Vice Chair Tony Piper was called out of town. Once quorum was reached, meeting summaries for January 11 regular meeting and January 28 planning meeting were approved.*

**2. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**a. Anchorage Police Department (APD)**

*Capt. Ross Plummer reported that the department is working on a five-year strategic plan, with emphasis on community involvement and resources.*

*Capt. Plummer asked the Commission to consider a recommendation on whether or not APD should pursue the idea of property forfeitures for on-site chronic illegal activity. If the Commission decided to look into this matter, they could inquire at community council meetings to assess public response to the idea. He said they have spoken with the MOA legal department about the issue. There are currently mechanisms in place for some types of forfeiture, but not for civil crimes for which the crime is degrading the neighborhood.*

*Mark Mew asked about a current ordinance for which property owners are fined for chronic on-site illegal activity. Capt. Plummer replied that the fine does not seem to be an effective deterrent. Sam O'Connor asked about a related state statute. Capt. Plummer replied that a local ordinance is needed to create a mechanism for working within the state system. Mark Mew recalled foreclosures on two Mountain View homes. Capt. Plummer responded that houses can now be seized under federal law; this would be a local ordinance.*

*Chuck Springer holds lending notes and he expressed concern that lenders could be negatively affected by the civil forfeitures. Capt. Plummer replied that such concerns need to be part of the discussion, as do other potential impacts. Mark Mew reminded*

the group that forfeitures are given due process and are handled fairly through court proceedings. He noted that a civil forfeiture ordinance was attempted in the 1990s, but it never made it to the Assembly floor.

The Commission voted unanimously to further discuss the subject of property forfeiture.

Mike Smulski asked about car forfeiture. This type of action is already in use for relevant DWI and driving with suspended license offenders. Mr. Smulski asked about the problem of recurring accidents on the Seward Highway (south) and whether the MOA could increase preventative efforts. APD currently enforces the highway as far south as McHugh Creek. They also often increase coverage at busier times. Chuck Springer asked if a speed limit reduction would help. It would most likely help and Capt. Plummer will look into supporting data.

Sam O'Connor asked about the APD officer shortage. APD has about 20 more officers than it did a few years ago. In 12- 18 months they will be close to their authorized number. They have about the same response time to crimes since they are able to now have a traffic unit. Those ten officers work accidents and are usually not otherwise available. Soon APD will have 15 officers in the traffic unit. A traffic officer is now on duty for each shift.

**b. Anchorage Fire Department (AFD)**

Michelle Weston brought DVDs of information about the new training center to give to the group. She introduced Young Suenram and Paula Harrison, who spoke about AFD recruitment. Mr. Suenram gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting elements of the recruitment process, including testing (reading comprehension, work style inventory, human relations, and ergo-mechanical aptitude tests), interviewing, and physical agility. AFD gives practice tests and interviews to help prepare trainees for the testing. Background checks for candidates will be more extensive now. Discussion ensued on the background check process. They are working towards diverse recruitment that is representative of the community and are looking at reasons some groups are failing (i.e., discovered women were having problems with physical agility requirement, and so could focus on that area with trainees. Women and men must have the same physical capabilities.). They are working to use technology more in the recruitment process, including creating a list serve so interested individuals can be notified of recruitment dates, test dates, schedule changes, etc.

James Gray spoke to the group about fire and life safety inspection. He demonstrated the technologies used in the field, including a touch-sensitive computer tablet on which report templates are stored, and a wireless printer attached to a belt. All GIS addresses (125,000) are now stored in their database, up from the original database of 16,000, including individual suites in every building and shopping mall. Chuck Springer asked if they have a way to refer other potential non-fire-related violations they observe. They do refer concerns as needed and have a database of department contact information that is accessible from their portable workstations.

Chuck Springer asked about big box stores that house large items on shelves that reach the ceiling. James Gray concurred that the situation is unsafe, but responded that only the shelving in such stores is regulated, not the items housed on the shelves. Codes are set on a national level, so the Mayor and Assembly cannot change regulations for Anchorage.

c. **Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Report**

Heather Handyside outlined the OEM's emergency plan for avoiding a "medical surge" on hospitals in the event of a disaster. She noted that, even now, emergency rooms are frequently on "divert," sending patients to other facilities. Partnerships are being developed with neighborhood medical clinics to address non-emergent needs, and congregate care sites would address medical needs that don't require special medical technology, while also providing prescription medications. Light injuries (cuts and bruises) would be handled within neighborhood centers, and hospitals will be used for true emergencies while also housing the Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) and federal and military resources. Each of these four types of sites should be able to assist approximately 1,000 people. The public would learn of the plan through advance education. The details of the plan will be further developed over the next year.

Sam O'Connor asked about boxed emergency kits and whether Ms. Handyside sees a need for them in the community. Mark Mew mentioned that aid kits for Russia were created and sold out of grocery stores at one time. Ms. Handyside noted that companies have already developed such kits and such things could be useful to the public. She emphasized the need for kit elements to include batteries and battery-operated radios and flashlights, as well as plastic containers for holding insurance papers.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

a. PSAC information sheet review: reviewed and changes noted. Catherine will circulate the amended sheet to PSAC members and post it on the PSAC Web site (see attached).

b. Publicity plan review: postponed until the March meeting.

c. Sam O'Connor – Engine #5 ride-along questions & concerns: Sam O'Connor was very impressed with the Station #5 staff. He expressed concern that parked police cars at one time blocked the path of AFD vehicles at a scene. Capt. Plummer noted that often APD is asked by AFD to block off areas with their cars, but later they may need the cars to be moved. Mark Mew noted that all the departments will be on the same radio frequency in a year and therefore able to communicate readily about such issues. Mr. O'Connor said he mentioned the problem to Assemblywoman Pamela Jennings, who in turn wrote a letter to Chiefs Monegan and Goodrich. Capt. Plummer and Young Suenram noted that the departments do talk to each other and frequently review such problems at department meetings and trainings.

d. Mike Smulski - Seward Hwy inquiry for APD: addressed earlier in the meeting.

e. Mike Smulski – Prepaid cell phone inquiry for APD: Mike Smulski expressed concern about disposable cell phones and the potential for using them to detonate explosive devices. Capt. Plummer will ask an appropriate APD representative to talk with the Commission about this issue at a future meeting. Mark Mew mentioned that the types of phones Mr. Smulski is talking about may not be sold in Alaska yet.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

a. Community Council Report: Sam O'Connor reported going to three community council meetings and the concerns expressed at each: Spenard—concern expressed about speeding vehicles; Sand Lake—he is on the March agenda; Campbell Park—

Call of the Wild bar is closed, concern expressed about bike crossing at Campbell & Lake Otis, 12 prostitutes arrested in the area but this high number is most likely due to the DEA building located in their neighborhood.

b. Public Testimony: None

c. Other (unscheduled discussion): Chuck Springer noted the high amount of false alarms on a community council report. He asked APD and AFD about false alarms and what deterrents are in place. APD allows three false before a fine of \$150 is charged; AFD allows two false alarms before a fine of \$750 is charged. Discussion ensued about potentially matching APD's policy with that of AFD. Chuck Springer requested the issue be placed on the April agenda for further discussion. Capt. Plummer will talk with the Chief's office about data and support for the change. Mark Mew noted that such an attempt had been made in the past and failed, so the model has already been written. He also noted that the Anchorage School District (ASD) already pays around \$50K each year for false alarms. ASD is working on the technical aspects of limiting these alarms, but it is a 20-year, \$15 million project. He would need to argue for an exemption for the schools. Capt. Plummer will bring the city's false alarm statistics to the April meeting. Chuck Springer will follow up on the issue for the Commission.

Chuck Springer wondered about placing public testimony at the beginning of the meeting rather than at the end, since the meetings tend to be lengthy. Mike Smulski will discuss this with Chair Lynda Zaugg.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be April 12, 2006 at 6:00PM in the Mayor's Conference Room, suite 830 of City Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

PSAC Summary 02.15.06  
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