SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
July 14, 2009
5:30 P.M.

Council Committee Members: Chair Jed Morison, Ben Kessler, Mark Masser

Call to Order

Roll Call: Chair Jed Morison present. Mr. Kessler and Mr. Masser were out of town and unable to attend.

Others Present: Mayor Brennan, Lou Chodosh, Beecher Hale, Bill Harvey, Larry Heiser, Robyn Jones, Matt Lampke, Jeff McClelland, Chief Rinehart, and Rick Weber.

Review of Minutes from June 9th, 2009 – No Action

Report of Chief of Police- The new hire test will be held on July 25th. Applications are being accepted until July 17th. To date, there are less than 100 applications and he had hoped that number would have been higher. Chief Rinehart stated that there had been more advertising and in further areas. He plans on hiring not only a replacement for retired Officer Wayne, but also hire for the two positions who will be retiring next year.

Chief Rinehart stated that the patrol had been increased for the 4th of July activities. Everything went well without any major incidents. Pedestrians were able to cross safely at Main and Drexel. The crowd this year was larger than last year's event. Mayor Brennan stated there were approximately 1,500 to 2,000 in attendance this year. Chief Rinehart said the police felt very in control of the crowd. The overtime money spent was in the budget and they did not go over the planned amount.

Ms. Jones stated that anyone who was not close enough to hear the music should try to sit closer next year. The high school ensemble and the rest of the music groups were wonderful.

Mr. McClelland asked the Chief about private citizens using fireworks from their homes in Bexley on both July 3rd and 4th. Chief Rinehart said that is one of his pet peeves because people don't realize how dangerous it is to everyone, not just the person setting off the fireworks. He said his officers have continued to warn individuals but if it continues next year, they will be issuing tickets. Mr. McClelland

suggested that next year perhaps we should try to make the public more aware that they are breaking the law by setting off their own fireworks.

Mr. Morison said he recently saw some coverage on that same issue on a television program. They did a great job showing the dangers and results of attempting to have your own fireworks display.

Progress of Police Station – Mr. Morison stated the new police station seems to be coming along well. Chief Rinehart said the safety fencing is now down and they are doing well on the progress. Any change orders – Mr. Harvey said the new station does not have any large change orders and currently is running on schedule and on budget. He said they just poured some new test concrete. It is more porous than regular concrete and allows the water to run through it. Mr. Harvey said it was a "green" element. Mr. Morison asked if the signage is included in the construction or is something separate from the project. Mr. Harvey stated some of the signage is included but not all. Mr. Morison suggested that work on the signs be started since it can be a timely project.

Mr. Harvey said there is a water problem at Cassidy & Delmar and the City will be working on that water pressure issue.

Report of Mayor/Safety Director- Mayor Brennan said there have been some successful block watch meetings. July was the initiation of the block watch program and Detective Overly has done a great job with this program. She has a true passion for the Block Watch Prevention program. Mayor Brennan stated that he did attend a meeting and there were residents from three to four blocks included in an area. Detective Overly will be setting up another meeting for July 31st. If any Council Members are interested in learning more or would like to plan on attending, please be sure to join this meeting on July 31st. Chief Rinehart added that it is helping to spread positive information to prevent crime as well. He stated that Det. Overly explains important issues such as not keeping items in the car along with not trying to scare someone off when breaking into a garage, but rather to notify the police immediately if they hear a noise.

Mayor Brennan stated there had been an increase lately in car break in situations. He stated the majority of cars broken into were to grab cash and change only. He is hoping this will be taken care of shortly thanks to our police staff.

Fire and Emergency Services- Mr. Morison wanted to remind Council that if Columbus cuts their fire services, the outcome will have an impact on the City of Bexley.

Ordinance No. 40-09 establishing Bexley City Code requiring owners or occupants of abutting lands to keep sidewalks free from snow and ice, introduced by Mr. Morison, (Introduced on July 14, 2009)

Mr. Morison said the Safety Committee will be introducing the snow removal ordinance at City Council for its first reading. He wanted to thank Lou for working on the ordinance and incorporating residents' comments and suggestions. He also wanted to thank Fiona Edmunds for all of the research she did to help with this

subject matter. He said it would be discussed at the September meeting and there may be other residents interested in coming to speak. There were some revisions including the change of "physical" disability to just disability.

Ms. Fiona Edmunds addressed the Safety Committee to encourage City Council to support this Ordinance. She stated it would provide greater safety to walkers and prevent sidewalks from being a hazard to neighbors, not to mention the physically challenged individuals. Hazardous sidewalks are especially dangerous to senior citizens and individuals in wheelchairs. Ms. Edmunds sited a stated from the "WSNA" located in the State of Illinois. She also mentioned the high tech equipment police officers use in Boston that are hand-held computers and take photographs of the walkways as a ticket is issued. She is not suggesting that the City of Bexley consider that due to the cost factor. She stated that Bexley is a walking community and it is dangerous for pedestrians to share the roadways with cars during inclement weather conditions. The residents of Bexley need to be reminded of the need and the Mayor hopefully will be able to help with publicity. A large number of Jewish faith individuals are also members of the Bexley community. They walk to the synagogues and need clean, safe sidewalks. This ordinance would be no different than the cutting grass, peeling paint on the side of a house or other maintenance requirements.

Mr. Morison thanks Ms. Edmunds for her comments and wanted to point out that physically challenged individuals will be greatly affected by the passing of this ordinance.

Other Business: Mr. Morison said he has been receiving a lot of input from the residents regarding the issuing of "texting" on a cell phone while driving. This is a major issue, especially among the younger drivers and parents have asked him to consider an ordinance to make this illegal in the City of Bexley. He asked if this could be considered a traffic violation or which approach could be best used to prevent this from occurring.

Chief Rinehart said there are articles that reflect the use of texting among young people. Texting is very prevalent. He said that he has a son who is almost 18 years old who is always texting. It is part of our culture. He would be in support of any ordinance that would prevent individuals from looking down while driving. Driving requires full attention and whether it is applying make-up, texting, etc. it is a major cause of car accidents.

Mr. Morison said that if Council did pass an ordinance, it would be misdemeanor. He said he would like to be pro-active on this subject because it is a hazardous trend. The Dispatch conducted a study regarding the reaction time of a driver. When texting, there is a 35% slower reaction time. There is a 12% slower reaction time when drinking and a 21% slower reaction time to someone on marijuana.

Ms. Jones said she had a car cut her off just recently and it was someone talking on the cell phone. She would like to include using a cell phone as well in this ordinance.

Mr. Morison stated that he does feel texting is more dangerous than speaking on your phone while driving. Texting requires you to look down to read your message.

He realizes that the police officers probably won't be looking for someone texting, but thinks by making it a law; it would be a good tool for parents to use.

Mr. Weber said he would fully support an ordinance regarding this issue and thinks it should be made into the form of an ordinance.

Mr. Morison said it might also provide some information regarding the cell phone use, but his main concern is the texting issue.

Mr. McClelland said he would certainly be in favor of a "no" cell phone while driving ordinance. Mayor Brennan asked if the reckless operation would cover this act. Chief Rinehart answered this concerns driver's attention to the road and it would not be as serious reckless operation.

Next meeting –September 8th, 2009

Adjourned at 6:00 p.m.