

MINUTES

CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD

OLD CITY HALL, 510 GREENE STREET

MONDAY, February 25, 2013

A regular meeting of the City of Key West Citizen Review Board was held in the main room of the Commission Chambers, Old City Hall, on Monday, February 25, 2013.

Chairman Kevin Collins called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Answering roll call were Board members Virginia Altobello, Joe Pais, Tom Milone, Michael Behrend, Vice Chair Larry Beaver and Chairman Kevin Collins.

Mr. Hayward Magby was absent.

Also present was Executive Director Susan Srch.

The pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America was given by all present.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

There were no changes to the agenda and it was approved.

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Mr. Milone wants to make a correction to the minutes on page two (2), first paragraph, changing the word “use” to “misuse”; so the sentence will read “I see no misuse of the TASER”. Based on this correction Mr. Milone makes a motion to approve the minutes, second by Mr. Beaver. Motion passes.

ACTION ITEMS

None

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1) Bahama Village Survey – Mr. Milone points out the negative comments on the survey about the police department and introduces the author of the survey, Alison Morales. He further states that the survey was conducted from September to November 2012. There were 342 responses and 53 of respondents, about 15%, had a problem with the police department. Ms. Altobello questions where the surveys were distributed. Mr. Milone defers to Ms. Morales to answer questions on the survey. Ms. Morales states that the survey was distributed in various places in Bahama Village; during community events, after church services, and face to face on the streets. Ms. Morales further states that there were three (3) open- ended questions; what are top three (3) issues Bahama village faces, giving respondents the opportunity to list their top three (3) issues affecting Bahama Village and among the top five (5) of all responses was police harassment. Other issues were lack of parking, lack of activities for children, drug trafficking and littering; police harassment being fifth in the top five. Mr. Beaver questions the topic of “how safe do you consider Bahama Village to be?” and attempts to quantify between ‘very safe’, and ‘quite safe’. Ms. Morales states that “very safe” is the highest and “quite safe” is just below that. Mr. Milone asks if the survey was restricted to residents of Bahama Village. Ms. Morales replies that it was given to people who live there, work there, or frequently visit Bahama Village. However most of the respondents were residents. At this point Mr. Milone points out that Ms. Morales is a student at FIU and that this is a part of her obtaining her Masters’ Degree in Public Health and this is the Monroe County Health Departments survey. She goes on to explain that this is one of the first steps in compiling all results and creating a report and then explain, to the residents, everything they found out from the survey. She further states that the top five (5) issues are something the health department wants to look into. Dr. Collins asks how the Health Department would deal with police harassment but does not ask for an explanation. He goes on further to state his relief that the top three (3) items are close to identical to other parts of the city. Ms. Altobello asks ED Srch if the police department conducts sensitivity training. ED Srch responds that while not knowing for sure, she does not know of police departments that don’t have sensitivity training of some type, both in the Police Academy and continuing training on a regular basis. Mr. Beaver states that he would like to see this on the agenda for the next meeting; addressing what training they have and how they address these issues. He goes on to point out that a lot of our complaints center around insensitivity or how the officers deal with certain situations. Ms. Altobello questions how officers are assigned to work in Bahama Village. Mr. Milone questions what kind of training officers receive in the academy as far as verbal training; how to talk to them and judge their demeanor. ED Srch says that she will obtain a copy of the curriculum from the academy. Ms. Altobello asks about the demographics of the department; how many officers are employed and how many of them are African American. Dr. Collins points

out that the survey shows that overall 77% of respondents rated the department between fair and good because that wouldn't have been the case ten (10) years ago. He further states that Ms. Morales said this wasn't completed just by people who live there and so many of the answers may be based on perception. Mr. Milone asks ED Srch about the police department response to the survey. ED Srch states that she has spoken with Chief Lee about the results and that she believes, based on conversations, that he too is looking at the big picture and seeing that 70% of respondents are happy with police service in Bahama Village. She further states that this does not mean that Chief Lee is not concerned about the issue of police harassment. She goes on to point out that the number three (3) issue is drug trafficking and the number five (5) item is police harassment and that the two (2) issues are a bit related. If you want to fight drug trafficking there may be a bit of perceived harassment. People are going to be questioned that wouldn't normally be questioned. Dr. Collins points out again that the first issue is activities for children and the second is parking; then drug issues and police harassment. Several members point out the problem with turnovers on the police department due to various reasons like high cost of living that can add to the problem in Bahama Village because newer officers don't know the residents as well.

There are no other comments and Dr. Collins recaps the request by members for ED to inquire about training and on-going training sensitivity for Officers. Mr. Pais also wants the demographics of the department.

REPORTS:

ED Srch talks about morning magazine with Bill Becker that morning and that the main topic was the fact that the CRB was in their second month without a complaint and this is the ultimate goal. Further talked about how the police department is doing their job and in conjunction with crb that things appear to be working the way it was set up to be. Very; positive interview and Bill felt the same way.

ED talks about the end of Mr. Milone and Mr. Magby terms in June. She states that after checking the CRB policy and talking to City Clerk Cheri Smith; Mr. Milone can be re-appointed by the Board without reapplying however Mr. Magby must resubmit his application and ED must advertise the vacancy and send all applications to the City Commission for appointment. ED will start advertising the vacancy in the paper April 1, 2013 with the last day to apply being Friday, May 31, 2013. This will give time to put this item on the City Commission agenda for June 18, 2013. Mr. Milone states that for the record, he is interested in being re-appointed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No one was signed up to speak.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Chair Collins states that he thinks that the Board has put themselves out there; and that people know that they can approach any of us with issues. He goes on to say that he agrees that it's positive that we've not received any complaints.

Mr. Milone brings up what Mr. Pais said at the last meeting that we conduct a CRB meeting in Bahama Village. Dr. Collins worries that it might start to look like "why just Bahama Village?" kind of attitude. Mr. Milone goes on to say that he feels the perception is that most of the complaints come from Bahama Village.

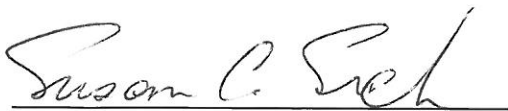
Mr. Pais suggests we do one in each district.

ED points out that the problem moving from place to place is continuity and consistency of the meetings. People know that just like the commission meetings, the CRB meetings are in this room at the same time each month. She continues to say that if we advertise and they don't see that advertisement and we're moving from place to place for each meeting we run the risk of losing the few people we do have coming to the meetings.

Mr. Milone states that maybe it would be a good idea for members to attempt to attend District VI meetings.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Susan C. Srch", written over a horizontal line.

Susan C. Srch, Executive Director