



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, January 4, 2016**

The Public Safety Commission convened a regular meeting on Monday, January 4, 2016 at City Hall, 301 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Austin, Texas.

Vice Chair Rebecca Webber called the Board Meeting to order at 4:00p.m.

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Rebecca Webber, Vice Chair  
Rebecca Gonzales  
Brian Haley  
Michael Levy  
John Hernandez

William Worsham  
Ed Scruggs  
Daniela Nunez  
Sam Holt

**Board Members not in Attendance:**

Kim Rossmo

**Staff in Attendance:**

Jason Dusterhoft , Assistant Chief, Austin Police Department  
Jasper Brown, Assistant Chief, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services  
Brian Tanzola, Assistant Chief, Austin Fire Department

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- The minutes for the regular meeting on 12/7/2015 were approved on Commissioner Haley’s motion, Commissioner Holt’s second and a vote of 9-0.

**2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS**

- No citizen signed up to speak

**3a. VISION ZERO**

- **Francis Reilly**, Planning & Zoning Department, City of Austin began the presentation on Vision Zero after **Commissioner Levy** commented there was no need to review the entire Power Point presentation since the board had already reviewed it. Present the highlights of presentation and then move directly into the draft action plan created to have an impact on traffic fatalities. The four key items in the action plan were:
  - Focus on Hot Spots (location of most crashes) and Dangerous Behaviors
  - Target Education and Media Campaigns
  - Data Collecting (utilizing and sharing all information on where and how fatalities happened)
  - Develop Vision Zero Program and Continue Vision Zero Task Force

The first key item (Focus on Hot Spots) includes focusing on dangerous behaviors such as speeding and failure to yield. Most of this area is referring to enforcement; increase the number of prosecutors

in Austin/Travis County that are working on DUIs. **Vice Chair Webber**, is there a recommendation from Vision Zero to increase funding for more highway enforcement? **Commander Art Fortune**, Austin Police Department: we are looking to expand the DWI Unit from the current three units seven days a week, to maybe ten units seven days a week, but also add six additional officers to each shift to work traffic enforcement thus freeing up the remaining officers to focus/work on DWIs and pedestrian safety. **Commissioner Levy** commented that enforcement is the number one thing that has the most immediate impact/effect on reducing highway fatalities. Commander Fortune agreed and commented that in order to enforce they have to have the resources (monies and staff/sworn staff). **Commissioner Levy** also shared during discussion that there needs to be a change in the conversation at Austin Police Department that reiterates the importance of enforcement in neighborhoods as much as the highways (to address bicycle and pedestrian fatalities). **Commissioner Holt** asked the question; are there any programs to keep pedestrians out of the roadways? **Jim Dale**, Manager, Austin Transportation Department responded: the Transportation Department is building six signals to safely move bikers and pedestrians safely through communities/streets. There were several questions from the board members:

- In comparison to other cities has there been any study to see what they are doing to decrease their traffic deaths (this is in reference to the 2013 data)? **Scruggs**
- Hot Shot Map- What year of data was used when the map was used and when was it created? **Scruggs**
- Has there been any effort to determine what happened in 2010? **Scruggs**
- Will this task force take a position on Uber and Lyft in the City of Austin? **Webber**
- What do you see us (the board members) doing to help with this task force? Possibly making a recommendation to Council? **Haley**
- Data comparison to other cities per capita? **Worsham**
- So do we want to say/recommend today that the Public Safety Commission agrees with Vision Zero Task Force? **Haley**

**Commissioner Levy** shared an article on New York's Vision Zero Plan, and there were two significant points 1. More aggressive enforcement and prosecution resulted in huge decrease in fatalities the first year. **Commissioner Haley** asked again, so do we want to say/recommend today we agree with Vision Zero? **Jim Dale**, responded to Commissioner Levy that there are immediate action the Transportation Department could take and are working on to improve and implement for decreasing fatalities. **Levy** – fine we have three things that we can recommend today. Planning Department also recommends continuing the Task Force. **Commissioner Rebecca Gonzales** – I heard Francis say this is not the final action plan and I need clarification. I don't think we should make any recommendations until we see the final plan. **Francis** replied that **Commissioner Gonzales** was correct in that this was not the final action plan being presented to them today. **Levy** asked why this final plan was not sent to them before this meeting and **Commander Fortune** responded that the final draft plan was simply not ready to be distributed. **Levy** – why was management of the Vision Zero plan changed? **Jim Dale** –response to Commission Levy was because the program is now moving into the engineering phase is the reason Austin Transportation Department is taking the lead, but by no means would this only be a Transportation Department item. The work will still require all three departments. **Commissioner Nunez** – have you faced any opposition to Vision Zero? **Francis Reilly's response** – currently we are working on finalizing a draft that will be made available to the public and afterwards there may be some opposition feedback/comments. There's perhaps some sort of an acceptance generally/publically that's the way it is business as usual (referring to traffic deaths) feelings by the public. Francis shared a conversation with a Statesman news reporter who commented that he (the reporter) will be doing another story next week, same subject (translating to traffics deaths are so common). **Commissioner Holt** – I have two questions for you - will your final draft be made public soon, and will it include such things as enforcement, education, and prosecution? Second question, please clarify term “cost of doing business” concerning the number of fatalities? Are you saying the number of fatalities in this area is the cost of doing business? **Francis Reilly**- As a society we sometimes accept that traffic

deaths are somehow unavoidable. Vision Zero comes in and says that all of these deaths could be prevented through some measure or combination of measures. Behavior that causes traffic accidents like, failure to yield, intoxication, distracted driving all things we could stop through a combination of enforcement and education. Commissioner Webber – following up on **Commissioner Nunez’s** question, what can we do to help? We agree every death is avoidable. **Levy** - What action can we take and when will the action plan go to the Mobility Committee? **Levy** – could we make an informal recommendation, **Janet**? Yes, I could keep the notes. The board could not make a recommendation today because the item is listed as staff briefing. **Scruggs**- mayor said he would like to see a major traffic proposal go forward to the voters in 2016. How does this package (Vision Zero) become a part of that proposal? **Commissioner Levy** - suggested making an informal recommendation, **but Commissioner Webber** requested we should keep it official and not make an informal recommendation. **Commissioner Scruggs** – if we see the final draft (Vision Zero) on February 1, 2016 and it goes to the Mobility Committee on February 3, 2016 then there is an opportunity for us to make a recommendation to the committee. **Levy agreed. Commissioner Webber** – is this a situation where another working group would be appropriate for putting together a recommendation? **Commissioner Nunez** – yes, I think so. **Commissioner Haley** – I think at the next Public Safety Commission meeting we need or should have 2-3 bullet points to discuss prior to making a recommendation. **Commissioner Webber** – any takers for the Working Group? A working group was voted on, and the group consisted of Ed Scruggs, Daniela Nunez, Bill Worshman, and Mike Levy. Commissioner Haley motioned to vote on the members for the working group and Commissioner Nunez seconded. Approved with a unanimous vote

### 3b. RESTORE RUNDBERG UPDATE

- **This item was requested by Commissioners Scruggs and Nunez.** Commissioner Nunez – I moved into the Georgian area and became interested in Restore Rundberg. I attended a Restore Rundberg meeting at Lanier High School interested in learning about the funding program and what role this commission could play on public safety grants, what accomplishment, and find out about the goals of the program. **Scruggs** - my interest is learning more about the Restore Rundberg program, viewing it as a model for the City of Austin. I know the program is focused on a high crime area, there could be new high crimes developing in the future. It is great to already have a model in place that we (the City of Austin) could refer to. This is a very comprehensive program model to use in the future and we are already using this model. **Commander Donald Baker, Lt. Leverenz, Sargent Bazzle and Grants Manager, Kyran Fitzgerald all from Austin Police Department** were in attendance to present and answer questions. **Commissioner Levy** – requested the Austin Police Department team present the high points of the program in approximately five minutes so there would be more time for discussion. **Commander Baker** – started the presentation discussing goals of the program. The main goal of Restore Rundberg has been to reduce violent crime. **Rundberg** was the only place that qualified for the grant. University of Texas has worked closely with the team to improve the Rundberg area. In 2013 when Commander Baker begin to work in this area the resounding question from the stakeholders was okay “ what are you going to do different from the previous commanders? The challenge was how to make it better. We worked with researchers and came up with a mobile walking beat that some other cities had been successful with decreasing crime in their areas.. We developed this program along with community members and created a Priority Act. Some of the accomplishments of Restore Rundberg :
  - Cleaned up area behind the Bowling Alley on Rundberg
  - The land has since been purchased by IDEA SCHOOL
  - Care Teams - we established contacts/networks of social services for the homeless population that was living behind the Bowling Alley. The Care Teams included non-profits like Caritas, Mobile

Loaves and Fish, Integral Health Care, and Veterans Administration. APD worked more in the background.

- Forty homeless people lived on the property and they were all helped and relocated with the exception of four people who refused help and would not leave. Austin Police Department had to enforce the removal of the remaining four people.
- Volunteers (approx 900) assisted with the clean up/transformation of Dobie Middle School
- Officers go out on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays to talk to people, handout information and listen to their ongoing needs or concerns. This is community policing at its finest.
- University of Texas has offered lots of help with Restore Rundberg program by creating, tracking surveys, and compiling data from the surveys that is used in measuring the success of the program.

**Commander Brown** completed his presentation and asked for questions.

**Commissioner Webber** – thank you Commander it was a really impressive presentation.

Daniela, do you want to ask questions? **Commissioner Nunez** – Did you meet your goals on the percentage of crime reduction in the area? **Commander Brown** – Yes

**Commissioner Nunez** – Were violent crimes like rape and other physical assaults included in your data?

**Commander Brown** – yes and there was zero crime when officers are on their walking beat.

**Commissioner Worshman** – What is the number of officers on a walking beat? **Commander Baker** – there is a Sargent plus eight officers on a beat.

**Commissioner Webber** – do they write ticket while on the walking beat, and do any of the officers live in the neighborhood?

**Commander Brown** – yes they will write a ticket while on the walking beat and no, none of the officers live in the neighborhood. **Commissioner Holt** – You and your officers have done an excellent job. Historically when I was on the force the people who lived in that area wouldn't even talk to the police. Great job and I am proud of your team.

**Commissioner Haley** – What is being done to continue the UT contract, has it been extended **Commissioner Scruggs** – fear of grant funding ending is this program going to be able to continue if there is no funding? Any kind of a timeline to replicate the program in the Dove Springs area? **Brown** – no concrete plans, but there has been comments concerning possibility of having the same type of program in Dove Springs.

**Commissioner Nunez** – going forward I would like for us (Public Safety Commission) to be informed about State and Federal grants related to Public Safety. **Commissioner Haley** – could we maybe get a list of items being asked about during the budget times? **Commissioner Levy** – offered to summarize as a list of continuation of programs initially funded by grants

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### 3c. UPDATE ON ROCK THROWING

- **Commissioner Scruggs** requested this agenda item. The reason for his request was due to continuing questions from citizens on what the status of this crime and why hasn't Austin Police Department caught anyone yet? He made a decision to ask for a status. **Commander Kurtis Krause, Austin Police Department**-begin by commenting that's a fair question/request concerning this issue (Rock Throwing). Some of the things that make this case complicated:
  - infrequency of this incident makes it difficult (approximately 50 incidents since June 2014)
  - Crimes are happening early morning at 4am
  - Happening at a high rate of speed (coming from moving vehicles)

- Small Opportunity to observe this crime
- Often the victims do not report the crime right away
- Need of the community wanting to know the status but it could compromise the case

**Commissioner Scruggs** asked if there has been any consideration to build/install the barriers. It would be nice to know where to go or who to ask about the installation of barriers. It would be nice to have some specifics. **AC Dusterhoft** commented that we should talk to TxDot first and get back with Public Safety Commission. Commissioner Worsham- asked what is the length of the barrier? **Commander Krause** – responded he didn’t know the exact length . **Commissioner Levy** – When is the last time we used rewards programs (like Crime Stoppers). **Krause** – we have used Crime Stoppers three times and the reward was one thousand dollars, but no tips were shared on the case. **Commissioner Scruggs** – does TxDot cameras help at all? **Commander Krause** – not very much due to the quality of the resolution. **Commissioner Holt** – has any thought been given to having a temporary net until barriers can be installed? **Commissioner Nunez** – What is the penalty for rock throwing? **Commander Krause** responded there could be an assault charge could become a murder charge if a person dies from the incident. **Commissioner Scruggs** – do you suspect this is one or more persons, or a copy cat crime? **Commander Krause**- we don’t have any evidence to indicate one way or another. **Commissioner Webber** asked for any further discussion and there was none so discussion ended.

### 3d. ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPARATION

Jason Dusterhoft, Assistant Chief, Austin Police Department presented (Commander Jamail was not able to attend). Shooter preparation begins in the training academy. This training started after the Columbine shooting. Now there is immediate intervention and officers don’t have to wait at a critical scene until SWAT or other agencies arrive. Officers train regularly and some go to training in San Antonio and the Alert Center. APD makes sure they are equipped with the proper training and resources needed to be an active shooter. At Active Shooter scenes police rush right in to try and save lives. **Commissioner Levy** – commented that Austin Police no long have to wait before going in after an active shooter. **Commissioner Haley** – do you have a request for more personnel or equipment to help these active shooters? **AC Dusterhoft** – I could get a list together for you on where we are (inventory, staff). **Commissioner Scruggs** – commented on a New York Times article in which the City of Austin was awarded the distinction of being the only major city that has not had a massive shooting. What do you attribute that to? **Assistant Chief Dusterhoft** – I would say the one major thing that changed when Chief Acevedo came on board was the promoting lots of training for all officers. The extensive training, continuing education and support he encourages has helped the Active Shooters. **Commissioner Worsham** – how many incidents have we been involved in. **AC Dusterhoft** – commented I’m not sure. The most recent that comes to my mind is the OMNI shooting and the expertise of the officers on that call who went in and took care of the shooter and as a result no one else was hurt.

**Commissioner Worsham** – how many active shootings in the last year or two? **AC Dusterhoft** – I don’t know sir I would have to get back with you. While we have not had mass shootings we have had attempts at mass shootings. The training that police officers have had really shows up in detecting and preventing mass shootings from being carried out.

Commissioner Webber asked if there were anymore comments and closed this discussion to move on to Future Agenda Items.

#### 4. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Vision Zero to present the final draft action plan and the Working Group (Scruggs, Nunez, Worsham and Levy) present 2-3 bullet points before a recommendation is made to Council
- Commissioners Scruggs and Nunez – request Restore Rundberg team return prior to the thick of budget session for an update and a list of all the Public Safety Grants (current, pending approval or extension and expiring grants)
- Commissioner Scruggs - Rock Throwing Update – follow up with TxDot on installing barriers and the funding
- Commissioner Haley – Uber & Lyft, would like for Public Safety Commission to weigh in on the pros and cons of the TNCs before the final decision is made, and submit a recommendation to Council. Would like to have reps presenting from Austin Transportation Department and possibly the Mobility Committee
- Commissioner Webber – working group to present on structure of Public Safety Commission monthly meetings

**5. ADJOURN:** At 6:15pm Commissioner Haley motioned to adjourn (*No motion, second or vote is required to adjourn the meeting unless there is an objection to adjourning.*)