



**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
Monday, January 8, 2018**

**The Public Safety Commission convened a meeting Monday, January 8, 2018 at Town Lake Center, 721 Barton Springs Road in Austin, Texas.**

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

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Rebecca Webber, Chair	Daniela Nunez
Sam Holt	Ed Scruggs
Preston Tyree	Kim Rossmo
Carol Lee	Brian Haley
Rebecca Gonzales	Noel Landuyt

**Staff in Attendance:**

Ely Reyes, Assistant Chief, Austin Police Department  
Jasper Brown, Chief of Staff, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services  
Richard Davis, Assistant Chief, Austin Fire Department

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes for the December 4, 2017, meeting was approved with a correction requested by Commissioner Nunez to correct misspelled name on *page 5 from Ann DeFrata to Ana DeFrates*. Commissioner Tyree motioned for approval of the minutes and Commissioner Holt second. **The minutes were approved with a unanimous vote (10 approved 0 disapprove).**

**2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS –**

- **John Woodley – Missing Person Flyer** – his 17yr old nephew
- **John Woodley** – Item #3
- **Karen** - Item #3

#### **4. Involvement of public safety departments in city wide planning and review of specific development plans – Sponsored by Commissioner Lee**

**Commissioner Lee** introduced the topic and her reasoning for requesting to add this agenda item. **Lee** commented she had been approached by several planning commissioners who were concerned about some flag lots that they had been seeing come through the planning commission. So I went to some of the PAC (Pedestrian Advisory Council) meetings and viewed video and heard testimonies about some situations occurring around town. There was an incident where guard rails had to be removed to get fire trucks around curbs and ambulances having to park at the end of a street and walk to the address they had in the caller ID of their phones. I want to get an understanding about how robust our review is in citywide planning on Pedestrian, Mobility, CodeNext and to get a look at how we are allowing our public responders to do their public service and not create a hazard. **Assistant Chief Davis** – begin responding with comments that Austin Fire Department has been working with Austin Transportation Department with planning purposes and overcoming obstacles. **Commissioner Webber** interrupted and asked that they not discuss the Transportation issue because they had been invited to this meeting but needed more lead time. She didn't want this item discussed until ATD could attend the meeting. **Assistant Chief Davis** asked **Rob Vires** to come up and address the topic. **Rob began to respond to the introduction** – Currently AFD (Austin Fire Department) is set up to come in at the third step of the planning phase. We are not in the initial phase when they are designing a new development. We are currently working with ATD and others to try and figure out how to have us included in the initial conversations so all of the individual parties needs are met in the beginning stages of planning. In response to one of the incidents reported, it was not guard rails being removed/cut, but bollards in/near south east downtown. This is one example of the need to make sure all the initial stakeholders that need to be included in the early /beginning stages of planning are included to avoid situations as the one described. **Commissioner Lee** – could you explain what the third step means? **Rob Vires** – the third step in the site plan review is at that point where developers have already gotten their master plan done and necessary approvals, but without all of the stakeholders having had a chance to look it over. The initial master plan review does call for Austin Fire Department input, but we are not going to know unless someone else brings up the question about the size of the road and fire trucks.

During the past six months AFD has been in a number of conversations/ with a variety of stakeholders (ATD, PAC and other COA stakeholders) to discuss how we make sense of all this stuff and past the right pieces in the right places. We are doing this to try and avoid all of these issues moving forward in our efforts to meet all of the stakeholders needs.

There were questions/comments from commissioners concerning future citywide planning and public safety involvement:

- Are there already specific requirements as far as the width of the road that every development must follow anyway? (**Webber**)
- Are you specifically having that conversation (adopted code for COA #503 requires turning radius needs to be 25ft inside, 50ft outside and the road needs to be 25ft) with regards to Code Next? (**Webber**)
- Mueller we believe the 25ft is greater than it should be and it's greater than the standard of 20ft. (**Tyree**)
- Is your review based on someone bringing it to your attention? (**Rossmo**)
- Who is responsible for notifying you guys in the very beginning? (**Rossmo**)

- Commissioner Lee this is your item, do you think it would be helpful to have AFD come back with an update on the review process of notification on development plan issues in the early stages? **(Rossmo)**
- **Commissioner Lee responded, yes to this as a future agenda item**
- Concerning the width of the streets, are old streets like the Hyde Park area grandfathered in? Some of their streets don't seem to be that wide. **(Scruggs)**
- Have you been approached to participate in the Code Next? **(Scruggs)**
- The Milwaukee parking changes where one day parking is one side of the street and rotates, are you familiar with that and can you confirm? **(Holt)**

AFD responded to comments and questions, such as yes we (AFD) are having conversation with CODE NEXT that is part of the equation to improve the early planning. Rob shared ATD's observations of San Francisco and Milwaukee and the width they are requiring for their emergency vehicles to be able to get from one place to another. These cities are still requiring 28ft. **Commissioner Tyree** commented "the issue is a balance between long-term safety of the roads". How do we keep people safe in case of a fire, but we don't trade off the lives of people using those streets for the next 70 years, because our trucks are too big for the situation. **AFD** agreed to come back to the commission with an update on the planning inclusion of Public Safety Departments in the early stages of the development process citywide.

**3. Effect of traffic calming devices on public safety including emergency response times, evacuations, people with disabilities, and goal of safer streets - Sponsored by Commissioner Nunez**

- Disability Access Advocate John Woodley

Mr. Woodley began the discussion by stating that he and Karen were in attendance to highlight issues he has been working on for the last nine months, concerning traffic calming devices. These obstacles in the street cause harm to people with skeletal disabilities as well as slowing down emergency response times. Some issues with site plan development that needs to be worked not only for ATD, but for EMS and APD also. These bumps could slow APD while officers are responding to a possible assault case. EMS trucks have wider wheels and can roll over the bumps so their response time may not be affected as much. Mr. Woodley main focus was on skeletal disabilities and asked if there were any questions?

Commissioner Nunez, thanked Mr. Woodley for sharing his thoughts on traffic controlling devices and possible impact on certain musculoskeletal disorders. Generally speaking, I've seen people in my neighborhood supported those traffic calming devices. I have participated in the steps to acquire the speed bumps for our streets.

- Door to door for signatures (petition)
- Wait for City of Austin to complete a study of the streets
- You have to get the City's support and then there is the question of funding

My sense is there's that need to understand if something is unintentional harming, when it was meant to actually include safety, especially for vulnerable individuals, people with mobility issues, people with disabilities and I was wondering if you would have any thoughts for the transportation department as they are going through this process, and prioritizing the various streets across the city. Any general comments about ways to improve the process and of course hear from ATD in the future.

Mr. Woodley commented on some possible options for ATD to consider to easing the main from the speed bumps.

- Install signs to warn people the bumps are being installed.
- Some signs already installed are behind bushes, and not very visible
- Some people who have been harmed in the past say that the asphalt bumps has not caused harm
- Lack of police enforcement in area of Austin to get drivers to slow down

Karen shared her experiences over having the bumps in her neighborhood near Far West Blvd. She also mentioned that met with the City of Austin Engineers, exchanged e-mails, attended conferences, had phone calls and spoke at a city council meeting. Per Karen, after the council meeting ATD was instructed to meet with them to address some of the issues and that meeting has never happened. Karen is of the opinion that the head of ATD just doesn't care about their concerns. She and John have tried to work with Traffic Logics, ADA Manager and had an MIT engineer to access the speed bumps.

Commissioner Webber- could you bring it around to what you are asking us to do? We really appreciate what you are trying to do and it's really important for people like you to come and say, how hard it is sometimes. Karen responded, we are asking that somebody hold the transportation department accountable because they are not listening to us

As far as response times:

**EMS – Jasper Brown**, the wheel base that our ambulance have should be able to travers them (speed bumps) with minimal touching

**APD - Ely Reyes**, we don't have any concrete evidence to show whether the response times have increased or decreased by a specific device being in place.

**AFD – Richard Davis** , the Fire department is kind of in line with EMS and Police. Our response times differ from year to year and our wheels are wide enough to traverse the traffic cushions.

**Commissioner Tyree commented** – it's indicative of the whole discussion about how wide we make our roads. These particular things (speed bumps) are a solution, but probably one of the worst solutions to the problem. **Rossmo commented** – maybe it was time to have Vision Zero come back to the commission with an update. **Commissioner Lee asked** – I wanted to clarify with Mr. Woodley what I hear. Did you indicate that the asphalt built speed bumps do not cause pain? And I wonder if we have any of them in Austin? **Mr. Woodley responded** – I can't say that they don't cause any pain at all, because everybody's situation is different. There was continued discussion on action taken by John Woodley and Karen and their plans for moving forward and working with Austin Transportation Department. **Commissioner Webber** commented she is inviting the ATD again to the meeting and they might be able to join in February or March 2018.

## **5. Austin Police Department body-worn camera deployment and policy** – sponsored by Commissioner Nunez

Commissioner Nunez opened the discussion with a little history over the past several years the board has asked lots of questions concerning the police body cameras and last year Austin Police Department started rolling out the body cameras. Approximately over 700 cameras are with APD officers and City Council unanimously approved funding for an additional 1200 body cameras, at their last council meeting. There is still a need to hear from the community, since the community was involved in the policy writing of the body camera policy, and I think there are still ongoing

transparency concerns with regard to how APD will share footage with the District Attorney's office. With the hiring of a new City Manager, I think it's an opportunity to start looking at how we can continue to make sure that these body cameras and the policy around them do increase transparency and help build community trust.

**Assistant Chief Reyes** commented - he had provided every commissioner with a copy of the current policy, in addition to a copy of the Bureau of Justice statistics checklist that APD was required to complete with our policy, because we received State and Federal grant funding for the body worn camera program. Currently the body worn cameras are in three of our four substations.

**Matt Simpson** with American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) – commented he thought it was important to start re-engagement with the community once the cameras are on patrol, because it took several years to figure things out especially concerning the ability to request the camera be turned off when they were just chatting with an officer not being arrested.

**Chris Harris** – echoed Matt's comments and commented there is a need for firm language of the 180 day rule which is statute for police misconduct. Once 181 day passes then the video can go away. Chris questioned who the video is for and what is the actual purpose. What are the consequences if an officer doesn't turn the video off when he/she should?

There was discussion amongst the board members and Assistant Chief Reyes concerning recommendations to change/improve the Body Worn Cameras policy and the request for public information procedures. Commissioner Webber commented- it makes sense to bring this item back in a couple of months after some possible community re-engagement and tweaking of the policy.

Additional questions were asked by Commissioners Gonzales, Scruggs and Nunez.

## **6. Future agenda items and 2018 Public Safety Commission meeting schedule**

- A motion came from Commissioner Tyree to approve the 2018 meeting schedule and Commissioner Rossmo second. Unanimous (10 for 0 against)
- Commissioner Holt requested an update on asphalt vs rubber speed bumps

Adjourned @ 6pm