



City of Mesquite, Texas

Minutes - Final City Council

Tuesday, December 17, 2019

6:00 PM

City Hall | Council Chamber
757 N. Galloway | Mesquite, Texas

Present: Mayor Bruce Archer and Councilmembers Tandy Boroughs, Robert Miklos, Dan Aleman, Kenny Green and B. W. Smith, City Manager Cliff Keheley and City Secretary Sonja Land.

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING - CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER - 6:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

OTHER BUSINESS

- 1 Discuss strategies for addressing crime in Mesquite and receive citizen input.

Mayor Bruce Archer called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending. He stated that tonight, Council will hear concerns and suggestions from citizens regarding crime and will be directing the City Manager and Police Chief to prepare an aggressive crime-fighting plan to bring back to Council for consideration in January 2020.

City Manager Cliff Keheley stated that Council and staff are seeking problem-solving suggestions from residents for reducing crime in neighborhoods. Council has been very supportive of the new technology and additional manpower needed to help the Mesquite Police Department (MPD). Members of the MPD are well trained, well equipped and have the right attitude to address this problem. Following Police Chief Charles Cato's presentation, citizens will have the opportunity to speak on strategies, solutions and issues regarding crime. Staff will present options for Council consideration at a Special City Council Meeting in January 2020.

Police Chief Charles Cato introduced Assistant Police Chief Robert Piccioni, Assistant Police Chief David Faaborg, Captain Bill Artesi, Captain Doug Yates, Captain Paul Pecena and Captain David Gill, who are members of the Police Command Staff.

Chief Cato reviewed the Uniform Crime Report, from 2010 through November 2019, for murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft and motor vehicle theft. He stated that an average of five murders occur each year. In 2019, there were six murders. However, one more murder will be added to the 2019 statistics due to the recent death of a beating victim. For the past 10 years, the highest peak in murders was in 2015 with nine and the lowest in 2018 with two. There have been 230 robberies in 2019, compared to 210 at the same time in 2018. Two parking spaces, in front of the MPD, are identified as a "Safety Exchange Zone" and he encouraged citizens to use these spaces or come inside the building anytime they are meeting someone to sell or purchase items. There have been 77 business robberies in 2019, with half of the robberies involving 24-hour convenience stores and gas stations. MPD's clearance rate is 39.5

percent for robberies which is 10 percentage points above the national average. He added that a significant number of robberies are drug deals. Aggravated assaults are trending up with 67 percent of the victims knowing their attacker. Chief Cato stated that 54 percent of the persons arrested do not live in the City of Mesquite.

Chief Cato stated that the MPD communicates with the public through various methods including the City's Facebook page, the Nextdoor app, Citysourced app, Neighbors app, Contact the Chief link on the City's website, MPD lobby open 24 hours a day, non-emergency number, jail log, MPD Call Archive and the Community Crime Map. Chief Cato stated that accuracy is a critical component of the MPD's credibility and when information is released to the public it must be accurate.

The following persons spoke regarding strategies addressing crime in Mesquite: (1) Sherry Williams, 1448 East Park Drive; (2) Andrew Morris, 1825 Oates Drive; (3) Andrew Hubacek, 217 Toler Drive; (4) Bobby Richardson, 1528 Mayfair Drive; (5) Maria Cardenas, Viva Drive; (6) Kaelynne Aldrich, 820 Forestbrook Drive; (7) Kathy Mascaritola, 109 Running Brook Lane; (8) Sherri Neil, 3916 Hunters Trail; (9) J. R. Black, 1739 Roundrock Trail; (10) Jennifer Vidler, 300 Clear Springs Drive; (11) Debbie Anderson, 2729 Ash Creek; (12) David Current, 3704 Susan Drive; (13) Holly Fisk, 4200 Woodbluff Drive; (14) Brenda Jean Patrick, 302 Norwich Lane; (15) Larry Good, 2621 Monticello Drive; (16) Millie Arnold, 2206 Luau Street; (17) Kirk Boxdorfer, 2304 Lesley Lane; (18) Tom Briscoe, 1977 McKenzie Road; (19) Kellie Good, 2621 Monticello Drive; and (20) Reba Graham, 2713 Willow Way.

Suggestions offered from citizens include an MPD mentorship program; adding crime watch group information on the City's website; revising lighting standards in new neighborhoods; revising residential building codes regarding recessed doors; providing a universal Neighborhood Watch business card containing important contact information; encouraging residents to be more visible in their neighborhoods; participating in neighborhood crime watch groups and block parties; Council interaction with the neighborhoods; friending businesses in crime watch areas; sending group texts to crime watch members; crime watch leaders attending PTA meetings at schools; encouraging citizens to ask solicitors to produce solicitors' permit; encouraging residents to install cameras on their properties; and utilizing "No Solicitors" signs.

Chief Cato stated that one School Resource Officer (SRO) is assigned to each middle school, The Learning Center and Mesquite Academy, and two SROs are assigned at each high school. Chief Cato stated that the MPD has a strong mentorship program with the Mesquite Independent School District, the Police Explorer Program, summer camp and college internship program. The MPD recommends citizens use a two-factor authentication for in-home camera systems where citizens use mobile applications to access cameras. Chief Cato recommended citizens install lights around their house and for citizens to call the MPD with parking violations.

City Manager Cliff Keheley stated that a program will be presented in February 2020 regarding "Lights on for Safety." Mr. Keheley expressed appreciation to the citizens for their input and that the Police Command Staff and City Leadership Team will develop strategies for the Council to consider at a future City Council meeting.

Councilmembers expressed appreciation to residents for their input and suggestions in addressing crime.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Miklos moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Aleman and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Sonja Land, City Secretary

Bruce Archer, Mayor