

District III Advisory Board Minutes
May 1, 2013
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The District III Advisory Board meeting was held at 6:30 p.m. at the Wichita Water Center at 101 E Pawnee; eight District Advisory Board members were in attendance; seven City staff and 10 members of the public were present.

Members Present

Eric Bell
Jody Bennett
Paul Davis
Danny Johnson
Wendy Ratliff
David Robbins
Roger Smith
Connie White
Council Member James Clendenin

Staff Present

Officer Trisha Tiede, Patrol East
Officer Claudale Cavanaugh, Patrol South
Jess McNeeley, WAPD
Lt. Scott Siple, WFD
2 members of the Wichita Fire Dept.
Janet Johnson, Neighborhood Services

Guests

Listed on the last page

Members Absent

Terry Brewster
Elena Ingle

ORDER OF BUSINESS

At 6:30 p.m. **Council Member Clendenin** called the meeting to order. Minutes from the April 3, 2013, meeting were approved.

PUBLIC AGENDA

Scheduled items

No items

Non-Scheduled items

No items

STAFF REPORTS

Community Police Report

Officer Claudale Cavanaugh, Beat 26, Patrol South, reported Patrol South recently conducted a john/prostitution sting that resulted in the arrest of 10 men and one woman. She also reported there was a drive by in the 2000 block of S. Main; it was not gang-related and two are in custody for that incident. Also, South City will be holding an organizational meeting on May 2nd.

Officer Trisha Tiede, Beat 33 Patrol East, gave the crime stats for her beat that included three robberies, 10 residential burglaries and seven auto thefts. She said they also recently ran a school bus assignment and only three or four tickets were issued (to motorists passing the bus when the stop sign was extended).

Wichita Fire Department Report

Lt. Scott Siple reported in April there were around 700 calls in District III, which is up around 100 from last year. There were 19 fires; 12 accidental, two undetermined and the others are still under investigation.

Action: Receive and file.

NEW BUSINESS

CON2013-0005

Jess McNeeley, Metropolitan Area Planning Dept, presented a request for a special review of an off-site sign (a junior billboard) within 300 feet of a residential zoned lot. The location is at 3150 Southeast Blvd, located north of 31st Street South and east of K-15. This request has already been approved by the MAPC. **McNeeley** explained it will be an LED, v-shaped sign 12' x 24' in size. He said the back of the sign is visible to two residences, and it will be screened. To date, there have been no calls from neighbors, or protests filed, regarding the sign.

Roger Smith asked if each side would be 24 feet; **McNeeley** said yes.

Jody Bennett asked how high the sign will be; **McNeeley** said 36 feet. She wanted to know if the K-15 Neighborhood Association had been notified; he said yes, along with Planeview and South City.

Dave Robbins asked how far north of the intersection the sign will be placed; **McNeeley** said just north of the intersection.

Vaughn Fox said he was concerned about the brightness of the sign – some of them can blind you at night. **McNeeley** said City Code addresses the brightness issue and it is required that the sign have the ability to adjust the brightness.

Dave Mollhagen, Clear Channel, explained the lighting and dimming process.

Roger Smith, (White) made a motion that the DAB approve staff's recommendation with the five listed conditions.

Action: Motion passed 7-1.

Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office

Sedgwick County Sheriff Jeff Easter, who took office last December, provided the DAB with an in-depth presentation on changes he is making at the jail and in the Sheriff's Office. **Sheriff Easter** was with the Wichita Police Department for 24 years before being elected Sheriff; he said because he had no experience in running a jail, he hired Danny Bardelsbain as Undersheriff. Bardelsbain has previous experience in running the jail.

Easter said when he took over as Sheriff; there were issues in the jail, including the morale of the deputies who work there. One of the first changes he made was to start charging inmates criminally for defacing property (graffiti in the jail cells), contraband and batteries. He said this was important because it's tax payer property they are destroying and it was very bad for morale when inmates would assault deputies with no consequences; thus far they have charged 16 inmates for these types of offenses.

He said the good news is the number of inmates at the jail has decreased. He said in 2009 there were 1500-1600 inmates being housed, not they are down to around 1300. The jail will only accommodate 1200, so around 100 are housed at other county jails -- which involves another big change Sheriff Easter has made. Instead of housing prisoners all over the State – sometimes as far a five hours away, the Sheriff's Office is only housing prisoners in Sumner, Cowley and Butler County (overflow in Chase County). He said he believes this will save the County around \$400,000 per year.

Easter said he wants to provide more opportunities for inmates including GED studies, Christian Ministry programming and a mentoring program. He said studies show when these three components are present, the number of re-offenders drops. Because Christian Ministries uses volunteers, it doesn't cost the tax-payers anything.

Mental Health issues continue to be a problem at the jail. **Sheriff Easter** said he will be appearing in front of the County Commission in the near future to ask for funding for a Mental Health pod. He said about 1/3 of the jail population suffers from mental illness. He said there's one mentally ill inmate who has been in jail 27 times.

He is also making changes to the hiring process. He said he will no longer hire 18-year-olds because he doesn't believe they have enough life experience to be successful working in the jail. Applicants will also be subject to a polygraph. When there are openings for Patrol positions, he said he will promote internally.

In June of 2013, Sheriff Easter plans to launch an interdiction unit to address drug trafficking. He said interdiction units are self supporting and he believes by cutting down on the drug traffic, it will also reduce other types of criminal activity.

Sheriff Easter is saving the tax-payers money in some less traditional ways also. He cited two recent incidents whereby individuals who were in need of a very expensive surgery intentionally committed a crime so they would be put in jail and the tax-payer would have to pay their medical bills. **Easter** said he went to the Judge and had these individuals released from custody. They will still have to stand trial for their crimes, but in the meantime, the County tax payers won't be paying their medical bills.

Dave Robbins asked if Easter has considered detention like the old P farm; **Easter** said yes, he thinks something like that would work for DUI offenders.

Roger Smith applauded Easter's efforts thus far and asked him what he thought about Sheriff Joe Arpaio's methods. **Easter** said some of his ideas are good, but he has gone overboard and now he's being faced with a lot of law suits. **Smith** shared some of his ideas on incarceration. **Easter** explained many of the inmates at the jail have only been charged with a crime – they have not yet been convicted. Therefore, he said you are very limited doing anything that appears to be punitive.

Jody Bennett said she liked Easter's ideas about education and training and asked if Vo-Tech could be incorporated. **Easter** said that is not possible because Vo-Tech involves the use of tools, and tools would not be allowed in the jail.

Bennett also asked if the mentally ill could be isolated; **Easter** said no, isolation is only for the hardened criminals and that is why he is seeking a mental health pod. She also wanted to know how sexual offenders are handled. **Easter** said they are housed separately.

Connie White asked how soon the mental health pod would be implemented; **Easter** said he will go in front of the County Commission on May 16th to ask for the funding. He said dealing with the mentally ill is very challenging because they often exhibit behaviors that other inmates find annoying and so the mentally ill are victimized. He also noted the jail can't force a mentally ill inmate to take their medication. **Vaughn Fox** said everyone should be lobbying the County Commission to support Sheriff Easter in this request.

Paul Davis asked if any certain population would be targeted by the interdiction unit. **Sheriff Easter** said no, but that realistically methamphetamine is currently primarily coming from Mexico, but that cocaine and marijuana are being distributed by all races.

George Theoharis wanted to know how much the jail spends on toilet paper per year; **Easter** said around \$200,000 is set aside in the budget for toilet paper per year.

Jody Bennett asked what the physical condition of the jail building is like; **Easter** said it's in great condition, but does need some technological upgrades in the master control unit and with the cameras.

Vaughn Fox asked how the conceal carry law had impacted the Sheriff's Office; Easter said they have been

extremely busy trying to keep up with the demand. He hopes to have a Deputy assigned to that full time in the near future.

Action: Receive and file.

UPDATES, ISSUES AND REPORTS

Council Member Clendenin announced he is planning on changing the structure of the June DAB meeting and making it more like a Town Hall meeting with Police Department Command staff. He said for the past few months he has been receiving a lot of phone calls from citizens about crime and police response.

Vaughn Fox said he would like to have a meeting with the zoning/OCI people because the things that are occurring in his neighborhood are ridiculous. **CM Clendenin** said that is a possibility.

George Theoharis brought up a new halfway house going in on Chautauqua street that has neighbors concerned, and about an alley on Rutan that he would like to see closed without having to go through the City's vacate process.

Council Member Clendenin said the City Council is working on a small incentive package with a business that will be locating in District III that will ultimately employ between 500 and 1000 people. He said the jobs will pay in the mid \$30,000 range and will have benefits.

Dave Robbins announced the dates for the Southeast High meetings and the Fabrique neighborhood cleanup.

Roger Smith shared some information from the WIN newsletter.

Jody Bennett said the South Area Neighborhood Association will not meet over the summer.

Council Member Clendenin said the South City Neighborhood Association is trying to get re-organized and invited everyone to attend their planning meeting on Thursday at 7 p.m.

Wendy Ratliff announced the Planeview Neighborhood Cleanup and **Connie White** announced the Fairfax clean up.

Meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting for District Advisory Board III will be held at 6:30 p.m., June 5, 2013, at the Water Center at 101 E. Pawnee.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Johnson, Neighborhood Assistant – District III

Guests

Sheriff Jeff Easter
Tom Strickland
Betty Strickland
Vaughn Fox
Jim Gulick
Trisha Epps
Marjorie Griffith
George Theoharis
Wayne Wayman
Dave Mollhagen