

City of St. Petersburg
Public Services & Infrastructure Committee Meeting Report
Meeting of January 13, 2011
City Hall, Room 100

Members and Alternates: Council Members: Herb Polson, Bill Dudley,
Karl Nurse & Leslie Curran
Alternate: Steve Komell

Support Staff: Rob Gerdes, Planner II
Evan Mory, Parking Manager

Others Present: Councilmen Jeff Danner, Jim Kennedy and Wengay Newton, City Administrator Tish Elston, Internal Services Senior Administrator Dave Metz, Chief Assistant City Attorney Mark Winn, Community Enrichment Senior Administrator Goliath Davis III, Zoning Official Philip Lazzara, Director of Transportation and Parking Management Joe Kubicki, Sergeant Hordge, Lieutenant Korinek, Assistant Director of Community Enrichment Shrimatee Ojah-Maharaj, Economic Development Coordinator Paul Stellrecht, Manager of Neighborhood Transportation Mike Frederick, Assistant City Attorney Lynn Gordon, Assistant City Attorney Macall Dyer and Deputy City Clerk Amelia Preston.

A. Call to Order/Roll Call/Vote for Chair and Vice-Chair – 9:42 a.m.

Chair: Councilman Polson
Vice-Chair: Councilman Dudley

B. Approval of Agenda

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Minutes of December 16, 2010 approved.

D. Continued/Deferred Business

1. Central Avenue Unified Corridor

Goliath Davis stated that in June of 2010 the PSI committee asked the Community Enrichment Administration to facilitate discussions with businesses and associations along the Central Avenue corridor and to build on work previously done by other city departments. Staff held four (4) meetings with stakeholders along the corridor and invited everyone to attend in order to allow people to meet each other and to build assets/issues lists. At the meetings, staff discussed case studies such as Grand Central and brought in subject matter experts in Law Enforcement and Transportation. Mr. Davis stated that the goal was to communicate that the city is willing to help but that the interested stakeholders need to take the lead as was done in Grand Central. As a result of the meetings, stakeholders found that they have many issues in common even though each district wants to have its own identity. Mr. Davis stated that the various groups along the corridor are in different stages of development, but that the West Central Business District is being very aggressive in moving forward. He further stated that the groups are now taking time to work on their individual issues and the city will reconvene meetings at some point in the 1st quarter of 2011.

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Several of the Committee Members and Councilmen present thanked Community Enrichment for the work they have done and for the update. CM Polson praised the work that is being done by the West Central Business District group. Several questions were asked regarding the progress of various groups and attendees at the meetings. CM Nurse encouraged small groups to get started and Mr. Davis commented that many of the functioning groups along the corridor are led by small groups of people.

Action: Staff will meet again with stakeholders in the 1st quarter of 2011 and will schedule a return to PSI for another staff update.

2. Red Light Camera Program Update

Mr. Kubicki stated that staff has been working on three (3) issues related to the red light camera program: 1) The need for cameras; 2) an independent analysis of crash data; and 3) an evaluation of contractors. Pertaining to the need for red light cameras Mr. Kubicki stated that staff has been reviewing all intersections in the city to determine if there are any technical safety issues that need to be remedied according to FHA guidelines. These include issues such as signal timing, brightness of lights, effect of sun glare, etc. Staff is resolving these issues where they appear and the next safety step to take is red light cameras. Regarding the independent analysis of crash data, the report shows that 36% of crashes at signals occur due to red light running. It also shows an average of 15 red light running caused injuries per month and an average of six (6) fatal crashes per year caused by red light running. Lastly, Mr. Kubicki noted that staff has been meeting with contractors and reviewing costs and services. Mr. Kubicki stated that the Administration may send out an RFP for services or may piggyback on an existing contract.

Discussion and questions ensued among the Committee Members and other member of City Council present. The discussion items included: the perception of St. Petersburg as a dangerous place to drive; red light cameras as public safety tools – not revenue generators; prohibiting right turns on red in downtown; the number of tickets issued for illegal right turns; extending the time of “all red” at intersections; education related to red light cameras and the “dilemma zone;” staff’s opinion of a report critical of red light cameras; the procedure of citing a red light runner and whether it is a traffic citation; and the effectiveness of modifying behavior through fines. CM Kennedy asked for a copy of the FHA comments on the critical study cited and follow-up from communities that are removing red light cameras. CM Polson related information from an MPO subcommittee that recommends uniform signage for red light cameras throughout jurisdictions, a website showing the location of red light cameras and education for magistrates handling appeals of red light camera citations.

Action: Mr. Kubicki will update the PSI committee again as he moves forward toward a contract for Red Light Cameras.

E. New Business

1. Domestic Equipment Storage on City Streets

CM Newton introduced the issue concerning domestic equipment parked in the right-of-way such as boats, inoperable vehicles, trailers, etc. Sergeant Hordge discussed

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Section 26-150 of the City Code of Ordinances which prohibits the storing of domestic equipment on city streets with conditions. The Sergeant stated that he had discussed the issue with Chief Harmon and they believe the issue can be addressed through the current regulation. Assistant City Attorney Lynn Gordon stated that she and the Zoning Official, Philip Lazzara, had some concerns about the current regulations and would like to recommend some modifications. A discussion ensued related to enforcement of regulations on private property by the Codes Compliance Assistance Department and in the right-of-way by the Police Department. CM Kornell stated that it can be frustrating for neighborhoods to follow up on complaints when they are switching from Codes to the Police Department as the equipment is moved from private property to the right-of-way. Goliath Davis stated that persistence and enforcement by the Police Department are the keys to rectifying such situations. CM Nurse discussed enforcing yard parking through the Police Department as a traffic violation. CM Dudley related a story about the diligence required in enforcing a long-term domestic equipment violation in his neighborhood. CM Newton stated that he will advise his constituents to contact the Police Department regarding domestic equipment stored in the right-of-way.

Action: Assistant City Attorney Lynn Gordon and Zoning Official Philip Lazzara will return to PSI with suggestions on modifying existing ordinances. The Police Department will enforce the existing regulations regarding domestic equipment storage in rights-of-way.

F. Next Meeting – January 27, 2011

1. Use of QR codes on historic sites & points of interest – referred by CM Newton – presentation by Rick MacAulay, Manager of Urban Planning & Historic Preservation.
2. Proposal to ban tobacco litter on city beaches – referred by CM Newton – discussion by Mark Winn, Chief Assistant City Attorney.
3. Potential impacts of solar panels in zoning districts – referred by the Community Redevelopment Agency – presentation by Derek Kilborn, Planner III.

G. Adjournment – meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.