

VILLAGE OF WESLEY CHAPEL  
SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
7:00 PM, February 8, 2007

The Safety Committee met in the Fellowship Hall of the Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church at 120 Potter Road South, Wesley Chapel, North Carolina, with Councilman Brad Horvath presiding.

**Attendance**

Present: Councilman Brad Horvath, Committee Members Allison Maher, Bryan Raughley, John Stoehr, Tessie Morris and Jennifer Viohl.

Absent: Hank Pressley and Bill Moran.

Guests: Five guests present, including Craig Horn, Weddington's future Safety Committee Chair.

**Minutes**

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM and a quorum was present.

1. Motion was made by Stoehr and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Viohl to approve the January meeting minutes. Motion was approved.
2. Chairman Raughley renewed the discussion that the mission statement for the Safety Committee was adopted. He also reiterated that fire protection was discussed in detail at the last meeting, mainly due to the devastating fire that had occurred just before the meeting in Stallings.
3. Stoehr led a discussion about law enforcement. He suggested that we look further into the advantages and risks of adding a local deputy. The group agreed that a crime prevention strategy is needed based upon present criminal activity. Crime trends should be examined further. The group agreed that we should analyze the local crime trends first. Then we can better evaluate alternatives to for a crime prevention strategy.

Jen Viohl recently hosted a Citizens Meeting at Stonegate with Lt. McGee from the Union County Sheriff's Department. This meeting introduced the Neighborhood Watch Program. Lt. McGee was an excellent speaker and provided insightful information and handouts. Viohl brought up the topic of connecting local Neighborhood Watch Programs via the Safety Committee. Lt. McGee will be invited to our next meeting to explain the Program. Raughley and Viohl will compile a list of 10 questions for him to review and target the discussion. Viohl will request Lt. McGee to provide crime statistics related our desired need for understanding crime trends.

4. National Night Out was discussed. The event will be held August 7 or 8<sup>th</sup> this year. This event is a national program that promotes a safe evening among communities. Wesley Chapel, Weddington, Indian Trail and Monroe have previously participated.
5. Viohl spoke about the safety group that has been communication for one year. She developed an organized email network for communicating safety information among point-of-contacts from subdivisions and rural parcels. She does this via email blasts. The information contains updates about safety issues, such as recent crimes and suspicious activities. She has about 45 people on her email list across Union County. Unfortunately, she will be moving in June and she asked if the Safety Committee could absorb what she does. Perhaps even link it to the Wesley Chapel website.
6. Stoehr reported that he had spoken to Indian Trail and tried to get their crime statistics. He was told that they have had some loitering and vandalism. He felt that they are passionate about fighting and preventing crime in their respective areas. They presently have six, contracted deputies. Each salary is \$60,000 per year. Stoehr led the group in a discussion to identify specific analytical factors for a possible law enforcement study. These factors included:

- § How do we justify a contracted deputy?
- § How do we establish want vs. need?
- § Are local tax payers willing to pay for a contracted deputy?
- § What are the crime trends, such as breaking and entering, vandalism, theft (severity); commercial versus residential vandalism; rural versus subdivision parcels; and population densities of high crime areas.
- § Comparing our crime statistics with neighboring jurisdictions, such as Indian Trail.
- § Understanding the ratios of population and businesses to contracted officers in neighboring jurisdictions.
- § Comparing our crime statistics to crime five years ago and population growth

It was also noted that contracted deputies are not dedicated solely to a jurisdiction. Deputies must answer 911 calls outside of their assigned jurisdiction when call volumes are high. Apparently, this situation occurs often.

The group further discussed omni-presence alternatives that could be implemented until the need for a contracted deputy is clear. The progressive alternatives included: (1) organized Neighborhood Watch Programs that could share information, (2) a volunteer Public Safety organization that conducts unarmed patrols, (3) shopping center security patrols, and (4) a local reserve unit of the Sheriff's Department.

7. The group continued discussions about Sean Maher's omni-presence concept that was presented in November 2006. Mr. Maher will be invited to present his concept in further detail at the May 2007 committee meeting.
8. Horvath talked about the relationship of the law enforcement presence with the future Master Plan. He suggested that the Village could survey residents about progressive levels of law enforcement and fire protection. He asked that we meet with the Sheriff's Department to verify the cost (salary and benefits) of a contracted. This way we would be prepared if and when this is needed.
9. Raughley discussed his concerns regarding the Pandemic Flu. He would like to invite Pat Beekman, Emergency Director, to possibly speak to us in the near future.
10. Guests, Mr. and Mrs. Patterson, presented a public safety issue. They are concerned about the shooting range located at the Land property off of Bloomsberry Lane, a parcel adjacent to their parcel. The shooting range is used to discharge a wide range of firearms, including high-powered rifles and machine guns. The Patterson's have requested assistance from the Sheriff's Department. However, the Sheriff's Department has no laws to enforce upon the property owner. The property owner is supposedly exempt from state and local noise and vibration laws. Councilman Horvath will bring the issue up with the Village Council. He also suggested that they contact the Board of Education, which is building an elementary school near the range, as well as federal law enforcement to verify that all necessary permits and licenses are in order.

Raughley stated that the Committee will take the information received into review. The public safety issue is that development is encroaching upon the shooting range. While the property owner has rights to discharge firearms, the property owner also has a duty to assure that 100% of the projectiles remain on his property. The Committee will attempt to locate a national standard with shooting range design requirements by the April meeting. A guest further encouraged the Patterson's to keep the issue in the forefront with as many public organizations as possible.

11. The next meeting of the Safety Committee is scheduled for March 8, 2007, at 7pm.
12. Viohl made the motion to adjourn. Shoehr 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Recording Secretary

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Chair, Safety Committee