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January 25, 2010

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The Committee on Public Health and Public Safety convened on January 25, 2010, with Chairman William White presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Rebekah Gewirtz and John Connolly also present and voting. Also present were Aldermen Bruce Desmond, Maryann Heuston, Sean O'Donovan, Walter Pero and Dennis Sullivan, Administrative Assistant Matt Dias, Executive Director of OSPCD Monica Lamboy, City Solicitor John Gannon, Superintendent of Inspectional Services Ed Nuzzo, Police Chief Anthony Holloway, Deputy Police Chief Michael Cabral, Ted Tobin from KSS, Matt Kramer from Best Pest Control and interested members of the public.

MaxPak:

Mr. Tobin and Mr. Kramer informed the members that the examination of the MaxPak site determined that there was no rat infestation but there may have been an infestation of mice. Chief Holloway discussed the report of shots fired at the site on January 18th and said that .22 caliber shells were found at the site and it appeared that the shots were fired at the dumpster. The persons who fired the shots has not been identified, however 4 white males between the ages of 18 and 22 were observed firing the shots. Chief Holloway said that the Police Department received 2 or 3 calls per year of shots being fired. Deputy Chief Cabral gave the committee the statistics of the directed patrols at the site.

Neighbors expressed concern over this incident and feel that the neighborhood is being disrespected and that the condition of the site is contributing to lawless behavior in the area. Neighbors also spoke about trespassing on the site and said that there should be more police enforcement. One neighbor reported seeing an individual release an animal into the site and reported the license plate number to the police. Chief Holloway said that he did not get the call but would follow up on the matter. Chairman White expressed concern over the break in communication and asked for a detailed report of why the information was not passed to the Chief despite it being reported.

Mr. Tobin stated that he has done his best to secure the property and noted that there was a 24 hour fire watch detail present when the shots were fired at the site. Chairman White stated that the vacant site would create future problems, therefore, the city must be pro-active to prevent it from being a nuisance and he requested that the Inspectional Services Department report back to the committee with ways to monitor a large vacant lot. Mr. Nuzzo suggested that a private security company might be hired. Chairman White

suggested that Neighborhood Watch signs be posted and Mr. Nuzzo advised that residents contact police about suspicious activity rather than engaging trespassers. Chairman White directed that Mr. Tobin meet with Monica Lamboy and prepare a plan for the security of the site within the next couple of weeks to present to the committee at an upcoming meeting.

515 Somerville Avenue:

Attorney Paul Pru appeared before the committee representing the owner of the property, who was not present. Alderman Heuston discussed her concerns regarding the property and said that it is unsightly and that a new fence should be put up around the property. Alderman Heuston asked for a clarification as to the status of development of the site and said that the continued permit extensions are not good for the neighborhood. Attorney Pru gave his assurance that the site would be cleaned up by an LSP and that the DEP mandated deadlines would be met. The property may be developed after that, however, no financing has been secured yet. Chairman White discussed the history of the environmental issues at the site and questioned the ability of the developer, noting that the concrete slab was removed even though the permit specifically stated that it was not to be removed.

Ms. Lamboy gave an overview of the demolition and excavation of the property. Alderman Desmond asked Attorney Pru to provide the committee with copies of the status reports.

Resident Lydia Costa spoke about problems at the site, especially with regard to rupturing the underground tank. Ms. Costa said that at one point, she contacted Ms. Lamboy to make sure that a wall of the building was secured and as a result of the city's failure to secure the site, she had to hire an attorney to get something done. Ms. Costa stated that she appreciated the work done by former ISD Superintendent George Landers with regard to the overall situation. Resident Claudia Morrow told the members that the structure was not supposed to come down, according to the plan, and that ISD should be more diligent. According to Ms. Morrow, the city gave verbal approval to do the work even though there was a stop work order in effect. Ms. Lamboy stated that Massachusetts is a self-reporting state and that the city does not enforce state requirements, adding that she has been in contact with the DEP. Going forward, a pre-demolition meeting will take place before a building is torn down. Ms. Lamboy explained why the stop work order was issued and stated that the asbestos removal had to be done, therefore it was allowed to continue. Alderman Heuston would like to make a zoning amendment to codify the city's role in these types of situations and feels that it's useful to discuss what can be done differently so that these problems don't occur in the future. Alderman Heuston said that she believes that ISD is under-staffed and she will submit a resolution to add staff to the department in the FY-11 budget.

Chairman White asked why no fines were assessed against the developer and Ms. Lamboy replied that the stop work order is the method used by the city.

Chairman White's motion *that OSPCD keep the committee apprised of all DEP compliance by the developer* was amended by Alderman Heuston to include *that this Board be informed prior to any permit extensions being issued and that the committee be provided with copies of the status reports*. The motion was approved.

Crime Statistics:

Chief Holloway told the members that crime in the city is at its lowest point since 2005. There has been a decrease in the number of burglaries and 109 associated arrests, with one individual admitting to 200 burglaries. Chief Holloway credited the city's police officers for solving the crimes. The city has seen a

rise in domestic violence and the city now has a victim advocate to assist in these cases. Incidents of sexual assault are also down.

Surveillance Cameras:

The Chief reported that the surveillance cameras had only zoomed in on one event. Otherwise, the panoramic view has been in use. In order to zoom in on a person, an officer must enter a password and the system is monitored. The chief told the members that crimes don't occur where criminals know a camera is located. There is a monitor in Chief Holloway's office that displays a panoramic view of the video being captured by the city's surveillance camera. Alderman Gewirtz commented that the decrease in crime at locations where a camera exists may be related to better lighting.

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following 4 items:

188640: Order - By Ald. White, That the Chief of Police and Acting Chief of Police provide this Board with 2009 crime statistics, and appear before the Committee on Public Health & Safety on 1/25/10.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be placed on file

VOTE: Unanimous, 3 - 0 in favor

188641: Order - By Ald. White, That the Chief of Police and Acting Chief of Police appear before the Committee on Public Health & Safety to update this Board on the use of surveillance cameras, as previously discussed.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be placed on file

VOTE: Unanimous, 3 - 0 in favor

188689: Order - By Ald. Desmond and O'Donovan, That the Director of Public Health bait the sewers at Nashua St., Wilton Rd., Princeton St., and Alpine St., following the demolition at the MaxPak site.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be placed on file

VOTE: Unanimous, 3 - 0 in favor

188690: Order - By Ald. White, That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services

attend

the next meeting of the Committee on Public Health & Safety on 1/25/10, with all baiting records for the recent demolition at MaxPak, and be prepared to discuss all related baiting efforts.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be placed on file

VOTE: Unanimous, 3 - 0 in favor