

31. DISCUSSION REGARDING POTENTIAL SHORT TERM PUBLIC SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS SUCH AS HIGH-INTENSITY LIGHTING ON COLLINS COURT

February 14, 2018 - R9 V

Sponsored by Commissioner Samuelian
Police

ACTION

Commissioner Samuelian said that he would like to speak a little bit on the item and then hear from a few people, one of them being Mike Palma from the Ocean Drive Association. This item came up at Commission; there were some high profile incidents from a public safety standpoint. He said we have tried to accelerate lighting which there has been progress and license plate readers. This is an idea that has been floating around, related to more policing on Ocean Drive. This discussion is about a collaborative effort where the Ocean Drive Association would be participating and providing funding and also looking for some support from the City. From April to August during the weekends, the first question is whether we want to see more policing on Ocean Drive specifically on the West side of the street, the second question is are we okay considering funding incrementally from the City if the businesses step up. He thinks it is an intriguing concept and is well worth the time. He thinks what we are going to hear is conceptually support from the business community, our residents, and the Police Chief as well.

Mike Palma, Ocean Drive Association, spoke. He said that the Ocean Drive Association began a due program and they are collecting dues, but this would be separate from that program because he doesn't want to put more pressure on the members. This is basically a cut out of 5 different businesses that have agreed to fund additional 5 officers for the West side of Ocean Drive with a sergeant in charge of the group. We need to make it a safer, cleaner environment. These officers would be looking at the quality of life issues that they are having. He personally went to the businesses with Ceci Velasco, Executive Director of Ocean Drive Association and they came up with a number they thought they can handle for a budget. He recognized Chief Oates in being open with them and trying to figure out how to do this and Ian Robinson as well has been helpful.

Daniel Oates, Police Chief, spoke. He said that they are excited to add up to 5 additional officers on Ocean Drive in the concentrated area with the highest activity on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. He said we want to find a way to make this work. There are some nuances associated with this; the most significant for him is that the labor union has to agree to a different off-duty rate to work on Ocean Drive versus anywhere else in the City. He said he has not achieved that agreement yet, there have been discussions about it and he thinks we can get there. He thinks Mike has had some discussions with the union president as well. Any time there are changes with the workforce there are some concerns. The other challenge is finding the set of officers willing to work those hours. The Ocean Drive Association generously offering a higher rate of pay is probably going to make it easier to fill those spots. This is something that can be worked out, it obviously a policy decision for the Committee whether it will be supported by paying for a portion of those costs.

Jon Guzman, Miami Beach Crime Prevention and Awareness Group, spoke. He said that they full support any action the City can take to make the place safer; there have been a

couple of videos on their site. He spoke on behalf of the group by saying they don't want to take this anymore. There has to be more urgency, they support any type of urgency to resolve these situations. People could have gotten killed; these videos could blow up on us nationally and internationally. We have to be more urgent about it.

Commissioner Samuelian said the spirit here is short term, things we can do right away to move the needle. This proposal that is not finalized yet will have incremental police, potentially up to 5 officers on the west side of Ocean Drive as soon as April, if the logistics get worked out. Specifically what we are talking about is if we are willing to fund a sergeant, there has been a request for an additional officer, we can consider that. If there is support, we should allow the Chief to work with the union; the businesses involved and perhaps favorably move forward to the Commission pending those details get worked out. He said that is the gist of what is on the table.

Commissioner Arriola said to Mr. Guzman's point there is a sense of urgency and he thanked Commissioner Samuelian for bringing this up again. He said he wants to solve the problem, he said the past 2 years he has been on the Commission we have thrown money at the problem, we have closed down some problematic businesses. We have increased lighting as well and still the problem persists. He said that Mr. Guzman's group has been instrumental in identifying some chronic bad actors and making sure they go away. He said he is willing to do everything to make the problem go away, but he is looking to Chief Oates for any recommendations. He said we tried the 2 am, which was one of the Chief's recommendations and that didn't pass. He is willing to do everything and anything to solve this problem. He said he is open to ideas including more police.

Chief Oates said it will be fabulous to have 5 extra police officers during those windows of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights when they are needed. He said he is confident that the union issues can be worked out. It is a policy decision from the Committee whether or not some portion of the costs was traditionally paid for by the operators and some portion by the City.

Commissioner Arriola asked if we have dollars on this yet. John Woodruff, Chief Financial Officer, said this just came up. Commissioner Arriola suggested some ball park figures to know what 5 police officers and a sergeant would cost and what the businesses are prepared to pay for.

Mike Palma said they put together a quick analysis and they sent it to the Commission. Ceci Velasco passed out the analysis. Commissioner Arriola asked for Mike Palma to walk the Committee through the numbers.

Mike Palma said this is for Friday, Saturday, 9 p.m.-5 a.m. and a 6 p.m.- 3 a.m. on Sunday. There would be 3 officers that the businesses would take the majority of at \$97,000 and the 1 additional officer and 1 sergeant are at \$32,000 and \$35,000, which equals \$67,000.

Commissioner Steinberg said she is a little bit confused because this said this was an item about high intensity lighting and now are talking about police officers.

Commissioner Samuelian said this was referred from the Commission as under the umbrella of short term public safety enhancements. We talked at the last meeting about lighting on Collins Court, about license plate readers. The idea was what things we could

do in the short term. That was the umbrella and we have covered a couple of them, this was another idea that surfaced for short term.

Mike Palma said this is a short term attempt. As they get Ocean Drive organized and the membership fees are coming in, he is hoping by next year there is an allocated item and they can in fact put more police and pay for it, whatever they need to do to keep it safer and cleaner. This is a start, but they are dedicated on the back end to get the Association to front more in the future.

Commissioner Arriola confirmed the days and hours that this would apply. Monday-Thursday this wouldn't apply because they are fairly quieter.

Mike Palma said there would be 4 total officers and a sergeant, the businesses are going to pick up the 3 and they are asking the City at some point to figure out how to pay for the sergeant and additional officer.

Commissioner Arriola asked if the total numbers that were provided earlier would be for 18 week period. Mike Palma said yes. Commissioner Arriola said that the City's exposure would be about \$67,000 in salary and asked if there would be any additional costs. He asked about any pension and benefits.

Chief Oates said that there are some nuances that need to be worked out; he believes that the proposal is a stipend to go to the Ocean Drive Association and then all of this would be off-duty work. Mike Palma confirmed, he said we need some money to be fund the program because it would alleviate some of the other issues related to the City paying directly which is more expensive.

Commissioner Arriola asked Chief Oates if we can find the officers to fill these positions.

Chief Oates said they have worked cooperatively in the past to try and fund a regular group on these nights, the challenge has been getting police officers to volunteer to work off-duty on Friday and Saturday nights, there are a few reasons why. The idea that this rate is significantly higher than what we are paying for off-duty in the rest of the City, the problem with finding volunteers they hope will go away. They are hopeful they will be able to find the officers.

Commissioner Arriola said the City's financial exposure would be \$67,000 for 18 weeks. He is comfortable. This will give us some important data whether it works or doesn't work. If it prevents chronic bad behavior, then it is a small investment with a high payout.

Ceci Velasco, Executive Director of the Ocean Drive Association, said 2 years there was a pilot program with off-duty and it showed a significant decrease in crime during that time. She said they did the security ambassadors last year, which was positive because of the visual presence, but what they all determined was that off-duty was really the critical solution that worked.

Commissioner Samuelian said this will have to go to the Commission of course and said if Ceci Velasco has some of that data for the full Commission that actually showed we had an impact he thinks that would be very helpful. The motion on the table and he is happy to make it is that conceptually the City is on board with funding part of this and the businesses are going to fund part. We look to Chief Oates to work the details and as soon

as he has the details worked out, given the urgency we would then want it to go directly to the Commission.

Chief Oates said that the critical detail is reaching an agreement with the union. He thinks that can be achieved, but he doesn't want speak for the union president.

Commissioner Steinberg said she is fine seconding the motion, but she asked John Woodruff where this money would be coming from. She wants to make sure we can do this if we say we are going to.

John Woodruff said that he would describe the City's situation as tight right now. He said we would probably work with Chief Oates to take another look as we get to the second quarter of the year we will have a much better idea if there are any potential savings within the Police Department. Thankfully this is a number we can probably work with and we will see what we can do. He said he thinks we can get there.

Commissioner Arriola said from what he remembers we still have a number of open positions in the Police Department, he asked if that is correct, that maybe we budgeted for but aren't yet filled. Chief Oates said yes, but we also have some challenges around overtime this year too. Sometimes vacant positions translate into overtime.

Commissioner Steinberg said we are going to have a conversation about police officers in schools for the remainder of the school year, which is going to tap into overtime also. She wants to make sure that we are thinking of all of the priorities.

Jon Guzman said when talking about budget and number of police officers, etc, he said he met with Mayor Gelber a week ago or so and we keep saying we are adding more officers, but the chart he has seen here are about 400 officers and it dips a little bit but then comes back and forth. That has been the level for 10 years we aren't adding police officers, we still have the same amount. The officers cannot just keep doing shifts on overtime, someone needs to make a policy decision, and we need more total police. We have the same amount of officers and a lot more challenges. There are rougher crowds on Ocean Drive and many other crazy people, that has changes dramatically and the personnel has not changed to address it. He knows it is going to cost money, but this has to be the top priority.

Commissioner Arriola agreed.

Commissioner Steinberg said overtime ends up costing more sometimes.

Commissioner Arriola said this Commission has been fully committed to funding and adding police resources, technology, doing things to go after bad businesses.

Chief Oates gave some information on where we stand now in terms of hiring. There are 18 vacancies today, they are hiring 10 graduates of the police academy on Monday and they hope another 6 people will be ready by April 2nd, they will be at virtually full staffing by early April. The problem is that those 16 or 18 whatever they end up with is that it is roughly 6 months before they count towards staffing because of all of the high level of training they are required to do. He said they also expect 7 additional retirements in August. They hope to be at near full staffing within a couple of weeks the department will

be paying for the officers, but they don't count towards staffing. They cannot be deployed on the street for 6 months.

MOTION: Commissioner Samuelian motioned to move this with a position recommendation. Conceptually the City is on board with funding part of this and the businesses are going to fund part. As soon as the details are worked out from Chief Oates, go directly to Commission. Commissioner Steinberg seconded.