

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
4th Floor Police Training Room
June 14, 2004

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Anthony J. Dolce and Council Members Carolyn Bloomquist and Lynda Albert (arrived at 6:50 p.m.)

OTHERS PRESENT: City Clerk Sanfilippo, Police Chief MacLaughlin, Deputy Fire Chief Hedlund, Corporation Counsel Fiore-Nieves, Stephen Abdella, Marie Carrubba, Martin Adams, Helen Kerns, Peter Morgante, Jeff Lay of LaMar Advertising, John Whittaker of the Post Journal,

Chairman Dolce called the meeting to order.

The Committee reviewed a request from St. James Parish to hold an Evangelization Mission at Potter's Terrace on July 25, 26 and 27, 2004 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Carried: 3 ayes, 0 nays

A request from Beckie Towne of Towne's 5 Corner Diner for a loading zone in front of 230 E. 2nd Street and a discussion on changing 2nd Street to two-way traffic from Institute Street west were tabled pending receipt of reports from the Department of Public Works.

Corporation Counsel Fiore-Nieves advised the Committee that she would be meeting with staff members to draft possible changes to the zoning ordinance regarding billboards. Chairman Dolce wanted to make sure that everyone was on the same page and requested that Bill Rice attend the July 12, 2004 Public Safety Committee meeting. Mr. Lay from LaMar advertising asked about the process of amending the ordinance. Chairman Dolce explained the process. Mr. Lay stated that his company wants to remain a part of the community and offered to send some sample legislation to the Corporation Counsel. Mr. Adams questioned how much input the Planning Commission would have in the process and stated that it was important to get their feedback. He also distributed copies of a letter to Jim Olson dated April 13, 2004. Chairman Dolce explained that the Planning Commission had referred this matter to the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Abdella on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce stated that they were interested in this issue and were planning to do a survey. He will pass the results on to the Committee and offered their assistance.

The Committee reviewed a letter from Gary Templin of MacDuff's Restaurant regarding the "Thunder in the Streets" special event planned by the DJDC. After discussion and review the Committee denied the request from the Downtown Jamestown Development Corporation to sell and consume alcohol on Tracy Plaza.

Carried: 3 ayes, 0 nays

The Committee discussed at length the proposal to place on the ballot an amendment to the Charter to change the term of City Council Members from two years to four years. Chairman Dolce advised that he had contacted individuals from some other cities who had four-year terms for their legislature. He received a positive reaction regarding the four-year term. Some of the comments that he received were they got more done; it was less partisan; and that they worked better toward a common goal. Most of these municipalities had a part-time Mayor, smaller councils and at-large rather than ward Council Members. Marie Carrubba addressed the Committee regarding the consensus of the Charter Advisory Committee that a four-year term was preferable. She explained that this was not put into the revised Charter as they were afraid that the entire Charter could be defeated based upon one issue. Some of their reasons were: people didn't want to run due to the two-year term; the members were running every other year;

there would be more consistency; a larger pool of people would be available; better decisions would be made; and people would think about the issues rather than "will this get me re-elected"; it was expensive to run every other year; better long-range planning; and they would be more effective. Chairman Dolce thought that a two-year term for Council and a four-year term for Mayor created an imbalance. Mr. Morgante questioned whether the City needed at-large Council people. Councilwoman Albert felt that the community wants a choice every two years and that the people should be petitioning for this change. She did not hear a clamor to put this on the ballot. She also stated that there would be an election held every year anyway. She felt that there could be people who are not willing to make a commitment for a four-year term. Ms. Carrubba stated that the Charter Advisory Committee was made up of a cross section of the community and they felt that this should be put to the people. She also said that the people were only hearing one side of the issue and the Committee had planned on doing an education campaign to inform the voters. Chief MacLaughlin stated that government today is very complex. It is difficult for department heads to bring people up to speed every two years. All decisions have a consequence and he recommended the four-year term. Councilwoman Bloomquist felt that the public should have the opportunity to make their own decisions. It was her opinion that it was wrong not to put it on the agenda. Councilwoman Bloomquist moved to bring this forward to City Council for a vote.

Denied: 1 aye, 2 nays
(Albert and Dolce, nay)

Chairman Dolce stated that he did not support this motion because he wants to take a look at other options; for example, terms, number of Council Members, type of government and other possible choices. He did not feel that people were clamoring for a change and that they need to look at other things.

Helen Kerns addressed the Committee regarding concerns that several years ago a request for a handicap parking space had turned into the establishment of a 15-minute loading zone in front of the Arts Council. This was referred to the Department of Public Works.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Shirley A. Sanfilippo, MMC, RMC
City Clerk