

DRAFT

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Special Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, March 5, 2019

A Special Session of the Piedmont Public Safety Committee was held March 5, 2019, at Piedmont Veterans Hall, 401 Highland Avenue, Piedmont, CA. In accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2(a) the agenda for this meeting was posted for public inspection on March 1, 2019.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lynne Wright called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Lynne Wright and Committee Members: Police Chief Jeremy Bowers, Fire Chief Bret Black, Lori Elefant, Jeffrey Horner and Garrett Keating

Absent: Committee Member Chris Houlder, Gina Jurva and Amal Smith

Also Present: Councilmember Jen Cavanaugh, Council Liaison

PUBLIC FORUM

A resident on Wildwood Gardens spoke of two issues involving speeding and emergency egress on his street. He reported working with the City Council on them, briefly described the traffic calming request and work to hopefully resolve the emergency egress issue.

SPECIAL SESSION

**Public Safety Camera
Evaluation Meeting**

Police Chief Jeremy Bowers indicated that the purpose of this meeting is to receive resident feedback and hear resident concerns regarding the possibility of public safety cameras at various locations within Piedmont. He indicated that he will discuss the reasons public safety cameras are being proposed, the pilot program, integration with the existing Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) cameras, as well as technical program specifics and next steps.

Chief Bowers detailed the history of the City's ALPR program, which began in 2013. He spoke of the efficacy of the program and how it has been used since installation. He also spoke of successes achieved by the ALPR program, including the identification of suspects in several high profile incidents which have taken place in Piedmont. Chief Bowers also indicated that the ALPR system has been used in conjunction with private video surveillance footage provided by homeowners to help identify suspects. He noted that there is evidence that bad actors have taken precautions to avoid detection by the ALPR system.

Chief Bowers then described the Public Safety Camera pilot program approved by the City Council and implemented at the end of 2017, which consists of cameras at the intersection of Oakland and Grand Avenue. He reported that there were initial public concerns regarding privacy. Chief Bowers reported that the Council considered these concerns and approved a public safety camera policy which addresses privacy concerns.

The Chief then presented examples where the public safety cameras captured robberies and burglaries on camera and were used to identify vehicles. He also spoke of the collaboration with BART officers for incidents occurring in their parking lot.

Chief Bowers then presented data on incidents which have occurred from 2013 to the present and indicated that his department has been using this data to locate hot spots or where crimes are occurring. He noted that ALPR data was also used in the preparation of this data.

The Chief spoke of privacy and civil rights concerns, indicating that the Police Department wants to ensure that its employees are able to view the footage and that it only is used for criminal investigation purposes. He also spoke about the Values Act adopted by the State legislature which addresses the prohibition of local law enforcement involvement in civil immigration procedures, and the Council approved its own sanctuary city resolution. He discussed the Public Records Act and how it relates to footage from Public Safety Cameras and disclosure of Police personnel records. Chief Bowers indicated that the proposed cameras would not be used for traffic enforcement, but might be used to help determine the cause of traffic collisions. He also discussed data quality and retention time.

Chief Bowers presented a news video involving a violent home invasion in Piedmont wherein cameras were instrumental in solving the crime. He spoke about the time it took to obtain the private surveillance footage, find a car that closely matched the suspect's vehicle, review of the public safety camera footage, the ability to get the license plate from the camera, and dispatch of officers. He indicated that officers would not have been able to locate the car and proceed with the case had the public safety cameras not been in place, indicating that they play an integral role in keeping the community safe and solving crimes.

Chief Bowers indicated that additional neighborhood meetings will follow to discuss this issue. He thanked Public Safety Committee members Jeffrey Horner, Lori Elefant, and Chris Houlder for their work. He invited residents interested in this issue to communicate with him via email and indicated that there is a Frequently Asked Questions document on the City's web site.

Chief Bowers then opened the floor to questions. The first was whether more cameras would be considered. Chief Bowers said there is a list of locations that goes beyond the first six cameras, and he believes it will be a matter of the public appetite for it and the cost.

The second was whether it would have greater deterrent effect to place signs at camera locations indicating their presence. Chief Bowers indicated that from a transparency and privacy standpoint, he would suggest this be done; however, he was not sure it would deter criminals.

The third question was whether any similar technologies have ever been challenged by defense attorneys in court. Chief Bowers indicated that while defense attorneys can attack anything, he was unaware of any case. Public Safety Committee Member Jeffrey Horner, a retired Superior Court Judge, discussed the legal and constitutional standards governing government use of surveillance cameras.

The fourth question was whether the proposal was to co-locate cameras with ALPRs. Chief Bowers indicated that some proposed cameras would be co-located with existing ALPRs and others would not. He indicated that the proposed locations are based upon crime trend data.

Chief Bowers thanked all attendees for their participation and questions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m. to the next regular Public Safety Committee meeting on March 28, 2019.

DRAFT