

City of Tybee Island
Alcohol Ordinance Workgroup
Draft Minutes – 11-16-20

Present: Shawn Gillen, Major Fobes, Bubba Hughes, Steve Kellam, Lawanna Tsoulos, Jenny Orr, Anne Delaney, Paula Crowe, Dillon Patel, Kathryn Williams, Mary McLemore, Demry Bishop, Todd Morrison, Walter Hattrich, Alice Jonsson, Matt Harrell.

Shawn Gillen called the meeting to order at 1:02.

Attendance was taken for the record.

Shawn Gillen went through some housekeeping. All will be set up with city emails which should be used for the work of the committee. It's important for members to understand open-records rules. Everyone on the committee was sent an email by the City Manager going over the processes related to open-records. Committee members may not speak with one another about the work of the committee outside the meetings. Members may speak with members of the public who are not on the committee. Todd Smith will create emails for the committee members.

Send minutes to Mike Voquer – check email – send him notes -

SG - Defining the problem is important. What can we do to help the situation? Banning open containers is off the table. We need to stay focused .

TIPD data was passed out by Wally Hattrich and Major Fobes, 2017 to 2020.

Use-of-Force data 2017 – 2020

Major Fobes and Shawn Gillen walked the group through the data.

7 use-of-force in 2017 - all involved alcohol.

2018 – use-of-force - 24/50 had alcohol involved.

2019 - use-of-force data 21/30 had alcohol involved.

2020 – so far 15 alcohol involved – March thru August there was very little interaction because of COVID.

Orr – How many visitors came? Also what time of year did these occur?

Major Fobes – we will get that for you. By end of the week, total numbers for traffic can be communicated to the committee. Explained how to read the data.

Bishop – Do arrests accompany these calls? (2020 traffic stops, for example.)

Fobes - Almost everybody involved in use-of-force calls are felony arrests.

Delaney – Of all the alcohol arrests, how do we know if it is related to open-containers, specifically?

SG – Open-containers are not really the focus of this because that idea was rejected by Council.

McLemore - Do we know if these are STVR guests, or residents, or day-trippers?

JF – We do keep track of guests vs residents so we can get that for the group.

SG - It's usually a visitor, speaking generally.

JF – It's rarely a local.

Williams – What about GSP or Chatham County PD?

JF - If it goes through our court, it is listed.

Patel - alcohol being involved is not necessarily open – container.

JF – We can't collect the open-container data.

Morrison - How many people work on a Sat? (Summer weekend.)

JF - Three officers per shift, generally, but maybe on a holiday weekend there will be more.

SG – Beach Patrol? Moving forward those would be Code Enforcement officers.

JF – Including Beach Patrol it would have been about five. Two on beach and three on the street.

SG - Next step is to brainstorm – put about of ideas on the table and then distill the ideas down to a feasible list. Then put them in a policy format for Council to consider.

Williams – Concern about punishing the masses for the bad behavior of some. Can we enforce the ordinances we have? Also can we look at how many officers there are and how thinly spread they are? Alcohol tax could be used? Could we pull in Chatham County to support us? Litter – How can businesses help?

Patel – passed.

Morrison – Need more police.

Kellam – Small number of officers concerns him.

Orr – Tax on alcohol should go towards enforcement. Need more officers. Also having a satellite station might be good in the busy restaurant zone.

Bishop - asked JF what is the overall police perspective?

JF - Answer calls as they come to us, but sometimes we have to prioritize the order in terms of responses. Part-time people from other agencies have no skin in the game, typically. Adding officers means more arrests – those are time-consuming. We would rather eliminate the issue proactively. Having many many officers might not change a whole lot, especially when dealing with people who have been drinking all day on the beach.

Bishop – How many officer injuries happen during these interactions?

JF- probably 10 or less serious injuries.

Delaney ? - More officers could help. (Woman sitting next to SG, blue mask, couldn't see who was talking.)

McLemore – How do we get more officers during tourist season? Chatham County, for example. Why hire more permanent PD for a few months? How would that be paid for? Likes the substitution idea. Asked when that will open up.

SG – Hopefully old Marine Sci. Center will be vacant and ready for alternative uses before the next season, but it's impossible to guarantee that.

JF – Explained that staffing is a problem for most area departments.

SG – Increase salary would help but pool is getting smaller. We have spots to fill.

Tsoulos - More officers would be good. Likes KW's idea regarding litter – hearing JF she is open-minded and thinks maybe we need to encourage less consumption

JF explained how the PD runs shifts. (Paula Crowe's question.)

Three per shift. Four shifts. Run from 6-6. In a two week period they will work seven days and be off seven days, staggered.

12 hour shifts. A B C D shifts. They swap.

Cycles are for 30 days, then they rotate.

There is typically one supervisor and two lower ranking people. Once we get fully staffed we hope for four.

Four administrative positions. One Marshal. They can augment the officers down front.

Williams - Use of security guards should also be taken into consideration.

SG – explained how a typical Saturday in June works.

JF – Sheriff's Dept. helps initially but then they hand them over to TIPD. There is a presence there, though.

SG – More police visibility is a different issue. It's the difference between adding more officers and using what we have differently.

Orr and Fobes discussed the size of the force and how it relates to budget timing. JF - The staff is larger now than in previous years.

Crowe – Asked about recruitment. Ft. Stewart and Hunter – are we recruiting from there?

JF – Yes. Previously we only hired trained people, but now we can send people to the academy. It has helped a lot.

Crowe - How many times per year does the academy run?

Hattrich – Garden City and Savannah Tech.

JF - We prefer the state academy because it's far less money. Chatham County wouldn't let us use their training program in the past. That negatively impacted us.

Crowe - Who handles the Intox 9000?

JF – Arresting officers are trained in DUI detection, field sobriety, and the Intox.

McLemore - what is PD turnover?

JF – In a year, four to five officers per year for myriad reasons. Takes strong officers to work here. Tybee rides two to three times the number of calls than Savannah.

Williams - Are drunk tanks legal? Would the substation help? Can holding people until they are sober be done, sometimes?

JF - We can only hold for a certain period of time. Due to COVID – unless it's a felony or felony arrest warrant that Chatham County handles, they won't pick them up from out here.

Chatham takes a lot longer – takes two – three hours. Here it takes about an hour, if we have a jailer. No jailer and the officer has to stay the entire time.

Presence of jailer makes a big difference in time savings – one fulltime person being at the station is hopefully alleviating the issues. Also one part-time. There are some people who can fill in and help.

SG - Next steps – plan out a schedule of meetings.

Walking through each one at next meeting will happen SG

Nov. 24th at 10:00 – Orr can't meet 22nd thru 30th.

Dec. 1st - 10:00

Dec 8th – 10:00

Dec 15th – 10:00

Dec 29th – 10:00 and on that day we will decide when last meeting will be.

January 5th – no go due to Election Day

Group decided everyone doesn't need to be present, but should try to be.

SG - Mid next week – Zoom meeting for the public. We'll have another Zoom meeting at the end of the process.

Bishop made a motion to adjourn, seconded by McLemore. Motion passed. Adjourned at 2:15.