

**City Council of the City of Greenville
Work Session**

**Monday, September 28, 2020
3:00 p.m.**

Greenville City Hall is currently closed to the public.

Virtual Meeting Viewing
<https://www.greenvillesc.gov/meeting>

**Telephone: 1-415-655-0002
WebEx Event Number: 173 319 2336**

**Remote Viewing Location:
Greenville Convention Center, 1 Exposition Drive – Room 102**

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL: Councilmember John M. DeWorken, Councilmember Lillian B. Flemming, Councilmember Kenneth C. Gibson, Councilmember Wil Brasington; Councilmember Russell H. Stall; and Councilmember Dorothy H. Dowe;
Absent: Mayor Knox White

CITY STAFF: City Manager John F. McDonough; City Attorney Michael S. Pitts;
City Clerk Camilla G. Pitman

Vice Mayor Pro Tem Russell Stall called the meeting to order for the purpose of discussing the following matters.

Speed Limit Analysis

Engineering Services Manager Dwayne Cooper provided a presentation on the agenda item, as located in Council's Agenda packet. Mr. Cooper presented information from the Greenville Police Department providing pedal cycle collisions from 2016-2020 and a proposed program called "20 is Plenty" that looks at the reduction of speed limits to 20 mph in neighborhoods and pedestrian zones. Mr. Cooper stated the goals of the program are to reduce facilities, to provide for safer road conditions and to improve quality of life along the neighborhood roads. Mr. Cooper referred to research on what other municipalities across the nation are doing with the program.

In conclusion, Mr. Cooper stated by lowering the speed, the studies show only an average of 1.9 mph reduction which is not a great reduction when changing the signage. Mr. Cooper also stated the program raises awareness because it involved public and community input.

Councilmember Brasington asked how the study is only reduced by 1.9 mph. Mr. Cooper responded the reduction in speed is a suggestion and not a requirement, so the program attempts to get a conscious decision by that driver to slow down. Councilmember Brasington asked if information is available showing the average posted reduction and the results it yielded, and Mr. Cooper responded he does not have that information.

Councilmember Stall asked how many accidents have occurred on neighborhood streets and how many could have been prevented or reduced by the speed limit reduction. Chief Thompson

responded that the one bicycle fatality which occurred in 2017 on Augusta Road was at the fault of the bicyclist. Chief Thompson stated that accidents that are occurring are not that many and are occurring on the main roadways.

Councilmember Dowe asked for the percentage of state owned right of ways versus city owned right of ways. Mr. Cooper responded that state is around 100 streets and city is around 250 streets. Councilmember Stall asked if the recommendation is to blanket the program over the City or to use it as part of the traffic calming efforts to reduce speed on neighborhood streets. Mr. Cooper responded he is not sure if he would prefer the program as part of traffic calming or as a separate process for speed limits.

Councilmember DeWorken stated while there is not a huge change with 1.9 mph reduction on the larger streets, it still make a difference in the neighborhoods. Councilmember Gibson referred to Boulder, Colorado as the only city in the presentation to perform a blanket study and asked if any other city performed a citywide study. Councilmember Gibson also asked if there is anything in the reports that would encourage Greenville to want to pursue a citywide default speed limit. Mr. Cooper responded he believes Boulder came across a lot of people who wanted to feel safer and wanted to be involved and that 20 mph was a consensus for their municipality. Mr. Cooper stated he liked the neighborhood approach because each neighborhood is different.

Chief Thompson referred to the past year's analysis in neighborhoods and provided the following statistics: 4,126 roadway collisions with 292 (7.1% percent) of those collisions occurring on residential or low volume streets; out of the 2,706 residential or low volume streets in the city, 2,422 streets had no collisions; 242 streets had 1 accident and 37 streets had 2 accidents; and out of the 242 accidents with 1 accident, only 21 involved speed.

Councilmember Stall asked what enforcement would be required with a reduction in speed limits. Chief Thompson responded the traffic team would perform a traffic study for seven days prior to sending officers out. Chief Thompson stated it takes a lot of time and expense to send an officer out to sit and watch traffic and sometimes it is not productive.

Councilmember Gibson asked how backed up the City is on traffic calming at this time. Mr. Cooper responded the City has 22 speed humps approved for installation and six or seven neighborhoods who have applied for traffic calming. Mr. Cooper stated some of the traffic calming humps being installed now have been waiting for a year and that he believes some of the installations will be deferred to the next fiscal year. Councilmember Brasington recommended implementing signage uses, referring to the Fremont, CA campaign, and stated it could be implemented in select spots over short or long durations.

Public Works Director Mike Murphy advised the goal at this time is to begin with baby steps initiating a public signage campaign and stated the program as a whole would be considered as a capital improvement project. Councilmember Dowe asked how many times the Police Department is called upon to conduct a stealth stat to determine speeding in a neighborhood. Chief Thompson responded much of it is perception by the public believing speeding is occurring when it may not be and the Department reviews the data to determine where to deploy the officers.

False Alarm Ordinance Changes

Communications Director Fran Moore provided a presentation on the agenda item, as located in Council's Agenda packet. Ms. Moore provided information regarding a summation of current

alarms and false alarms handled by the Police and Fire Communications Division and recommendations to amend the alarm ordinance. Ms. Moore stated under the current procedures, there is a lost opportunity cost when officers and fire personnel respond to false alarms and are not available for legitimate threats to public safety or other duties. Ms. Moore provided statistics between 2016-2019 showing a reduction in the false alarms for police and a steady increase in false alarms for fire. Ms. Moore shared challenges in processing general alarms and burglar alarms and efforts taken to assist key holders downgrading those alarms to a priority 3 response. Ms. Moore stated even with the efforts taken, the number of calls have not reduced.

Councilmember Brasington asked if there has been any reduction experienced with the downgrade to a priority 3 response. Ms. Moore responded it has reduced the volume, but the calls still average 98% percent false. Councilmember Dowe commented on the issues of a homeowner ignoring calls from an alarm company due to it being an unknown number or a homeowner being at the home at the time of the alarm. Ms. Moore responded another frustration is no accountability of the alarm company in determining if there is a real emergency. Ms. Moore advised alarm companies are “for profit” and expect public safety to identify emergencies or problems, creating a burden on the taxpayer.

Ms. Moore presented proposed revisions to the Ordinance to enhance the responsibility of the alarm company, to establish true verification of alarms, and to increase the safety and reliability of alarm systems. Ms. Moore stated the proposed revisions also shifts the responsibility from the alarm users and police to the alarm companies. Ms. Moore reviewed the process of implementing the proposed revisions.

Councilmember Stall asked what happens after alarm 3 on the new schedule. Ms. Moore responded the commercial business will go into a suspended alarm response status whereby the police will not go to a burglar alarm for a period of six months afterwards. Ms. Moore stated in many cases the businesses are not training their staff and are not managing the issue.

Councilmember DeWorken asked what happens if someone with a residential alarm system hits the panic button. Ms. Moore responded the panic or burglar alarm has to go through the alarm company and that a panic alarm is a priority 1 response and treated differently from a burglar alarm. Ms. Moore stated that a broken window will increase the call to a priority 1 response. Councilmember Gibson asked if the burglar alarm six month period can be reset, and Ms. Moore responded yes, referring to an appeals process that is in place. City Manager John McDonough stated many of the issues go away the number of alarm are reduced by shifting to a “verified response.”

Councilmember Dowe stated she anticipates the alarm company passing along costs and customers wanting to shop around. Councilmember Dowe stated the companies are giving the impression that you are tied to a certain company for life which is a false premise. Councilmember Dowe asked for staff to review the matter further.

Regarding next steps, Ms. Moore recommended having the proposed ordinance revisions approved and ready for roll out on January 1, 2021.

Contemplated Disposition of Surplus Property for Affordable Housing – Update

Mr. McDonough advised the item has been removed for further review and will be presented at a time in October.

Motion - Executive Session

During the open Work Session, Vice Mayor Pro Tem Stall asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. City Attorney Mike Pitts recommended going into executive session under S.C. Code §30-4-70 (a)(1) to discuss appointments to the City's boards and commissions or employment related matters.

Councilmember Dowe moved, seconded by Councilmember Flemming, to go into Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously.

(Executive Session)

There being no further discussions, Councilmember Brasington moved, seconded by Councilmember Stall, to go out of Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously. No action was taken.

With no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Camilla G. Pitman, MMC, Certified PLS
City Clerk

Meeting notice posted on September 28, 2020