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Public Safety Committee Meeting
Tuesday, March 19 2019
49th NYPD Precinct NCO Office

MINUTES

PRESENT: Yahay Obeid, Chair; Veronica Castro, Co-chair; and Eliezer Rodriguez.

EXCUSED: Tasneem Aljayyousi; and Estella Foley.

GUEST(S): Gene DeFrancis, AMA; Nivardo Lopez, DOT Commissioner; Captain Natiw, 49th Precinct; Patrick Nicewicz, NYPD-NCO Sector A; P.O. Grossett, NCO Sector B; Daisy Rivera, NCO Sector C; Gregory Hernandez, NCO Sector C; James Graham, NCO Housing.

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 p.m.

The meeting started with discussions around NYS and NYC laws regarding crosswalks. DOT Commissioner Nivardo Lopez clarified the law and gave the committee two references to the laws, which he will send separately via email. He said that the laws that were quoted previously were not from the references he will send, that they were just part of the law in general. The commissioner said that there are two types of crosswalks, a marked one at an intersection with a traffic light or stop sign, and the other at an intersection without a traffic light or stop sign. The Commissioner said that both state and city laws are similar without any contradictions. The Commissioner stated that the city is in the process of upgrading 400 crosswalks to make them more ADA compliant.

With reference to enhanced crosswalks for our area, the Commissioner stated that there would have to be a request or severe safety data to warrant the enhanced crosswalk upgrade. The Commissioner also said that the enhanced crosswalk upgrade will lead to at least two less parking spots. The Commissioner stated that there were no requests for enhanced crosswalks for our area, and requested we be more specific when the committee chair asked him to look our entire area, especially the Van Nest Neighborhood for any intersections that can qualify for an upgrade. The commissioner stressed that the community needs to be on board with these enhancements since there will be a loss in vehicle parking. The commissioner informed the committee that he is aware of the request that came through Councilman Ritchie Torres' office and that he just completed the research and will respond to their request soon.

The commissioner advised that there was a reauthorization to expand the speed camera system in NYC from 140 cameras to 750, but the upgrade will take some time. Other changes in the law include a time change, which will be from 8 am to 6 pm, all year long with the radius being 1/4 of a mile from a school. The commissioner also stated that commercial vehicles cannot park in the street overnight, including tractor trailers. Gene DeFrancis asked for a solution to the tractor trailer problem near St. Catherine's Academy. Looking at Google Street Maps, you can see two tractor trailers parked near the school, which they can do during the day, but have to be moved at night.

Mark Gjonaj's office was expected to attend the meeting to discuss possible funding for an NYPD Auxiliary van for the 49th precinct. The 49th Precinct has over 30 Auxiliary Officers, and only two are allowed to ride in the Auxiliary patrol car. This leads to numerous to and from the precinct to the post.

The NCOs from each sector gave the committee a briefing. The following were briefed by the NCOs:

- Phone call scams targeting the elderly, including IRS and Social Security phone calls. The NCOs also mentioned that one of their officers received a scam phone while on duty.

- 3 stabbings on 3/19, all related to high school students, 2 of them possibly related to Columbus High School.

- Quality of life issues in the housing areas, but with the new Marijuana laws, only a ticket is issued most of the time.

- A known individual that targets female shops was arrested at least two times this week so far. The committee Chair took the action item to contact the DA's office via the community board regarding this individual.

Gene DeFrancis mentioned putting stickers on the tractor trailers for illegally parking, but the NYPD said the stickers are usually done by the traffic or sanitation department including the towing.

Location for next month's meeting to be decided.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Minutes taken by Yahay Obeid, formatted and edited by staff.