



**DOWNTOWN
LONG BEACH
ALLIANCE**

**Public Safety Committee
Members:**

Denise Carter, Chair

Pat Welch, Vice Chair

Sheila Gibbons

Jon Timberlake

Janice Friend

Denise Maldonado

Nick Padula

Terrence Krieger

DLBA Staff:

Broc Coward, COO

Steve Be Cotte, Community
Outreach Manager

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, February 24, 2021
4:30 pm

Voting Present: Denise Carter, Pat Welch, Sheila Gibbons, Janice Friend, Denise Maldonado, Nick Padula

Voting Absent: Jon Timberlake, Terrence Krieger

Staff: Broc Coward, Steve Be Cotte, Justine Nevarez, Stephanie Gonzalez, Erica Beighley

Guests: Yvette Freeman- PUMA, Paul Duncan- Department of Health and Human Services, Peter Johnson- PARA, Councilwoman Cindy Allen- Council District 2, Cameron Andrews, Mark Robles

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Self-Introductions – Denise Carter, Chair
Meeting called to order at 4:30 PM. [Meeting Presentation.](#)
2. **Action: Approve minutes from [January 27, 2021 Meeting](#). 1st: Welch. 2nd: Gibbons. No abstentions. Motion carries.**
3. Public Safety Education Series Guest Speaker- Karen Englund, General Manager, Renaissance Long Beach Hotel. Brian McGraw, Director of Loss Prevention, Renaissance Long Beach Hotel. Presented slides 10-16.
 - Coward set the stage for the guest speaker by bringing Committee up to date on the challenges that have been encountered with people experiencing homelessness. Coward pointed to different hot spot locations along the Promenade and raised the court case, Martin v City of Boise (ID), that guides public policy and health/police procedures nationwide. COVID has put a damper on plans for activating Harvey Milk Park and the surrounding area and has caused it to become a regular challenge; this includes the Promenade between Ocean and First Street, which has had as many as 25 people congregating at once. DLBA has heard about the presence and encampments of people experiencing homelessness for some time and thought it best to bring everyone involved to discuss and explore opportunities.
 - Englund reported that since COVID started they have seen an increase in crime, an increase in interactions with people experiencing homelessness, and a significant decrease in travel. The Renaissance Hotel was at 6% occupancy during the December Safer at Home orders. Englund told Committee members that activity around the hotel ebbs and flows with people experiencing homelessness. The hotel had an encampment adjacent to their property for 2 weeks that has been cleared up. Last October there was a homicide on the Promenade, staff have seen the homeless engaging in sexual activity as well as walking around naked in the parking structure. People experiencing homelessness solicit without following proper social distancing or mask-wearing; having this visual presence has resulted in concerns from staff and visitors regarding the cleanliness of the property. All these statistics are being used to evaluate business decisions.
 - McGraw informed Committee he has been tracking incidents with their outside neighbors since 2018. When people experiencing homelessness trespass on the Renaissance Hotel premises, they are escorted off. They have been able to track repeat offenders, mostly mentally unstable or suffering from addiction, and have alerted the Police Department.
 - McGraw shared with Committee the proactive measures that have been taken to address their current issues. First, they have increased their security rounds and as well as added contracted security for their parking garage. Secondly, Renaissance Hotel has updated its camera system with a \$30,000 upgrade that is better able to keep a log of individuals. Next, they fixed and enhanced the lighting in the garage as well as the exterior of the hotel. Lastly, only their hotel guests can access the property with their room keys.
 - Johnson was asked to provide his input on the subject based on his experiences with the Promenade Area Residents Association and said that even with the increase in cameras, security, and lighting, residents are still concerned with what they will be encountering when stepping outside. Johnson shared that although there is no hard data to confirm, he feels they are losing residents, especially those with young families. Coward asked if there was a certain type of homeless person that they are encountering or just more in general? Johnson answered he is seeing more homeless with mental health needs as well as more aggressive with criminal



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behavior. He added that it does not mean the people that are living on the Promenade are the culprits, but more are trying to come into the building as well as break into cars.

- Coward introduced Andrews and Robles to Committee, they represent The Streets Property Management, which has an agreement with the City to maintain and program Harvey Milk Park. Robles shared when the park opened there were encampments as well as groups seen congregating that have First Amendment rights, which protects their right to congregate if no laws are being broken. The Long Beach Police Department has helped move some of the homeless population along but The Streets has seen a 30% increase in maintenance costs as well as an increase in crime. Incidents of rape, indecent exposure, property damage, drunkenness, overdoses, and broken windows have been constant occurrences both in the parking garages and The Streets. Business owners are being challenged to stay open without these added issues and law enforcement is challenged with who they can arrest, which creates a recurring cycle from repeat offenders. Robles shared the City of Whittier has partnered with their law enforcement and has successfully implemented a program that dissuades congregating in parks and public spaces. This program offers those experiencing homelessness a bed in the city, if they choose to not accept, they are warned and asked to move on. Robles suggested looking into this program and implement a similar one in DTLB.
- Coward invited Councilwoman Allen (CD2) to give her input on the present situation. Councilwoman Allen told Committee she, along with Councilwoman Zendejas of CD I, has asked the Chief of Police for an action plan addressing quality of life issues in the next 30 days. Councilwoman Allen said she has inquired within the City regarding resources that would assist Quality of Life Officers currently working in getting the homeless off the street and has reached out to PARA. Project Room Key has a limited number of spaces available because of COVID but will continue to advocate for resources for quality-of-life issues.

4. Public Safety Partners Report

a. Department of Health and Human Services- Paul Duncan

- Duncan informed Committee if they see someone experiencing homelessness and would like Homeless Services to come out instead of PD to send an email to homelesservices@longbeach.gov or call 562-570-4672(4MSC). In these cases, the person that made contact will introduce themselves to the person; they try to get them into a shelter. Carter asked for Committee to engage with compassion when interacting with people experiencing homelessness. Duncan added they have found individuals to be more receptive to accepting resources once they know they will have a room with a bathroom that can lock. Coward asked if they are experiencing any challenges with staffing in terms of engaging the homeless? Duncan shared that they had lost an Outreach Worker during the week but had added 2 additional Outreach Workers through a temporary agency as well as nurses that were scheduled to begin onboarding next week. They are currently understaffed, having 2 Outreach Workers for the entire City of Long Beach, and may take 1-2 days for them to make it out but urged to be patient because they will get out to them.

b. Long Beach City Prosecutor- Dean Vescera

- Vescera told the Committee the number 1 issue now is the Zero Bail Reform, secondly, even if the individual is convicted with a max of 180 days, they are being released the next day. People experiencing homelessness will not be arrested because it violates the 8th Amendment as cruel and unusual punishment. For an individual to be arrested, the officer at the scene needs to be present at the time the crime was committed limiting the enforcement the officer can use. Property and Business owners can fill out and sign a Private Persons Arrest Form permitting Police Officers to act on their behalf without being present, this helps obtain Stay Away Orders for repeat offenders since it permits Police Officers to arrest the individual for being present on the property. Vescera shared he is currently working on establishing a Homeless Court that would handle and create services that address issues concerning the homeless community. Vescera ended by urging the public to send every picture and video they take of these situations to DLBimpact@cityprosecutordoughaubert.com and he will personally investigate and get resources needed out there.

c. Long Beach Police Department- Sergio Ruvalcaba

- Ruvalcaba informed the Committee that the Promenade is designated as a walkway which limits their ability for enforcement, and most of the incidents that have been mentioned are not known to the Police Department. Some drug sales have been captured on video and



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- reports have been taken and officers do their best to mitigate. The more residents call and make a report the more the Police Department can enforce, before enforcement is made the officers will go out with Clean Team for the City of Long Beach or the Medical Team depending on the needs of the individual and give them information on how to get into a shelter. Sometimes the individual has already been helped they are just in transition. Coward asked if there were any plans to implement an undercover element in the area? Ruvalcaba responded that if enough people start documenting and reporting these situations the more detectives can do in response.
- Coward added a new, younger, mobile group that has been seen riding skateboards and BMX bikes which have not been part of the traditional homeless population suggesting possible drug sales. Coward asked stakeholders at the meeting to safely document and send the information to the email Vescera provided along with any descriptions observed such as height/age/weight/markings.
5. Staff Report – Steve Be Cotte. Presented slides 19-20.
 - a. Update on Clean and Safe Team Activities
 - Be Cotte shared with the Committee what the Clean and Safe Team is trained to come from a place of respect when interacting with people experiencing homelessness and try to make the situation better without involving the police department. The Clean and Safe Team will ask individuals if they have trash that they want to get rid of, if their property is blocking the sidewalk, they are informed that it is public space, and they will have to clear it. Coward added if the situation is not resolved then the Fire Department and Police Department would become involved.
 6. Chairperson Report – Carter. Presented slides 23-30.
 - a. Review of Committee Goal Strategies and Milestones
 - i. Helping Hands
 - Coward updated Committee by informing them the next steps will be working with DLBA's Graphic Designer to mockup graphics to use for social media and collateral when Committee will be able to engage with businesses.
 - Friend shared she has experienced some resistance because of COVID but has asked Carter to follow up the Manager for the Courtyard Marriott because they serve on the Board together. Gibbons added she had a contact at the Hyatt Regency and had recently found out that they toss any unused travel sized toiletries after they clean the rooms and had asked for items to be donated for campaign instead. Coward included items could be treated for risk of COVID.
 - ii. Go Long Beach App
 - Coward said a zoom session would be created to focus on one goal between meetings.
 - Gibbons gave example of a virtual clean-up that had a presentation on Go LB app that addressed the common mistakes made and how to use the app. After the clean-up, participants were asked to share an update on the app, about 100 entries were made.
 - iii. Mystery Shopper Program
 - Be Cotte shared he had added evaluation criteria in the Committee Google folder, which would give the people performing the evaluation the background, rules, and responsibilities for Pressure Washers, The Clean and Safe Team, and the Safety Ambassadors.
 7. Public Comment (Three minutes on all non-agenda items)
 8. Old Business
 9. New Business
 10. Adjournment
Meeting adjourned at 5:58 PM

**Next Public Safety Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 24, 2021
4:30 PM**

Mission: Cultivate, preserve and promote a healthy, safe and prosperous Downtown.

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