POLICE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 17, 2012
CANOPY APARTMENTS CLUBHOUSE
6:00 – 7:30 P.M.
MINUTES

Attendees
Bob Cohen
Bruce Delaney
Juanita Miles-Hamilton
Jaquie Resnick
Albert White
Rosa Williams

Absent
Norb Dunkel

1) Call to Order – Chair Bruce Delaney
The meeting was called to order at 6:05.

2) Approval of Minutes
The minutes from the March 19, 2012 and April 11, 2012 meeting were approved unanimously.

3) Update on GPD Issues from Chief Jones
Chief Jones gave an update on the demolition of the GPD 721 Building. Offices are still scattered all over town, but progress is being made with the permitting and floor plans. Staff conducted a neighborhood meeting to discuss their concerns about retention pond and noise from police cars coming in and out at all hours. The two sides were able to reach an agreement. One building plan had a glass front, but Chief Jones felt that made the staff and building too vulnerable. A wall or bollards are needed in front of the building as well to present vehicles from getting too close.

The staffing study has begun. The Chief wants the study to determine if we have enough officers to serve the City and if they are currently using staff in the most efficient ways. The company chosen for the study is Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) from Washington, D.C. The company has a history of studies in Florida. The study is scheduled to be completed in August. The Chief will present it to the PAC before it goes out.

Member White asked how much the study costs. Chief Jones said $45,000 which is a good price. The City of Gainesville’s Finance Department did the bids with specifications from the Police Department. Unions, management, and City staff were all involved in the process.

3) Public Comment
The PAC members introduced themselves to the visitors in attendance. Visitors included Bonnie Lachut, Manager of the Canopy Apartment Complex, John Reeves, Security Director for Canopy, and a representative from the Madison On 20th Complex.
Canopy has a problem because the City will not let them fence off an opening to block Southern Pines foot traffic coming on their property as a shortcut a neighborhood convenience store. The management has met with the City and GPD on blocking the entrance on their property, but City has denied the request. No one other than Canopy residents and staff have a reason to be on their property. Crime Prevention Officer Nicole Tierney will set up a meeting with Eric Bredfelt in the City Planning Office to discuss this issue. Member Cohen suggested the Canopy staff may want to work through their City Commissioner or the City Manager.

Another problem the Canopy staff and residents experience is a no left turn into the complex coming from the west. The original plan when the complex was being built was that the turn would be allowed. Lieutenant Bruce Giles will contact City Traffic Engineering Manager Phil Mann about the problem. Ms. Lachut is also concerned that the children in the complex have to cross a busy street to get to the bus stop in the mornings and afternoons. She feels this is a dangerous situation. She plans to work with DOT on this issue.

Member Cohen checked on CrimeReport.com for criminal activity for Canopy for the last six months and there was none. There was crime next door at Southern Pines.

Madison On 20th has a new, local owner who trying to upgrade the buildings and clientele at the location (formerly The Lyons). He now does backgrounds on all prospective tenants.

4) Member Comment
The Council wanted to discuss in more detail the race relations topic brought up by Chief Jones. Chief Jones has instructed GPD staff to stay neutral on the Trayvon Martin shooting, and has held public forums to discuss the issues surrounding the incident. The community and GPD need to work on race relations. He wants to avoid any civil unrest in the community. There is a lot of animosity against law enforcement. We need to work to gaining the trust of the citizens.

Member Williams commented that there are gangs out terrorizing neighborhoods and frightening the citizens. She says more citizens and churches need to get out and talk to the youth in neighborhoods. Citizens are tired of the young people taking over their community. People have to deal with this every day. The police can’t do it all by themselves. The citizens need to call.

The Chief announced GPD just received a grant from the Center for Children’s Law and Policy for $45,000 for three years for research and training of law enforcement and citizens. He has not received the MOU yet, he just got the notification the day before. Chair Delaney would like for the PAC to discuss the PAC’s role in race talks and what they can do to help. Member Resnick asked if this grant was directed in some way from the consultant the City used a few years ago. She suggested we include the grant person in the discussion of the scope of the grant. Chief Jones said that was indeed looked at for this grant. Member White asked the MOU with the CCLP will allow them to dictate how the money is used. Chief Jones said they will send a proposal and will agree or make suggestions and send them back for approval. He will share the information as he receives it, then we can discuss the race relations topic at the next PAC meeting with more knowledge of what this grant can help with. Member Miles-Hamilton was interested in the specs of the grant, but the Chief has not received them yet.
Member White asked how the “Stand Your Ground” Law plays into GPD’s actions and if there had been any cases in Gainesville. Chief Jones has a PowerPoint presentation he has presented to community groups regarding this issue. There are some in the community who are trying to take advantage of the Martin case and the subsequent unrest. So far there have been two active cases where the Martin case was mentioned; both are still being investigated. Fortunately these incidents are dying down, but there are still areas in town where we know the citizens won’t cooperate with Police.

Chief Jones commented that GPD staff has already been doing training in the community on “You and the Law” to familiarize citizens on basic laws and how to interact with law enforcement. Videos are being used in the training to show the right way and the wrong way to interact with officers. This training is the result of a grant from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). This is second year for this grant and this year he is planning a television show on Channel 12 and YouTube to educate more citizens. This grant must be spent City-wide, not in a concentrated area.

Member Cohen stated that all the PAC members need to ride with officers to see what is going on in community. He also suggested the PAC hold a meeting at the jail with a group of the inmates, at the Reichert House with students, or meet at the Juvenile Detention Center with inmates. Chief Jones will have to clear a meeting at the jail through the Sheriff.

Chair Delaney suggested the members think about ideas on how the PAC can help with race relations and present their ideas at the next meeting. Chief Jones said the next meeting can be a brainstorming session.

Chief Jones asked newly promoted Lieutenant Bruce Giles for his thoughts on this topic. Lieutenant Giles suggested the ride-alongs for PAC members. He commented that some citizens are against law enforcement for laws they did not make; officers are out there for the community. He suggested talking to parents; they can be the cause of a lot of the problems and then their children feed off of that.

5) **Next Meeting Date**
The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 21, 2012, 6:00 P.M. at the Clarence Kelly “Blue Center”, 1700 NE 8th Avenue.

6) **Adjournment**
The meeting adjourned at 7: 20 P.M.