

LAW AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
September 10, 2020

Attendance:

Tom Henning, Chair
Chris Hilberg, Vice Mayor
Brian Mueller, City Council
Tom Moeller, City Manager
Lori Thompson, Assistant City Manager
Chief David Schaefer
Brian Fox, Law Director
Anne Horne, Chair/Park Board

The meeting was held via Zoom Teleconference in accordance with the laws and regulations of the City of Madeira.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

1. **Native Meadow Discussion.** The committee asked Anne Horne, Chair of the Park Board and employee of the Cincinnati Nature Center (CNC), to assist the committee with the development of standards for creating code regulations related to allowing “native meadows” on residential properties. The following was discussed:
 - The current property maintenance code does not recognize a native meadow as permissible and, as such, a native meadow may violate the “high grass/weed” regulations in the Madeira Code.
 - Ms. Horne referenced Middletown, Ohio and its regulations on permissible plants for a native meadow as a good starting point. In consultation with CNC staff, they are recommending deleting and adding certain plants/flowers which fit better into a residential environment. She noted the list would be approximately 50 plants; not all will be readily available but would add to the quality of the native meadow in a residential setting.
 - Mr. Fox recommends referencing the Ohio Revised Code’s “noxious weed” list in the Madeira Code to be consistent with the State of Ohio.
 - Ms. Horne also noted that some milkweeds are better than others in a residential setting. She stated she will recommend a species which fares better and is less invasive.
 - The committee also discussed maintenance regulations for the native meadow area. Ms. Horne stated that the code should require “grooming, pruning or cutting back” the area annually as this keeps it manageable and more attractive. She noted that not all native meadow plants can be “mowed” so other methods describing this need to be identified. She also noted the need to have the area of the native meadow “defined” so as to make enforcement easier.
 - The committee has agreed that 100 square feet is sufficient and that it can be broken into smaller areas with a cumulative area of no more than 100 square feet.

- Ms. Horne noted there should be some delineation between the native meadow and the other “lawn” areas. Mr. Mueller stated that the dimensions of the area should be sufficient as these are easily measurable for enforcement purposes.
 - Ms. Horne will continue to work with Mr. Fox and staff on the appropriate language. The committee agreed to continue the discussion at its next meeting.
2. **Police Cruiser Design Package.** Mr. Henning recapped the discussions from previous meetings and the status of the discussion. He also acknowledged and thanked all of the residents who have sent emails to the city regarding the inclusion of the “Thin Blue Line” Flag/Emblem currently on the newer cruisers. The committee discussed the following:
- Law Director Brian Fox presented two options for discussion as an administrative policy for the graphics/emblems on City vehicles. One option proposed would allow only the US Flag, the Madeira City Seal, the words “City of Madeira” and the name of the Department. Any other graphics or words would need written approval of the Dept. Head and the City Manager. The second option would include the same language but would “grandfather” existing vehicles and new vehicles would come under the proposed policy language.
 - Mr. Mueller stated this was already the current policy as the City Manager did approve the inclusion of the Thin Blue Line on the new cruisers at the request of Chief Schaefer. Mr. Mueller stated he would like clarification that a policy for signs, etc. on city property/land be consistent with city vehicles. He stated he very much supports the Madeira Police Department and its officers, and understands the meaning of the Thin Blue Line flag and its importance to the police, but he believes a policy on neutrality is most appropriate for both city properties and city equipment and vehicles.
 - Mr. Fox noted the second option would require an audit of existing vehicles.
 - Mr. Hilberg supports retaining the current Thin Blue Line Flag and stated he supports allowing the Dept. Head and City Manager to make the determination on any additional language/emblems as they deem necessary.
 - Mr. Mueller noted that Council can always approve a resolution directing the City Manager to modify or remove anything deemed inappropriate.
 - Mr. Henning acknowledged the work of the Madeira Police; he stated this issue has been highlighted by the significant amount of input from the community. He noted the community is divided on the issue and due to such division, he supports removal.
 - Mr. Hilberg asked about the cost of the graphics package. Chief Schaefer stated it is approximately \$500 for the entire cruiser.
 - Mr. Mueller noted that the small cost is not an obstacle for removing the flag. He restated that a neutrality policy is the best option.
 - Mr. Hilberg stated he would support leaving the current graphics package and then not including the Thin Blue Flag on future cruisers going forward. He also stated he believes council should vote on the issue.
 - After some additional discussion, the committee agreed to recommend the first policy (see attached) to City Council which does not include grandfathering existing vehicle graphics, leaving the decision about whether to grandfather the existing vehicles to the full City Council.

- Mr. Henning thanked the committee and Chief Schaefer for the discussion. He also thanked everyone in attendance for taking an interest in the discussion.

3. Neighborhood Inclusion Committee for Equity (NICE).

- Mr. Mueller presented his revisions to the draft created by Mayor Spencer (see attached). He noted his goal was to clarify some of the action points. He recommended that City Council be provided a copy for the September 14th meeting and further discussion can take place at that time.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM

Tom Henning, Chair