

Downtown Pittsburgh
Downtown Clean + Safe Community Forum

February 26, 2019 Meeting Notes

Trust Arts Education Center
Peirce Studio, Lower Level
805 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Welcome

Public-Private Partnerships / Stronger Together

Director Wendell Hissrich, City of Pittsburgh – Pittsburgh Public Safety

Director Hissrich thanked the group for the opportunity to again open the year's series of meetings and for the outpouring of support received in the wake of the October 27th shooting at The Tree of Life Synagogue.

The Director outlined the City's preparations for the upcoming trial of Officer Michael Rosfeld which is scheduled for March 19, 2019. Meetings with community leaders and other City departments has resulted in the decision to close the streets surrounding the County Courthouse for the duration of the trial while maintaining emergency vehicle access at major intersections and routes to hospitals. Heavy police presence will focus on assuring public safety and the right to peaceful protests. The PDP will disseminate trial updates, as they become available, on all social media platforms and by email to the meeting's attendees.

Zone 2 Statistics

Officer Brian Wissner, PBP Zone 2 Resource Officer

Officer Wissner reviewed the Summarization of Part I Crimes noting that Drug Incidents statistics reflect only documented events resulting in a response by police or EMS. Similarly, Overdose statistics count only events requiring medical intervention.

Homeless Services Outreach

Laura Drogowski, Critical Communities Initiatives Manager, City of Pittsburgh

Statistics reviewed by Officer Wissner will not include EMS figures as the data are not easily sourced however 50 incidents are estimated to have occurred through the reporting period. These include intoxication events in addition to incidents by a subset of drug users which average eight (8) EMS transports a month.

The Smithfield Street overnight shelter will close March 15 and users of the shelter are expected to migrate to various downtown locations. Laura will address concerns expressed over users' behavior inside the shelter and outside prior to the facility opening at 5:30 p.m. with shelter management emphasizing that substance abuse among at risk populations is less a homeless problem than it is a service problem.

Technology Deployment & Crime Prevention

Dick Skrinjar, Allegheny County District Attorney's Office

Allegheny County Police have replicated the command center model instituted by Port Authority Transit Police, as have the South Side, McKeesport, and Oakmont. This major investment will occur over the next five years and includes a partnership with Pittsburgh Transportation Company (Yellow Cab) to place license plate readers on taxis to enable real time tracking of suspects. Skrinjar described the cooperation among local and regional law enforcement agencies as a key element in crime prevention.

Pittsburgh Public Theatre Guest Screening

Kevin Wilkes, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

PCT attracts 2 million visitors a year to downtown generating \$30M to \$40M in economic impact and \$850K in tax income. In a proactive measure, PCT began new guest protection efforts in October 2018, fine-tuned the process and have now rolled out to all venues. Pittsburgh Public Theatre is also utilizing the same safety procedures in their 224 performances scheduled for 2019. Between October 1, 2018 and February 22, 2019, the Trust hosted 266,573 guests and, using the new security measures, discovered 21 firearms in addition to 59 weapons self-disclosed by the owner, 167 knives measuring 6 inches or greater, and 92 cans of pepper spray. During ELF's four day run, security discovered 3 firearms plus 6 self-disclosing, 6 knives and 1 can of pepper spray.

Roundtable Discussion

- Chief Porter clarified actions taken in response to the January 1, 2019 shooting on a PAT bus and thanked PBP for their response. Police charged the actor as a crime had occurred however the victim did not press additional charges.
- Tamara Collier announced the Month of No Violence campaign kick-off date of May 7, 2019 and thanked the PBP for their participation in 2018. Local businesses will provide gift cards to give to participating students signing a Safe-Summer pledge. Teenagers are oblivious to their own annoying behavior, this program is focused on making kids in Downtown feel safe in their own environment. Northside teen focused organization YouthPlaces is active in 13 communities across Allegheny County and actively working to understand and respond to the needs of teens.
- A meeting with the Health Department, DPW and PDP will look into ways to manage the condition of alleyways in Downtown, particularly Exchange Way due to the high restaurant contributions to garbage and trash. Dumpsters are overflowing making trash collection very difficult, alleyway access is poor due to parking violations, and code enforcement is lacking.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.