

MINUTES
Annie Glidden North Task Force
Neighborhood Safety and Security Subcommittee Meeting
April 4, 2018

The Annie Glidden North (AGS) Safety and Security Subcommittee held a meeting on April 4, 2018, in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 8:12 a.m.

A. Roll Call

The following committee members were present: Michelle Bringas, Will Heinisch, Christie Krupp, Mohammad Labadi, and Mike Pittsley. Staff present includes Management Analyst Emily Tipps, Commander Craig Woodruff, Deputy Chief Jason John, NIU Police, and Diana Robinson, Center for Governmental Studies. AGN Task Force member Chad Glover was present as an observer.

B. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved following a motion by Heinisch and a second by Krupp.

C. Approval of Minutes – March 8, 2018

Minutes from the March 8th, 2018, meeting were approved as submitted following a motion by Heinisch and a second by Krupp.

D. Presentations

1. Presentation of Police to Citizen by Commander Craig Woodruff

DeKalb Police Commander Woodruff demonstrated the basic functionalities of the Police to Citizen Portal. It is not yet ADA compliant and there is not yet a date certain as to when that will occur. The capabilities allow for the following information to be entered and shared: accident reports, bike registration, Alert DeKalb (a third-party vendor), daily bulletin, incident reporting, vacation checks, and a “contact us” function for general comments. Woodruff said that the daily bulletin feature was most relevant to today’s discussion. It provides information about arrests and incidents including a description of events, photos of suspects, and the time and general location of incidents. Specific information, particularly about victims, is not being released. This portal provides a way for residents to view what is happening in various parts of the city. The committee was impressed with the website and suggested that the city put pressure on the web developer to complete the compliance work and make the site live.

E. Items of Discussion/Action

1. Discussion of potential future uses for 912 Edgebrook Drive

The City of DeKalb is requesting ideas for the use of the recently purchased 912 Edgebrook Drive property. Pittsley said that the neighborhood doesn’t need more buildings. Instead, green space would be welcomed by the residents, particularly those with families. A parking lot was

also a possibility but that wouldn't alleviate traffic congestion. Further, if it was redeveloped wholly or partially as a parking lot, who would monitor it? Krupp said that the people she's communicated with think redeveloping it as green space would be the preferred option. The estimated cost to redevelop the structure is in excess of \$1 million, and would be a questionable investment given that there are so many other structures that are empty and causing problems. Pittsley said that if redeveloping the structure was a viable option, the private sector would probably already have moved on that. Also, common hallways are going out of style in apartment buildings. Heinisch said that he thought there was value in the property, but the neighborhood does not need more housing. The possibility of the city mothballing the structure was discussed. The building is structurally sound and could provide a good site for cameras. Also, there is asbestos in the building that wasn't budgeted for when it was purchased. Krupp suggested that a satellite police office might be another viable reuse. It need not take up the entire building but would help ensure that the building is secure and not used for illegal transactions. John said that during town hall discussions the possibility of satellite police offices in that general vicinity was also raised. Heinisch summarized the optimum re-use scenario as stabilize the building, redevelop the site as part parking and part green space, and the first floor could become office space and possible security. If it was made into parking the city would need to make it permit (sticker) only.

2. Review and final discussion of potential recommendations for inclusion in the AGN Revitalization Plan related to neighborhood safety and security.

The committee reviewed the list of 19 recommendations that had been generated over its discussions. Krupp said that Marquette University in Milwaukee started buying and renovating or demolishing problem structure in its area to enhance student perception of safety. The received significant private funding for it. She suggested that NIU come to the table and explore with its funders how it might do the same. Woodruff said that other universities have purchased properties and leased them to Greek organizations, and if they do not abide by the terms of the lease they lose access to that property. Heinisch was in Milwaukee recently and was struck by the successful development of mixed-use areas consisting of light industrial, residential parks, and rail. He thought something similar could be done in AGN North but the key is safety.

Bringas said there is interest in bringing a grocer into the area. Labadi said that it's challenging for businesses like grocery stores when students leave for the summer. Sustaining a business year-round is difficult.

Each of the committee members and the other discussants identified their priorities from the list of recommendations and the additional ideas raised during this meeting. These fell into the following five areas:

- a. Install security cameras throughout AGN.
 - Institute a tax or another revenue-generating mechanism for purchasing and installing cameras.

- Set up a fund at the DeKalb County Community Foundation to accept donations to pay for cameras and other security improvements in the AGN area such as call boxes.
 - Require or encourage property owners with cameras to make live feeds available to the police.
 - Explore an ordinance requiring property owners to install cameras.
- b. Publicize the many safety resources and initiatives that are underway or planned
- Launch a voluntary Crime Free Housing initiative in DeKalb.
 - Promote the Police to Citizen Portal when it's ready.
 - Explore other apps designed to enhance personal safety, such as Guardian and Alert DeKalb.
 - Continue publicity around the Safe Street Initiative.
 - Recognize and reinforce the high levels of cooperation between the City and NIU police.
 - Promote the problem-oriented patrolling strategy used by DeKalb police.
 - DARA's efforts to encourage ethical behavior by member property owners.
- c. Address demolition or renovation of problem structures in the neighborhood.
- Consider the committee's recommendation regarding 912 Edgebrook to stabilize the building, redevelop the site as part parking and part green space, and consider using the first floor for office space and possible police satellite center.
 - Encourage and support NIU in acquiring and demolishing or renovating problem structures adjacent to campus.
- d. Mobilize and engage residents in making their own neighborhoods more safe and secure
- Encourage the formation of neighborhood watches and associations and help sustain them.
 - Help arrange opportunities for neighborhood safety and security experts to address residents and property owners to share tips and practices.
- e. Provide City resources to support these initiatives
- Assign one or more City staff to monitor neighborhoods and/or serve as a liaison between neighborhood associations.
 - Continue the "broken windows" strategy of trimming trees, replacing light bulbs, and providing general upkeep and maintenance.
 - Install additional security kiosks at University Village and other areas requesting them.
 - Explore with Proudly DeKalb how informational "welcome" packets can be provided to all new DeKalb residents that include safety information as well as essential community resources and services.

3. Approval of recommendations to the AGN Task Force

Given the large number of recommendations, committee members agreed to meet one additional time to review and organize the priorities into themes. The date and time set for the next meeting is Friday, April 13, 2018, at 8:00 a.m.

F. Adjournment

Heinisch moved to adjourn at 9:45 a.m. Pittsley seconded. Motion approved.

Minutes by Diana Robinson, Center for Governmental Studies

Approved by the Neighborhood Safety and Security Subcommittee: April 13, 2018