

# **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION**

**August 12, 2019  
6:00 PM  
Fairbanks Fire Department**

PSC Members:	Shoshana Kun (Seat A - 2020)	Stephen Heckman (Seat E – 2021)
	Lonnie Piscoya (Seat B - 2021)	Jason Doxey (Seat F - 2019)
	Rich Meyer (Seat C - 2019)	Jason McComas-Roe (Seat G - 2020)
	Buzzy Chiu, Chairman (Seat D - 2020)	Thomas Carter (Seat H - 2020)

## **Special Meeting Minutes**

Meeting called to order by Buzzy Chiu at 6:00 PM .

ATTENDANCE: Rich Meyer, Buzzy Chiu, Stephen Heckman, Jason Doxey, Jason McComas-Roe, Thomas Carter. Shoshana Kun arrived at 6:10pm. Lonnie Piscoya was excused.

AGENDA: The sole purpose of the special meeting was to discuss the future of the Public Safety Commission. The City Council is reviewing the function of all of its boards and commissions and the Mayor has asked the PSC to make a recommendation to him by August 15<sup>th</sup> as to whether the PSC should continue to exist. While August 13<sup>th</sup> @ 11:30 was proposed at the July PSC meeting, the date and time was set to ensure the greatest participation of voting commission members.

DISCUSSION:

The duties and powers of the PSC were reviewed, as published in City Code Section 2, Division 12. The two primary functions of the commission are 1) to research public safety issues at the request of the mayor or city council and 2) make recommendations to the mayor or council on public safety concerns identified by the commission or from public comments/complaints.

The commission has only been charged with researching a couple of issues in the last 10 years. Most recommendations made by the PSC are self-initiated. The most recent input provided to the council was regarding the proposed marijuana density ordinance [Jan 2018] and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Tap House Premises Extension [Feb 2018]. Citizen input/comments to the PSC have been virtually non-existent during the history of the commission. There was agreement that the time and location may interfere with public participation. It was commented that to garner community involvement takes more than advertising in the paper, and council members should be directing their constituents to the PSC.

As a preliminary litmus test, each member was asked if they supported the commission as it stands and unanimously everyone said no. A motion was made by McComas Roe and seconded by Heckman, “Should the PSC be abolished in its current configuration?” In response to the inquiry if there was further discussion, there was a debate regarding various permutations of the PSC, how it could be changed and what it could accomplish. The focus of several members was that the PSC could serve as a citizen board to investigate complaints about/against city public safety departments, provide an avenue to connect citizens with the departments directly so they could get

their issues resolved. There was not agreement between the members that the PSC had any power to investigate issues against the departments or direct the departments to get a citizen complaint resolved. The idea of blending the PSC and the Fact Finding Commission into one commission was again raised, but there were concerns about actual investigation of shootings, personnel issues, and other sensitive topics that are beyond the scope of the mission of the PSC, beyond the areas of expertise of the commission members, and would set a completely different tone. There was discussion that the recommendation from the PSC could be two fold – eliminate the current PSC and support the creation of a new commission that was more of a public forum. As the discussion had ranged far beyond what was appropriate for the motion at hand, the question was called and the motion in question, “Should the PSC be abolished in its current form?” was deadlocked at 3 For [Chiu, Doxey, McComas-Roe] and 3 Against [Meyer, Heckman, Carter].

The stated reason for the against votes was that while they did not support the PSC in its currently configured, they wanted to see the PSC exist in some form, as the work it could do is important. They were concerned that by voting to abolish the PSC that the Council would not see its way clear to appoint an alternative forum for citizen complaints. Ideas offered as ways to modify the commission were to 1) change the time and location of the meeting, 2) change the composition of the commission to include a social worker, 3) change seated “Public” members to not have so many have a law enforcement background but truly be from the community at large, 4) have an alternative mechanism for securing members rather than mayoral appointment, 5) actively promote community involvement/participation, 6) combine the PSC and the Fact Finding Commissions. Note that all suggestions were endorsed by more than one member. The only area of agreement was that an alternative meeting time and location would be more conducive to public access, which was noted did not require any change in the existing ordinance.

It was recognized that evening meetings would potentially increase the cost to the city as city employees would be working outside of business hours. Also concern about participation from City Department heads and/or designees, as currently there is not always someone from each department at meetings held during the workday.

A motion was made by Meyer and seconded by Heckman, that “The PSC should continue under a revised format.” During further discussion it was identified that the commission did not have any solid recommendations as to how to revise or modify the commission, beyond changing the time and location. The motion passed 4 [Heckman, Meyer, McComas-Roe, Carter] to 2 [Chiu, Doxey]. When asked for reasons for the nay vote, the main reason is that the council should start over rather than try to modify the current commission.

ADJOURNED: 7:32 PM