

## ECAC Meeting

March 12, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 18:20. Betsy, Buck, Jim, Kevin, Pete, Ron, and Tom were present. Michael Wacey came as a guest. Alessandra and Stacy were absent.

The minutes from the February 12, 2018 meeting was approved.

### **Meeting with Chief David Obzud**

Chief David Obzud came to discuss police matters and communications with the township residents, particularly given the generally favorable crime statistics in Easttown Township. However, those statistics are subject to interpretation based on how things are reported and massaged. The numbers can fluctuate too based on personnel changes and how the leadership chooses to look at some crimes (e.g., burglary vs. criminal mischief). Also, the way that some cases are cleared exhibit management discretion. This is particularly interesting since the 'cleared' rate in Easttown is low compared to the County. In Easttown, we don't have the resources to do all the investigations. There are no clear standards for clearing a report.

Identity theft is a particular conundrum because it gets reported here but the actual crime is usually perpetrated abroad, making it impossible to clear them because the amounts are never that large for any one victim. Sometimes the reports come in because the insurance companies and banks need a police report.

Easttown may "invite" crime because it's a wealthy community, there are a fair number of old people, access is easy, and people feel safe. Thus, people may not take normal precautions such as locking cars. On houses, there are fewer issues because most people seem to have alarms and use them since the houses are expensive. Video cameras are growing in use and that is a deterrent to home burglaries as well.

Ozbud reports that the papers don't generally print police data as much as used to be the case, even for missing persons in some instances. The media have the ability to determine what's newsworthy and sometimes have chosen to print things in the past and not do in other cases. But it's easier to have a policy of not releasing any information rather than reporting some things and not others and being accused of some kind of discrimination, so, recently, there have been fewer reports to the media. A question was posed if it would be possible to put a summary of monthly crime statistics on the website. Ozbud responded that it could happen but would need board input. Is that the best way to get news — which we assume is generally positive — out to the community?

Ozbud mentioned that communications to the citizenry in general take place in various ways. The following are the main sources:

- On the police website and Facebook page;
- The quarterly newsletter;
- Announcements at public meetings.

Finding the right place to put the information is key, as well as what information to highlight. There are no plans to emphasize something in particular every year (e.g., car break-ins). Ozbud noted that burglaries are evenly spread out within the township. Traffic is the big issue that people phone about: speeding, stop sign violations.

There is an officer every day at school opening and closing times but there is a downside to publicizing this: less coverage elsewhere during those hours or problems if there's a call elsewhere and the officer isn't there and then someone does something at the school site. Various suggestions:

- Would it be possible to just say that the police are working cooperatively with the school district?
- Adopt the Coffee with a Cop program that Tredyffrin is doing?

Ozbud is a bit reluctant to do too much grandstanding.

Ozbud stated that investigation of alleged child abuse takes a great deal of time. This includes grabbing a kid's arm but there are more serious things too. These reports are mandatory.

The board does not have any specific goals and objectives for the chief, partly because so many of the police activities are reactive rather than proactive or keeping things from happening rather than making things happen. The board does meet monthly (and confidentially) with the chief.

The chief is expecting opioid numbers to rise because of the Recovery Centers of America (RCA) facility — but not just there. Reported incidents are up about 200% in Easttown and expected to grow more.

Ozbud maintains that there is less respect for police from younger generations in some cases but certainly not in every case.

There was a query about the possibility of more public cameras along Route 30 and other places, working in conjunction with the various business associations. There are private cameras for some businesses in some locations now, but getting the footage can be a problem sometimes.

## **Devon Station**

Buck reviewed some history regarding plans to redevelop the Devon Station area from about eleven years ago, but there was little of substance that happened at that time. But the

footprint has changed since then; it is smaller than it was. Amtrak still controls some of the property. The township is studying Devon Center so some of Buck's work from back then could be helpful. A separate project would be the improvement, modernization, and preservation of the current station, but the Board wants it to be done in concert with the comprehensive plan amendments for the whole area.

Tom has started the process of writing a charter to determine what the ECAC's objectives are with respect to looking at this project because it could be large and unwieldy and needs to be done in pieces. Also we need to figure out what other agencies are involved. For example, PennDOT, SEPTA, Amtrak — even the U.S. Post Office. But they often don't talk to each other or even interact well together. It is reasonable to expect that there will be a lot of community thought on this project.

The meeting adjourned 19:55.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ron Mintz