

Glade Spring Planning Commission
May 3, 2018

Member Attendance:

Chairman Matthew Lloyd, Council Representative Councilman Dirk Moore

Community Attendance:

GSPD Chief Ricky Stumbo, Steve White, Leighann Lloyd, Kim Sweat, Kirk Knight, and Cathy Knight

Minutes:

M. Lloyd called the meeting to order at 6:03pm. April minutes were read and an overview of the evening was given in regards to the topics of current police protection and community safety.

C. Knight spoke to the differences in living Glade Spring and having a localized police presence instead of having to depend upon WCSO for police protection. She went into detail regarding prior experiences living in Mendota, VA and the lengthy wait of waiting for the police to show up when requested. K. Knight expressed how the local police force and Chief Stumbo were part of the reason that they moved back to Glade Spring last fall.

Chief Stumbo spoke to the current procedures of the PD including traffic citation protocols, high drug areas, and hotspots of illegal activity. Using the percentage given by the WCSO of their agency responding to 50% of emergency calls, there were approximately 686 total 9-1-1 calls for police response in the last year within the town corporate limits. This does not include the number that the GSPD assisted WCSO with outside of town limits. Chief mentioned the GSPD had a great working relationship with WCSO and he held them in high regard for their service to our town when a town officer is not on duty.

Chief Stumbo identified areas for improvement with the current police department status. These included having additional officers (both full-time and part-time) to help cover staffing shortages, potentially utilizing an auxiliary police force (as has been done in the past), and generating a vibrant community watch program. He clarified that the largest problem for our town was drug activity and that was both illegal drugs and prescription drugs. A large percentage of the traffic stops made would result in other charges. With regards to illegal drugs, Chief stated that most of the activity has been pass-through activity with a few instances of localized production. To help correct this overwhelming problem, he suggested continuing emphasis on community awareness and keeping various events and activities to keep people from gravitating to dangerous habits.

D. Moore spoke to how the drug epidemic is something that the town cannot solve on its own and that it is a result of a loss in “family values” with regard to respect for oneself and ones surroundings. This is something that no amount of money will

solve. S. White indicated that our region had the “perfect storm” of conditions that made the epidemic so prevalent and hard to beat. This perfect storm included an economically depressed region, high availability to the lucrative business of trafficking drugs, and lack of other activities to keep people busy. L. Lloyd spoke about how no matter how well resourced any drug rehabilitation program may be, there must be “grit” and determination to beat the addiction by the individual. She said that no matter how bad we may want different for them, there would be those in our community who do not want a different life.

M. Lloyd wrapped up the discussion and ideas brought forth and thanked everyone for their participation and asked if anyone had any concerns about EMS and fire coverage knowing that there had been some unsteadiness in the EMS area specifically in recent months. Everyone expressed their support with the current level of fire and EMS presence and had no suggestions for these agencies. M. Lloyd then asked the entire group to formulate potential next steps.

Next Steps

1. Establish and utilize a neighborhood watch program in addition to the one currently at the Senior Center. More people watching their neighborhoods and reporting unusual things to GSPD will raise awareness to problem areas and issues. There would need to be a coordinator identified (maybe town law enforcement?). A recommendation was made that Town Council reflect this desire for police protection in their decisions.
2. Begin to make plans for a new facility for use as a town hall, police station, and fire station. Having new facilities will encourage town and community residents that Glade Spring wants to make them feel safe as well as replacing older buildings, which have their drawbacks.
3. The recommendation was made that Town Council continue to work towards the goal of completing a feasibility study. This study may prove beneficial in identifying untapped revenue sources that would help to provide better police protection. The idea to utilize the monies designated for Economic Development in the proposed budget was suggested for this upcoming year.
3. Work with the entity that acquired the BVU divestiture (Sunset Digital Communications?) to help bring another competitor to Glade Spring for broadband Internet, television, and phone service. Seeking this provider would allow the citizens and community members to have another choice regarding their telecommunication provider. This should in turn provide both better services and possibly lower prices. This would help to enhance economic development activities.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:48pm

Minutes submitted by M. Lloyd