

**Security and Enforcement Committee Meeting**

January 22, 2018

Antoine’s Restaurant

The meeting was called to order at 2:07pm. Attendees introduced themselves and the November 2017 notes were approved unanimously.

Bob Simms showed a chart describing all of the various enforcement entities/resources within the French Quarter. Simms provided an overview of the history of the sound ordinance and, as a consequence of its failure, the laws on the books remain difficult to enforce.

Simms reported that sound violations are frequently submitted via the FQTF app, but there’s little that the officers can do to resolve the complaints.

Members of the City of New Orleans Department of Health indicated that often when they arrive on the scene to do a sound meter reading that the artists turn down their speakers. Simms showed examples of sound issues, including Saints Vader, the jugglers/acrobats in front of the Cathedral, and the brass bands on Jackson Square. Besides sound, these performers obstruct the public right of way and fire lanes. Much discussion ensued about the “bucket kids” and what the appropriate course of action against them is; residents and business leaders agreed that they were being disturbed.

Members of the City of New Orleans Department of Health said that they have been looking at what they can and cannot enforce. Sarah Babcock stated that they cannot enforce anything currently given the current language of the ordinance. The sound regulation states that 10 minutes of prolonged sound officially determines a violation, but 10 minutes is a long time for a band to play continuously/decibel measurements to be taken. The Department of Health has drafted ordinances that have been sitting on the Mayor’s desk for a long time; they try to get out with the NOPD and members of MCCNO to educate performers on the issue of sound, although these events do not happen in inclement weather. Babcock noted that their entire team is three people, and she is not full-time devoted to these efforts. Their authority is civil, not criminal. The Department of Health wants to focus on chronic problems and to determine whether it’s best for MCCNO or NOPD to approach those artists. Their focus is on scientific data: what level of sound is damaging to heath, what level of sound will wake or keep people up, and what are the best ways to enforce any regulations that are passed. The Department is hopeful that this time the ordinance can be passed like the smoking ordinance, where regulatory actions can follow.

Much discussion continued about the timeline of Mayoral and City Council transition. Gail Cavett suggested a permitting process; Ethan Ellestad said that would be difficult constitutionally and culturally. Susan Guillot discussed issues of equity amongst performers. Bob Simms suggested citizens’ best course of action is to report perceived violations of 311. Everyone stated concerns about waiting for the next administrations to take action on the issue. Simms suggested that the SEC approach the FQMD Board to take up the sound ordinance initiative; other attendees disagreed with FQMD being the appropriate conduit for this effort.

Simms discussed robberies and homicides in the fourth quarter of 2017 and then provided 8th District crime statistics. Overall, violent crime was down 15%, homicides were the same, illegal gun arrests increased to 177 from 99 (plus 120 from LSP), armed robberies decreased from 101 to 65, and simple robberies decreased from 118 to 88.

The main addition to the French Quarter Task Force in 2017 was traffic and parking enforcement. 81 parking tickets and 179 traffic tickets were issued. Simms discussed the vehicle fleet and the need for replacements this year. Simms reported that the Board voted to buy a new car at its January meeting.

Attendees discussed the difficulties associated with street dwellers and the progress with the low barrier homeless shelter. Simms reported that BB St. Roman recently received Mayoral recognition for her efforts with the homeless population. Vincent Marcello reported that the FQBA Quality of Life Committee recently elected to address the issue of vagrants as a major project for 2018. Cavett suggested that the FQMD Infrastructure Committee work with the SEC on this quality of life issue. Cavett suggested an additional FQTF officer could work on enforcement issues.

Simms reported turnover at the French Market Corporation in their security division.

The Committee elected to continue to hold meetings on the third Mondays of the month. The next two meetings will be held on February 19 and March 19 at Antoine’s.

The meeting adjourned at 3:34pm.