



Monday, December 16, 2019  
2:00 – 3:00 pm  
Antoine's Restaurant  
713 St. Louis Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

### **Security and Enforcement Committee Meeting Notes**

**Members present:** Ms. Beverly Fulk, Ms. Fluffy Hegenberger, Ms. Gail Cavett, Bob Simms, Mr. Steve Caputo, Ann Kesler, Mr. Matthew Emory, Mr. Robert Watters

**Members absent:** Bryan Drude, Vincent Marcello, Brittany McGovern

**Guests:** Glade Bilby, Ethan Ellestad

Meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm.

Attendees introduced themselves to the group.

Notes from the September meeting were not distributed prior to the meeting so no action was taken.

Chair's comments, Mr. Emory: Thanked everyone for attending the meetings to make a safer French Quarter. Tasked to present 3 actionable goals from this committee. This meeting is an open forum to discuss those goals. The committee achieved a major goal from last year in completing a security assessment. There are going to be challenges to get people to agree on the outcomes of that report. And therefore, we will all need to work together to make the French Quarter a safer place to live and work.

Ms. Cavett asked if it would be ok to come to the next meeting with goals?

Mr. Emory started the discussion with suggesting a goal of being a more efficient French Quarter with dollars spent and accountability for how those dollars are spent and that the Security & Enforcement Committee hold those accountable that responsibility. There is a lax attitude toward criminals in the French Quarter. There needs to be stronger laws and enforcement so that people are deterred not just by words, but by penalties. That there are three months sentences for gun possession on a parade route. Advocate to not have criminals released on own recognizance.

Ms. Hegenberger: The French Quarter needs more police on foot

Mr. Emory: How many?

Ms. Fulk: Control guns. Better systems, whether electronic, to remove guns.

Mr. Emory: Need to clarify illegal guns, not legal guns.

Ms. Hegenberger: Do we know if the Canal St. shooting was illegal guns? Could we have bright lights for special events?

Mr. Emory: Yes. Both perpetrators were felons and therefore were not permitted to carry.

Mr. Simms: When discussing the need for more officers, keep in mind: the shooters were within five feet of an officer in his patrol vehicle. There is a public consensus that you need to carry heat in the French Quarter. Need to enforce the law that criminal possession gets a three-year sentence. Why are there no gun sniffing dogs on Bourbon Street?

Ms. Fulk: Dogs cannot work with people in crowds.

Mr. Emory: The officers on Canal Street thought they were being shot upon; the shooters were so close. This shows that criminals feel too comfortable in the French Quarter. We need to make them feel uncomfortable.

Mr. Bilby: There is a perception that you can come to New Orleans and do these things here and get away with it. It's a bigger issue: can we get the DA and federal prosecutors to get on board with the higher sentences? The additional policemen wouldn't help in this case.

Mr. Emory: We are New Orleans and we cannot compare ourselves to other cities because of the dark tourism that we cater to. We just want you to do it in a safe way. We're not Disneyland, we are an environment that you can have fun, but not cannot infringe on others.

Mr. Watters: Years ago, FQMD worked to make the FQ a gun free zone because the French Quarter is like a park, so to speak. In Texas, you cannot have a gun within so many feet of an ABO, if enacted locally and enforced, this would make the entire of Bourbon Street gun free.

Mr. Bilby: Couldn't we make the whole French quarter gun free?

Ms. Cavett: Would the ABO operators support this law?

Mr. Watters: The ABOs hate guns and would support a law that would keep them away.

Mr. Caputo: Work collaboratively with residents and businesses on this together.

Mr. Watters: Need a lawyer to take the concept to the council to draft the ordinance

Mr. Caputo: The whole French Quarter would support

Mr. Watters: To clarify, you can have a gun in your house, but would not be allowed to carry in the street.

Ms. Kesler: How would this law that stop the illegal guns?

Mr. Emory: It gives the NOPD a tool to engage with gun owners that they do not have now.

Mr. Caputo: The law would have a higher penalty than what is existing and would have more teeth that would deter people from carrying in the French Quarter in the future.

Mr. Emory: Goals need to have an overlaying positive message to both the residents and visitors that we are being pro-active, that we are aware of our problems and are taking steps to remedy them.

Ms. Cavett: What have other cities done? If there is already a model, we should investigate it.

Mr. Caputo: We shouldn't wait. The roll out of the security assessment should include one to three goals that we can focus on implementing. We should use the assessment as a tool. A few years ago, New Orleans & Company did a study with the Boston Group that resulted in measurable goals. We are now using those goals as a road map and checking off achievements. The security assessment should be used in the same way – a road map to success. By improving the Quarter for tourism, it makes the neighborhood better for the residents.

Mr. Emory: The security assessment gives us a tool to point to. Another big question is what is the overall economic impact of the Quarter, based on property and sales taxes, to show the quarter's value? In previous efforts we couldn't get these figures out of City Hall, but it is vitally important. We need to spend more time on this to aggregate the data. It's hard to get the facts. We need this bullet in our gun to justify additional security measures in the Quarter.

Mr. Caputo: Is that an appropriate goal for this committee?

Karley: There is already discussion with New Orleans & Co. about a larger economic impact study of the French Quarter factoring not just taxes, but value added businesses that service Quarter businesses, and other tourism sectors in the City, region and State that feed off of the tourism generated by the Quarter.

Mr. Emory: The Mayor is supportive of this as well. And now that they are through the Fair Deal negotiations, there is interest in supporting this initiative.

Ms. Fulk: We need to also go to the governor for support as well. He should support the voters here.

Mr. Emory: Whatever initiatives we pursue in 2020, we need to be outspoken in our future.

Ms. Cavett: To recap three goals 1. Increase number of NOPD 8<sup>th</sup> District police officers to pre-Hurricane Katrina levels 2. Reduce guns in the French Quarter through creation of stricter carry laws and technologies 3. Support an emphasis on law enforcement and city code enforcement in the French Quarter.

Mr. Emory: Need to be measurable goals. Ms. Frankic will send an email to circulate ahead of the Board meeting.

Ms. Cavett: We are subject to action items as committee?

Mr. Watters: The Board must vote on any actions. As a committee we cannot have email discussions but can share information.

Mr. Emory: So we will clean up the recommendations for the three SEC goals and send out to the committee. Please reply to Ms. Frankic so that we can get consensus on the goals before the next board meeting. Do not reply all. Bob, take us through the crime stats

Mr. Simms: We have looked at the gun issue, there are new technologies out there like sensors on buildings that would detect when people are carrying weapons. They can feed directly into the Real Time Crime Center. That would be a huge deterrent to illegal carries on Bourbon Street

Mr. Emory: We do not want to support metal detectors on Bourbon Street. That is not the image we want to have

Mr. Simms: People would know there are wifi gun sensors and that would be the deterrent to illegal carry.

Mr. Watters: We asked the commander at the last board meeting about this. The commander said he is not aware of any of these new technologies.

Mr. Simms: We need to work with the Chief Technology Officer at NOPD.

Mr. Watters: The dogs work best when people are walking by in a line, not a crowd

Mr. Bilby: There is a company that does high end technology for gun detection, Palantir (SP?) that we should look into.

Mr. Simms showed the 2019 Q1, Q2, and Q3 crime maps for robberies, shootings and homicides.

Ms. Cavett: There is a cluster in the 300-400 blocks of Bourbon Street; is there anything specific going on there that is causing this concentration of crimes?

Mr. Watters: Conti and Bourbon has always been a troublesome corner. Not aware of anything new causing the spike there.

Mr. Simms: Q3 had no homicides, but 7 armed robberies spread throughout the Quarter, not all in one location.

Ms. Cavett: What time of day are the armed robberies?

Mr. Simms: I can add the times, but usually after midnight. These are opportunity crimes. More simple robberies in 2018, but shootings and armed robberies are up this year.

Mr. Emory: The stats are consistent. They are not going down.

Mr. Watters: The number of deaths is going down because the hospitals are saving more lives.

Mr. Emory: Stats can be misleading.

Mr. Watters: If you ask businesses on Bourbon Street, they will say crime is not down. One cannot walk down the street in the middle of the afternoon without getting solicited for drugs.

Mr. Simms: This is due to the lack of visible police on Bourbon Street.

Mr. Emory: We are getting told there are 22 officers on Bourbon Street, and that's just not true.

Mr. Simms: You cannot have two per block with only 22 officers. I asked the State police to be there earlier. Right now, there are no uniformed officer on Bourbon Street between 7 and 9 o'clock. The enforcement on Bourbon street is not consistent.

Mr. Watters: We used to have a problem with people selling hats on Bourbon Street, but now they're just selling drugs. How long until the mental services facility next to the jail gets off the ground? We've generated a lot of money for the French Quarter and this is discouraging.

Mr. Simms: We're exactly where we were when we got started.

Mr. Emory: the commanders have said that if we lose the EDD we will be in trouble, but there is no accountability in the how the EDD money is spent.

Ms. Cavett: When the program first started, the City was not paying the invoices, so the State drew from different accounts to pay to the troopers until the City paid up. When the money came back to the State from the City, the State sent it to the accounts where the State had borrowed it. This is why the accounting says that the money is being used for the vehicle repair account when it was actually borrowed money.

Mr. Emory: I call malarkey on that one, it's just bad business accounting.

Mr. Watters: To this day the City does not get regular accounting of how this money is spent.

Mr. Emory: the EDD is coming up for renewal, and it is time to negotiate it to be better, including accountability.

Ms. Cavett: The State Police have a very limited, narrow, program. They only have half the troopers in town that they need. The others must come from out of town. We need to put together a recommendation for how the money is spent and there are certain reports that need to be submitted with the information that we want to know. You build in the restrictions that make the EDD patrols work efficiently.

Mr. Watters: I spoke to Sidney about building into the app that it includes the State Police to get the accountability we are asking for from them.

Ms. Hegenberger: This should be one of our goals.

Mr. Simms: I put the app on the computers in their vehicles. All the State Police units have the app. They can see all the activity. They don't use the admin aspect of it.

Mr. Emory: Can we get more information on this?

Mr. Simms: If you attend the MAX meetings you can get this information. Looking better for Q4 but have a little time to go. It does look better than the previous

Mr. Emory: The assessment is in, but it has not been circulated yet. No date on when it would be released.

Mr. Watters: Ask for a special meeting so this can be read and get released.

Mr. Emory: Do not want to sit on the security assessment too long, want to see some action come out of it. Is there any new business? \*No response\* The next meeting is January 27<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01.