

**City of Jacksonville – The Jacksonville Journey
Law Enforcement and Deterrence Sub-Committee**

MINUTES

OF

GETTING GUNS OFF THE STREET

SUB-COMMITTEE

January 23, 2008

The Jacksonville Journey – Getting Guns Off the Streets

Sub-Committee

January 23, 2008

9:30 a.m.

PROCEEDINGS before the Jacksonville Journey –“Getting Guns Off the Streets” sub-committee taken on Wednesday, January 23, 2008, Edward Ball Building, 8th Floor – 214 N. Hogan Street, Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida commencing at approximately 9:30 a.m.

Bishop John Howard, Chair

Joe Stelma, Member

Ed Hearle, Member

Jon Phillips, Staff

APPEARANCES

COMMITTEE CHAIR & MEMBERS:

BISHOP JOHN HOWARD, Chair

JOE STELMA, Member

ED HEARLE, Member

PROFESSIONAL STAFF:

JON PHILLIPS, Office of General Counsel

STAFF:

LYN COMPTON

PROCEEDINGS

January 23, 2008

Getting Guns Off the Streets

9:30 a.m.

Call to Order and Comments. Bishop John Howard, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Purpose of Meeting. To establish this committee's goals, to discuss the methods and resources available to accomplish these goals, and to set a schedule of meetings for this sub-committee.

Minutes.

Bishop Howard questioned Mr. Phillips concerning Sunshine Law and the sub-committee's duties under this law. Mr. Phillips explained that these meetings are recorded events and, therefore, public record. He also cautioned members that discussing committee business among themselves (i.e., in private) was a violation of the Sunshine Law and should not be undertaken.

Bishop Howard then turned to Mr. Phillips for an overview of present gun laws. Mr. Phillips explained that there are firearms laws at the Federal, State and local levels, and further explained how they interacted. Mr. Phillips also summarized applicable Florida Statutes regarding illegal use and possession of guns. Mr. Phillips presented a handout of the summary and a copy of Chapter 790

of the Florida Statutes.

Mr. Hearle handed out a newspaper clipping from the Washington Post dated December 23, 2007 which concerned measures being taken by the incoming Mayor of Philadelphia to curb gun violence.

The sub-committee agreed that its focus should be on gun illegality rather than the issues created by laws regarding lawful use of firearms issues.

Mr. Stelma indicated that one possible action to be considered was that career criminals were causing many of the problems and that lessening of, or dropping charges, involving firearms is not good.

Mr. Stelma suggested that one possible action to be considered was that areas of high criminal activity should be so designated, and that judges should be allowed to impose higher bond amounts at initial arrest for crimes committed within those designated areas. He feels the Sheriff's Department has the information on hand as to which areas to designate as high criminal areas. Through discussion it was suggested that any such effort must be carefully undertaken with oversight in the community.

It was suggested that the Sheriff should be more involved in these communities, have a greater presence. It was also suggested that residents of communities designated as high criminal activity areas should be made aware of the proposed higher bond for criminal acts committed in these areas.

Mr. Hearle suggested that this subcommittee could possibly use a member

from a community designated as one with high criminal activity. Bishop Howard responded that the subcommittee might be able to invite visitors from these communities to give the committee a broader perspective.

Mr. Phillips explained that there were no limits on who can participate in the committee's meetings. Mr. Phillips will pass along this suggestion to the Law Enforcement Committee.

It was agreed among the committee members that Mr. Phillips should inquire as to the focus of other subcommittees so that this subcommittee does not overlap the work being done by those other subcommittees

It was suggested that someone from the DCSB should be invited to address this subcommittee about the firearms problems in the school system, if any.

It was suggested that other committees might be covering the neighborhood issues and that perhaps this sub-committee should look at those who commit gun crimes and penalties that they receive.

Mr. Stelma asked whether sentencing guidelines play a part?

Mr. Phillips suggested that to determine that empirically would necessitate looking at the percentage of maximum sentences gun criminals have received and how often do the sentences go below the guidelines.

It was suggested that perhaps a random sample of State Attorney's Office files should be examined to get a feel for how gun crimes are treated on average.

Bishop Howard mentioned high capacity guns and weapons of mass

destruction. He also inquired as to whether the Sheriff's Office or State Attorney's office has a gun crimes unit. If such a unit exists, he wants representatives at the next meeting.

Bishop Howard feels these departments should have information they will share and requests that Mr. Phillips make contact with both the Sheriff's Office and State Attorney's Office to get names of people who can meet with this subcommittee at future meetings. Mr. Phillips agreed to make these arrangements.

Suggestions were made as to where this subcommittee should focus its attention – streets first, schools later? Start with schools in target areas?

Mr. Phillips will check with other subcommittees on their involvement with schools.

10:25 a.m. to 10:35 a.m. – BREAK

The rest of the meeting was utilized to discuss and schedule subcommittee deadlines and meetings. It was noted that this subcommittee's Interim Report is due on March 13, 2008. It was noted that collection of data would ideally be accomplished prior to this date. Final committee recommendations are due by April 10, 2007.

The subcommittee agreed on the following meeting schedule:

Monday 28 January 9:30 AM
Tuesday 5 February 2:30 PM
Tuesday 19 February 2:00 PM
Tuesday 26 February 2:00 PM
Thursday 6 March 9:30 AM

Thursday 3 April 9:30 AM

All meetings are presently scheduled to last 90 minutes hopefully will take place in Room 825 at the Ed Ball Building.

TO DO LIST:

Get gun task force representatives to speak to committee – If they don't have one they need to recommend someone with knowledge of the issue.

Jon Phillips to do research as directed by this sub-committee.

Ask State Attorney to produce all of a certain time period's crime statistics (a sample size).

Mr. Phillips can utilize OCG interns for assistance.

Mr. Hearle mentioned use of Stop and Frisk and curfews. Look into law in Florida and other cities.

What do we need legislatively?

Discuss with judiciary higher bond issue.

There was discussion indicating that the present laws do not appear to be inadequate *per se*.

There was then discussion of what can be done, if anything, regarding use of volunteers, mothers organizing to lessen arms problem, and men mentoring younger men

11:00 A.M. – MEETING ADJOURNED.