

MAYOR & COUNCIL AGENDA COVER SHEET

MEETING DATE:

November 19, 2007

CALL TO PODIUM:

Fred Felton
Assistant City Manager

RESPONSIBLE STAFF:

Fred Felton
Assistant City Manager

AGENDA ITEM:

(please check one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proclamation/Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appointment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Hearing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consent Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ordinance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resolution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy Discussion
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work Session Discussion Item
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other: From Staff

PUBLIC HEARING HISTORY:

(Please complete this section if agenda item is a public hearing)

Introduced	
Advertised	
Hearing Date	
Record Held Open	
Policy Discussion	

TITLE:
Guidance on a Memorandum Dated November 15, 2007 Concerning a Police Training Opportunity at Broadstone Apartments

SUPPORTING BACKGROUND:
Staff will be seeking guidance on the attached memorandum.

DESIRED OUTCOME:
Provide guidance to staff.

MEMORANDUM TO: Mayor and City Council

VIA: James D. Arnoult, Acting City Manager

FROM: Frederick J. Felton, Assistant City Manager

DATE: November 15, 2007

SUBJECT: Police Training Opportunity at Broadstone Apartments

As you are aware, the Mayor and City Council has approved redevelopment of Broadstone Apartments, and the apartments will be entirely vacant in the near future.

As the attached memorandum from Chief King to Acting City Manager Arnoult indicates, the City Police would like to work with the Montgomery County Police to host a Forced Entry Training program for regional SWAT team members at the vacant apartments. For the reasons outlined in Chief King's memo, we believe this is an excellent opportunity for our Police Department.

While the use of explosives associated with training will be audible to City residents, Broadstone is an excellent location for this training because of the buffer provided by the already vacant West Deer Park Apartments.

In the event the City moves forward with this training, it is extremely important that we conduct significant public outreach and notify all nearby residents that the training will be occurring to minimize any public concern.

I will be seeking guidance on this issue during the November 19, 2007 Mayor and Council meeting. In the mean time, please feel free to contact me to discuss this matter.

FJF/ms

Attachment

MEMORANDUM TO: Acting City Manager James D. Arnoult
FROM: John A. King JK 11/14/07
Chief of Police
DATE: November 14, 2007
SUBJECT: Use of Broadstone Apartment Complex for
Police Training

It has come to the attention of the Police Department that the Broadstone Apartment Complex will soon be vacated and subsequently demolished to make way for a new development. If this is true the Department would like to the opportunity utilize the complex for training before it is demolished.

The City of Gaithersburg is in a unique position to host a very specialized school. The school is taught by Forced Entry Tactical Training, some of the most skilled police and military specialist in explosive breaching. This opportunity is so rare that jurisdictions from across the Country will bid for slots. The information taught at a school of this caliber is invaluable not only to the individual officers, but to the community that the officers serve.

There are times when the police are placed at a distinct disadvantage when facing certain life threatening situations. Situations, like hostage rescue, criminals barricading themselves in rooms, and hard targets that would require an unrealistic amount of time by police to enter by conventional means are very good examples of where explosive breaching is needed. When properly trained, specially trained police can utilize explosives to overcome or circumvent these barriers. . Having the option of defeating the barricades placed on the entry points, or creating access to a room or structure where the criminal doesn't expect it, such as through a wall, is the reason that law enforcement must train and be ready to utilize explosive breaching.

Explosive breaching is a sophisticated, mathematical, precise use of explosives that strives to use the minimum amount of explosives to positively breach a structure and ensure the safety of both the officers and the public. This class teaches officers to use the smallest amount of explosives to enter into structures such as schools, office buildings, malls or residential dwellings with a 100% success rate. There is a significant amount of training that is required for officers to gain this skill and even more practical hands-on training to keep these officers extremely proficient. Officers with the specialty of explosive breacher need to continually hone their skills.

The City of Gaithersburg depends on Montgomery County Police for certain special units. One of those units is the Special Weapons and Tactics Team commonly known by the acronym SWAT. This team is comprised not only of members from the Montgomery County Police, but the Montgomery County Sheriffs Office and the Gaithersburg Police department. Part of SWAT's function is to resolve high risk situations peacefully. In order to accomplish this team must constantly train in realistic conditions. Real world training sites are few and far between. The opportunity to learn and train on the actual walls, doors, and windows that they may face in a real crisis provides invaluable information, such as opportunity to learn and confirm that we are using the least amount of explosives possible to gain a positive breach.

The benefits of sponsoring this type of class not only to the City but the entire Washington Metropolitan Region as a whole. It is not if, but when there will be a school incident like those that have occurred in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, Bailey, Colorado, or Beslan, Russia in this region and we will need the officers and tactical teams from the surrounding jurisdictions to assist in the resolution. Training together is the best medium for meeting and learning about agencies that we would work closely with in life threatening events. It also allows those agencies

to train in Gaithersburg. It gives outside agencies an idea of where we are and what types of structures they may be up against if they need to respond to help. Beyond even normal law enforcement activities, the threat of terrorism looms high in this area. A review of terrorist tactics shows that they almost always do multiple coordinated attacks, typically four at a time. If that were to occur in this area, the few teams currently trained in explosive breaching will not be able to meet the need if they are being utilized in their own jurisdictions. Gaithersburg would be helping to increase the capability in the region, not only for the benefit of those other jurisdictions, but in the event the need is right here in Gaithersburg.

A final benefit on hosting a class of this magnitude is for recruiting. Officers from around the nation are going to look at our website to see what we are about. They will want to know where we are located, the size of our department, how big the City is, and how our benefits stack up to theirs. This may be a chance to bring officers to our department that want to move into our area but did not have a good understanding of the location or job opportunities. Officers will be in the area for seven days and will have a very good chance to look at our City and see what it can provide them and their families.

The inconvenience on the community will be minimal. Most of the charges will be on interior walls and doors. After reviewing the layout of the Broadstone Apartments, it is clear that we can do exterior wall charges on the walls that face the interior of the complex. The first three days of the school are classroom instruction. There will be about 20 shots a day for the two days following the classroom portion and only a few shots on the final day. It is safe to say the public will not hear most of the interior charges and the noise created by the exterior charges will be similar to the noise created by blasting at construction sites. There will be noise, but due to the layout of the area it will be minimal. The Montgomery County Police have utilized sites prior to demolition for over

12 years including many in populated areas. There has never been an accident, injury, or collateral damage in fact this type of training has been conducted in various locations around Montgomery County without incident.

Public concern about this type of training could become a reality and because of that procedure will be in place to provide them with as much information as possible as well as eliminate any risk to them. Signage would be posted and flyers would be distributed before and during the class informing the residents of what is taking place and that they are not at risk. Instructors and those who are familiar with type of training will be available to any questions that may arise and address any concerns the residents may have. Security will be provided at all times and at no time will explosives be left unattended.

Should you have any questions or concerns please let me know in order that they can be addressed.