

**ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

ACTION MINUTES

MEETING OF APRIL 7, 2011

The meeting was convened at 7:02 p.m. Soo Lee-Cho and Dennis Cain were absent. Eric Seigel participated via conference phone.

The chair moved, seconded by Sean Hart, to approve the agenda.

It was noted that Chief Dawson could not attend the meeting. Scott Gutshick from the Department of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS) and Matt Shanks, Fire Marshal for the City were the guest speakers.

Jim Wasilak noted that he had handouts for the committee – the boundary study for Ritchie Park Elementary School, a chart from Bruce Crispell showing the core capacities of the Rockville schools, and future CIP projects.

The committee considered the draft minutes from the March 31. It was noted that if there were any specific requests for additional data that they be noted in future minutes. Discussion indicated that there should be some expansion of the discussion with Mr. Crispell in the minutes. Tom Gibney moved, seconded by Charles Littlefield to delay action on the minutes pending further input from the committee.

The meeting then was turned over to the guest speaker, Scott Gutschick from the Montgomery County Department of Fire and Rescue Services.

Mr. Gutschick began by providing an updated map of the 10-minute response times for the City that includes the location of the new Station 32 at Travilah. He noted that the map had already included the response times from this station as originally published. Mr. Gutshick noted that construction of this station should begin later this year and come on line in FY 2013. He notes that the map is actually based on 8 minutes of actual travel time, plus the two minutes for call processing and turnout.

Tom Gibney requested that maps be provided to the committee showing what the response times would look like without Station 32. He would also like to see maps showing areas with service from one, two, or three or more stations. In addition, the map should show other stations in the surrounding area that also provide service to the City.

The presentation then turned to response time goals for DFRS. Mr. Gutshick provided a hand-out detailing what constitutes response time – Two minutes are allotted for call processing and turnout, plus travel time. The dispatch automatically determines what

units are needed and calls them; also can account for units already on the road that may be close enough to respond. There may be some minor turnout delay late at night when the staff is asleep. The routes taken are normally chosen based on staff experience with prevailing conditions. They can request guidance from dispatch if alternate routes are needed. The response time map is based on a Rand study from New York City, using a 39 mph travel speed.

Tom Gibney doubts the reliability of this study. Mr. Gutshick notes that Fairfax County uses a 30 mph travel speed, but that doesn't account for the zero start-up speed. Response times for DRFS are tracked on an incident basis, measuring the average actuals versus the goals. Past performance can be seen on the County's website, via the Chief Administrative Officer's data on performance measures.

Equipment dispatched depends on the character of the incident. Three aerial units are sent to any high-rise fire. Scott will have to provide us with what constitutes a high-rise. It may be either 4 or more stories, or more than 4 stories. He notes that there are some older buildings in the County that are not sprinklered. The Fire Marshal has been encouraging retrofit of these buildings, but that is an expensive job. Since 2003 in the City, and 2004 in the County, all new residential development must have sprinklers.

In terms of response time performance measures, most of the City is in the Urban district; a small portion is in the suburban district.

The next topic for discussion with a hand-out was Resource Deployment. Tanker trucks may be necessary in areas with low hydrant flow. Matt Shanks noted that the Department of Public Works (DPW) is planning to color-code the City hydrants based on their fire flow performance. This will replace the collars currently being used.

DRFS wants to increase the primary response to 4-person teams, some of whom may be volunteers. He notes that there are about 1,000 professional firefighters and about 800 qualified volunteers. 24 engines currently have 4-person teams, which include a paramedic, so the engine can double as both suppression and EMS. One aerial unit is also assigned a 4-person team. Right now, about 75 – 80% of the calls in the county are EMS, not fire. Mr. Shanks expressed the opinion that the APFO for fire and rescue service only applied to engines as it relates to response times.

The County also has a performance measure for heart attack response. It should be 90 minutes from the call until the patient receives treatment at the emergency room.

Right now Station 8 in Gaithersburg has a 4-person aerial unit as well as EMS units. Assets may be redistributed from time to time depending on demands/trends in the county. The Operations Division handles the staffing requirements and apparatus distribution.

Matt Shanks noted that it is almost impossible to build any new high-risk building types without sprinklers because the alternative safety code requirements are so restrictive.

Relocatable classrooms are considered “small” schools (<20,000 square feet) and don’t have to be sprinklered since they have ready egress. Fire drills are still required to be held by the schools.

The question was asked about what the County does when the goals aren’t being met. DFRS is always looking at added needs. There is already a demonstrated need for four new stations in the northeast portion of the county, along with possible relocation of existing stations. Studies also show a need for a new station in the vicinity of Rt. 355 and Shady Grove Road to serve the anticipated development proposed by the Shady Grove Sector Plan.

For fire insurance ratings, the Insurance Society of America (ISA) evaluates fire/EMS services and gives a rating from 1 to 10, 1 being best. The County was last evaluated in 1976, and received a 4 for urban areas and a 9 for rural areas. Urban and rural areas are based on the presence or absence of public water and hydrants. The county may request a new rating, but they have to demonstrate ability to provide 400-500 gallons per minute for 2 hours in a rural area to raise the rating, meaning several tankers have to continually circulate between a water source and the test site.

There have been a few large fires in the City in recent years. The most recent was at Chestnut Lodge. A few years back there were large fires at both King Farm and Fallsgrove. Back in the 1980’s, a townhouse office complex under construction on Frederick Road burned.

Sean Hart asked if there is an upper threshold beyond which some remediation needs to be done. Mr. Gutshick said not at this time. There is periodic reporting on performance trends. The fire service master plan is updated periodically, last in 2009 and adopted in 2010.

Sean asked for information on the other stations that support Rockville service. He’d also like to see the equipment and staff projections for Station 32. Jason Anthony requested information on the incident types vs. equipment dispatched.

Matt Shanks noted that all of the structure types noted as high-risk in the APFS are commercial buildings, which have a much lower fatality rate than residential structures. There has never been a multi-fatality incident in the properly-sprinklered building.

Mr. Gutshick will put together a list of data requests from tonight’s meeting, assess priorities (some may take longer to assemble) and forward to the committee chair.

The discussion turned to future agendas. The deadlines for information to Rockville Reports is April 19 for the May issue, and May 18 for the June issue. Decisions need to be made on when the public input date(s) should be. The citizen survey should be a separate exercise. These items will be included on the next agenda. We also need to have the City Attorney discuss both the Beall’s Grant court case and the issue of a dedicated school impact tax/fee. The preliminary agreement is that the April 14 meeting

will include discussion of the public input issue, information for Rockville Reports, and the Beall's Grant briefing. The April 28 meeting will include a discussion with City staff regarding citizen surveys and the City Attorney discussion on the potential for imposing the school impact tax/fee.

There also need to be discussion of what other guests need to be invited. We still need to reach out to Councilmember Phil Andrews. Input from WMATA is also on the list. The staff will also see if Laura Berthiaume can come, probably on May 5.

Sean Hart noted that he questions the accuracy of the core capacity numbers on the chart supplied by MCPS. There needs to be a better definition of what constitutes core capacity.

Tom Gibney moved, seconded by Charles Littlefield, to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.