

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE February 21, 2014

Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee:

TO Sheffie Kadane (Chair), Adam Medrano (Vice Chair), Dwaine Caraway, Jennifer S. Gates, Sandy Greyson, Scott Griggs

SUBJECT Safe Complex Symposium

Attached is the briefing material on the "Safe Complex Symposium" to be presented to the Members of the Public Safety Committee on Monday February 24, 2014.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Charles M. Cato'.

Charles M. Cato

Interim Assistant City Manager

Attachment

cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Dallas City Council
A.C. Gonzalez, City Manager
Warren M. S. Ernst, City Attorney
Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge
Rosa A. Rios, City Secretary
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor
Ryan S. Evans, Interim First Assistant City Manager
Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager
Forest E. Turner, Assistant City Manager
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
Theresa O'Donnell, Interim Assistant City Manager
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer
Frank Libro, Public Information Officer
Elsa Cantu, Assistant to the City Manager – Mayor and City Council



Safe Complex Symposium



City of Dallas

DALLAS CITY COUNCIL | PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 24, 2014



Purpose

- To consider possible revisions to Section 27-44 of the Dallas City Code: “Attendance At Crime Watch Meetings and Safe Complex Symposiums”



Background

- Multi-tenant facilities are required by Chapter 27 to hold multiple permits, submit to inspections, and participate in certain mandated programs
 - Certificate of Occupancy
 - Multi-tenant registration
 - Swimming pool/spa permit (if applicable)
 - Manager of pool operation class (if applicable)
 - Crime Prevention Lease Addendum (to be included with tenant's lease agreements)
 - Participate in Safe Complex Symposium
 - Attendance at least 3 crime watch meetings
 - Emergency Response Contact Information
 - Master Meter Notice
- These standards are important measures in preventing blight and decay, and for safeguarding public health, safety and welfare



Background

- The Safe Complex Symposium (hereafter referred to as “Symposium”) was established by ordinance in March 2004
- The event is organized by Code Compliance, and hosted in association with Police, Fire-Rescue, Water Utilities, and the City Attorney’s Office



Background

- The ordinance specifies that:
 - The owner, operator, or other person in control of a multi-tenant property must attend the Symposium annually
 - The Symposium be held during the third week in May each year (rescheduled by Council resolution in 2008)
- Ordinance revised in 2008 to add defense to prosecution for apartment complexes participating in a volunteer crime reduction program sponsored by DPD (Gold Star Program)

Other Programs Affecting Multi-Tenant Properties



- Since the Symposium requirement was instituted in 2004, several additional programs affecting multi-tenant properties have been created—some mandated by City Code, some voluntary
 - Mandatory Crime Reduction (M.C.R.P.) Program
 - S.A.F.E. Program
 - Gold Star Program
 - Chief on the Beat

Mandatory Crime Reduction Program (MCRP)

- Established by City Council in January 2009
- The goal of MCRP is to reduce crime in apartment complexes and obtain compliance with minimum property standards
- Complexes are required to participate based on a mathematical formula looking at their per capita crime rate
 - DPD Crime Analysis Unit produces a monthly report of those properties with crime that exceeds the threshold as outlined by the ordinance
- DPD Patrol Divisions give notice to those properties of their MCRP designation
 - After notice is issued the Patrol Divisions do the following
 - Conduct an accord meeting with the property
 - Perform a security survey of the property
 - Survey the residents
 - Develop a crime reduction plan
 - Have regular meetings with the property to gauge progress
- On average 25 properties are in the program at any one time
 - Properties are in the program an average of 9 months

Support Abatement Forfeiture and Enforcement (S.A.F.E. Program)



- DPD's S.A.F.E. Unit, established in 1991, targets properties known to be havens for specific criminal activity
 - The Unit notifies the property owners of the criminal activity and then assists cooperative property owners in putting an end to the criminal activity
- In those instances where the property owner chooses not to cooperate in the removal of these criminal elements, the S.A.F.E. Unit seeks court-ordered abatement and/or closure of the property
 - Uncooperative property owners risk losing access and/or the permanent use of their properties for a maximum period of one year
- On Average 150-200 properties are in the program at any one time
 - Properties are in the program an average of 4-6 months for residential locations, and 1 year for apartment complexes



Gold Star Program

- A voluntary program established by DPD in 2009 for apartment complexes that encourages safer communities through addressing the following:
 - Preventing criminal elements from renting at their property
 - Knowing who is visiting their property,
 - Making the property less attractive to the roaming criminal element
- 148 properties currently participate in the program



Chief on the Beat

- Crime Prevention Safety & Health Fairs
 - Program kicked off in January 2012
 - Safety fairs enable the police department to engage with the community in a non-enforcement setting
 - Police chief and various DPD units on site at each fair
 - Goal is to reduce crime rate by increasing:
 - Community engagement
 - Utilization of the social media
 - Health and social services
 - Crime Watch meeting effectiveness
- 7 fairs have been held to-date
- 7 fairs are currently scheduled for 2014



Multi-Tenant Inspections

- Multi-tenant Community Integrity Specialist (MCIS)
 - MCIS created November 2013 to concentrate inspection efforts on multi-tenant properties
 - Team consists of 1 manager, 2 supervisors and 15 inspectors
 - Addresses complaints and service requests related to multi-tenant properties
 - Conducts exterior and interior (dwelling unit) inspections at least once every three years as required by City Code
 - Inspections are graded
 - Failing properties are subject to additional fees if deficiencies are not corrected and possible litigation

Reasons To Update The Ordinance

- Ordinance currently sets the Symposium to be held on one date in the third week of May
 - If owner or operator can not attend they are subject to fine
- About 1,500 people attend the Symposium every year
 - While there are some updates to laws and other relevant information, owners and operators complain that the information is repetitive
 - Little opportunity for one-on-one time with staff to answer questions due to large number of attendees
 - Frustrating for attendees who must deal with large crowds



OPTION 1

- Keep the symposium and refresh the content
- Pros
 - Opportunity to partner with the Apartment Association of Greater Dallas (AAGD) to refresh the offered information, services, and resources
 - Maintains the one programming opportunity to reach all multitenant operators at one time with a consistent message
- Cons
 - No make-up alternative for those that miss the date



OPTION 2

- Keep the Symposium, but offer more resources and dates
 - Create a community development approach and focus
 - Offer four different dates in four different areas of the city
- Pros
 - Partner with AAGD and other groups to deliver information, services, resources
 - Allows owners/managers the opportunity to attend the session and date most convenient for them
- Cons
 - Requires ongoing staff resources due to number of events annually
 - No assurance that attendance would be spread out evenly



OPTION 3

- Sunset the Symposium and instead continue to use newer programs
 - Mandatory Crime Reduction (M.C.R.P.) Program
 - S.A.F.E. Program
 - Gold Star Program
 - Chief on the Beat
 - Crime Prevention Safety & Health Fairs
- Pros
 - Newer mandatory and voluntary programs already target properties that need or want assistance
 - Eliminate overlap of information, education
 - Reduces burden on owners'/managers' time
- Cons
 - Lose the opportunity to engage all operators in one program



AAGD Recommendation

- AAGD convened a task force that looked at alternative ways to comply with the spirit of the ordinance, which is crime reduction, while making it less burdensome for property owners and managers
 - Sunset the annual Symposium
 - Expand required attendance at crime watch meetings from three to four per year
 - Produce a series of short videos on topics that are normally presented at the Symposium
 - Implement an electronic newsletter
 - Improve and expand the Gold Star Program

**SOURCE: AAGD, "Alternatives to the Safe Complex Symposium"*

DRAFT: FOR STAFF DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY



Next Steps

- Consider and incorporate feedback from Committee
- Brief full Council in February 2014
- Offer proposed ordinance for Council consideration in March 2014