

University Hill Public Safety Association

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February 15, 2017

Syracuse University Department of
Public Safety Office
130 College Place

11:00 am

MINUTES

Present: President Sardino, Messrs. Brown, Daugherty, Dufford, Goldacker, Goodale, Hernon, LeRoy, Petterelli, Robertson, Riley, Sweeny, Woodson

Staff: David A. Mankiewicz

I. WELCOME AND MINUTES OF DECEMBER 21, 2016

President Sardino called the meeting to order and welcomed the members present. He asked for consideration of the Minutes of December 21, 2016. Mr. Goldacker moved and Mr. Daugherty seconded a motion to waive the reading of the minutes and to approve them as distributed. The motion was unanimously approved.

II. WINTER STORM TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mr. Mankiewicz noted that at the tabletop exercise, one of the comments recommended that the group review the winter storm traffic management plan that was created by the City of Syracuse and was put in place to address the need to methodically stagger an evacuation from the center city. The plan was created in 1994 after a snowstorm hit the city at a mid-day. By that time people had reported to work and students had been sent to schools. When it became apparent that the storm was turning into a significant snow event, a number of major employers closed and sent their employees home at approximately the same time. The New York State Department of Transportation closed Interstate 81 and Interstate 690 and the resulting traffic congestion, confusion regarding the status of the highways, the mounting snow, and the inability of city snow plows to reach it overwhelmed the local road system. This situation resulted in an effort by the City to create a better management plan to get people out of the center city. While the plan was written for a snowstorm, it could be used in just about any other scenario.

The plan was relatively simple. It urged employers to release employees in a staggered fashion. Those who lived more than 10 miles away would be released first, and then to wait a period of time (probably an hour for the traffic to clear) to release those who live within 3-10 miles. Finally those who lived within three miles of the city would be sent home.

Mr. Mankiewicz asked the members to discuss whether they were familiar with the plan, if it was incorporated into their own emergency planning, or if it was time that the plan was updated. Mr. Dufford noted that the Crouse had a plan in place prior to 1994, but generally the hospitals have the opposite problem. They are not likely to dismiss people in the event of an emergency like this. The bigger issue for them is getting the next shift of workers into the hospital. So Crouse is still using the City's plan and Crouse relies on the City to tell them what roads are available. Mr. Dufford raised the issue that the UHPSA should work with the City and County Emergency Management to determine if there are designated routes to get people off University Hill and to give people specific instructions when they leave and how they would get home in the event that the highways are closed.

Mr. LeRoy commented that the City's plan that issues to empty the Carrier Dome might be the right plan for University Hill. However, Mr. Sweeny noted that it only works with 50 police officers assigned to each Dome event and he reminded people that when the 1994 storm took place, the City Police was asked to assist the State in closing the on-ramps as well as trying to deal with the numerous traffic accidents that were reported. Mr. Sweeny also noted that the DPW's plowing plans may have changed completely since 1994, and therefore the plan should be updated. Most drivers today would rely on their GPS to tell them how to move around the city in the event the highways are closed. Mr. Sweeny also noted that given the changes that have taken place in controlling snow and ice buildup on the highways and plowing patterns, it may no longer be a requirement to close the highways anymore.

Mr. Robertson noted that if emergency routes were designated, institutions such as the V.A. could make some of their equipment available to assist the City in plowing routes in the event there was a snow emergency taking place.

Mr. Daugherty noted that getting information to people is also still a challenge. Only about 15-20% of the Upstate's staff has signed up to receive notices from the administration in the event that there was an emergency.

Mr. Sardino commented that while Syracuse University can release non-essential personnel, the University itself may not close. It was noted that the emergency route should be different than those that would be taken by hospital ambulances and that it is important to publicize and sign where the emergency snow routes are located. It was also felt that the County EMS office should get out information to everyone at once.

Mr. Sweeny noted that within two years there will be significant construction underway on the I-81 project, and therefore it may be necessary to develop new information now about how the public should travel around the problems that will be created by the construction and these could also be used for the emergency routes. He also recommended that the Department of Public Works be invited to collaborate on the effort as it is important to know what DPW's plowing priorities are and where they would like to have people travel. Mr. Sardino recommended that meetings be set up

and include NYSDOT, the City's DPW and County's EMS to help look into this issue. Staff will follow up by setting up that meeting for a subsequent UHPSA meeting.

III. SECURITY INCIDENTS AND CONSTRUCTION REPORTS

Mr. LeRoy noted that the new research center at Simms and Forestry will not break ground until the beginning of the summer, probably sometime in June, July or August. At that time, it may become necessary to close some of the parking on the campus. There will be some limitations on travel and some of the roads may have flag people operating on them.

Mr. Dufford noted the new emergency department at Crouse is scheduled to open next year. Syracuse University's steam station is planning to do some significant work to place a new steam line along Waverly and Irving. This may change the curb cuts for the Waverly lot and access to the CNY Garage during that construction will be difficult as it is likely the bus stop in front of the CNY entrance is going to be moved. Mr. Dufford noted that this project will be coming up soon and he will send out the dates as soon as he has them.

Mr. Petterelli reported that there have been a couple of burglaries at Le Moyne. He noted that subsequent to that two suspects have been arrested and things have quieted down since those arrests. Mr. Sweeny commented that there was probably 15-18 youths were involved in crime sprees on the Eastside and there may be an additional splinter group that is working in the area around Thurber and Clarendon Heights. The two arrested appear to be ring leaders of this group and since they have been arrested things have been quiet.

Mr. Sardino noted that construction for the new National Veterans Resources Complex will be starting soon. He also note that there is no update in terms of the timing of the Carrier Dome construction. He noted that there had been a couple of break-ins before the school break, but since then it has been quiet.

IV. I-81 UPDATE

Mr. Mankiewicz gave a brief update on the planning for the replacement of I-81. NYSDOT had narrowed its options to two: the construction of a new viaduct, or the establishment of a community grid solution. Since that time there has been considerable political pressure which has resulted in the Governor hiring an independent consultant who will look at the feasibility of building new tunnel and depressed highway options. Mr. Mankiewicz noted that Parsons Brinkerhoff, the firm undertaking the work has significant tunnel expertise. It would likely take them six months to complete their analysis and therefore the schedule that had been provided before which indicated the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was going to be released early in first quarter no longer will be the case. This has likely delayed the I-81 decision for an additional six months while the study is complete. This may put all of the options back on the table at least through this final review.

Mr. Mankiewicz noted that there would be a meeting held on February 16 of the ambulance and emergency service providers with NYSDOT to talk about the impacts of the I-81 construction and to get their comments on the various plans to replace I-81.

V. OTHER BUSINESS AND ADJOURN

Mr. LeRoy noted that ESF is planning to have training sessions during the summer including active shooter in June and interview/interrogation techniques in July. The other institutions are welcome to attend and participate.

Mr. Sardino noted that on April 8, the Monster Truck Jam Event will be once again held at the Carrier Dome. This tends to bring an audience unfamiliar with the Dome traffic plan to the area, so it tends to create more traffic issues than normal for an event of this size.

With no further business to come before the UHPSA, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.