



Peaks Island Council

Q&A with Police Chief Sauschuck

August 14, 2017

McVane Community Center, 6:15 p.m.

Chief Sauschuck began with a recap of topics discussed during his April visit, including:

- Orlando is working as the Peaks Island Cadet this summer and has generated positive feedback.
- Officer visibility and their presence out of the car. Gator vehicle being used by police is providing different visibility and accessibility for officers.
- They are looking into bringing the speed monitoring cart out to the island again, based on feedback from residents that it is effective in slowing traffic speed. Sauschuck stated the City only owns one, and currently has to rotate the location.

(Answers documented below were stated by Police Chief Sauschuck unless otherwise noted.)

Q: Would it be possible for local realtors to distribute the golf cart guidelines to summer renters?

A: Good suggestion. When the ordinance is finalized, that can be distributed for educational purposes along with a reminder for golf cart registration.

Q: Has anyone considered implementation of speed governors for golf carts? I've seen carts on the backshore going 30-40 M.P.H.

A: The island speed limit is 20 M.P.H. across all vehicles, and police will enforce that regardless of the vehicle. It is also difficult to enforce inspection standards for something like a governor.

Q: If a call is placed directly to the island station, are those calls documented and reported the same as with the non-emergency dispatch number?

A: It is incredibly important to use the non-emergency dispatch number (207) 874-8575, as the dispatcher will ask the right questions for the responding officer as well as reporting and reporting purposes. There is no delay in service by calling dispatch; appropriate responders are deployed in many cases before the call is over. In certain medical situations, the dispatcher has been trained to assist until emergency responders can arrive. Please continue to use dispatch, which is the preferred method of doing business.

Q: There's been an abandoned vehicle parked on Island Avenue for well over a month. There is a sticker on it that says it may be towed by May 20th. Why is it so difficult to get rid of these abandoned vehicles?

A: Officer Rose has set up two opportunities where we actually towed abandoned vehicles off the island. Officer Rose stated the vehicle in question is currently registered and also currently legally parked. Officer Rose stated that the police are following protocol in dealing with that vehicle.

Q: Welch Street fence is City property, but local island businesses have created a tradition of posting banners on this fence, which is in violation of City ordinance.

A: I'm not overly familiar with that fence or how signs would be placed there. I can tell you that if someone has a sign, billboard or sandwich sign directly on a sidewalk, we refer that to code enforcement. I'm happy to research, but I don't know enough about that particular situation to speak to enforcement of it one way or the other. I can do some further research.

Councilor Belinda Ray stated that permits are required for sandwich boards to be present, and there are rules for placement. Further discussion included suggestion of business boards for advertising. PIC Chair Peñalver stated that this topic will be revisited by the Peaks Island Council.

Q: Can there be a sheet giving information related to procedures for specific events on the island such as what staff and resources are available, and expected response times?

A: 911 is the baseline action for any emergency. There is a risk of confusing people with the information that is typically shared by the 911 dispatcher.

Q: Are there any standard operating procedures for how often the officers are driving the island or are visible?

A: We don't have a set policy of what the route should be, as it is better if it changes so our presence is not predictable. I do think officers need to be out of the station patrolling as often as possible. Ferry arrival time is also a priority for police presence for multiple reasons.

Q: We had spoken about possibly having a second police vehicle on the island on weekends in the summer, to allow for ferry presence and ability for quick response or patrol at the same time.

A: A second police cruiser is not likely. We only have about 8 officers that are EMT certified and have experience on the island with location familiarity. In many cases, the reason we have two officers on duty is to make sure they can work together to back each other up and respond safely. I don't foresee us placing a second cruiser on the island.

Q: What can we tell people are the consequences of letting children drive a golf cart?

A: Depending on the circumstances, it may be considered endangering the welfare of a child, or there could be a fine. I can't say specifically because there are so many possible scenarios. The officers will observe and make a determination for each case, but there is not a blanket answer.

Q: Is the island adequately staffed for domestic violence cases?

A: Yes. We conducted analysis when we reduced officer staff from two to one to ensure the need was not high enough to warrant two officers at all times. There are protocols in place for the specific types of scenarios as far as waiting for back up. I would not knowingly create an unsafe scenario for the officers.

Q: If I observe unsafe operation of a golf cart by kids and take a picture, is that helpful?

A: Sure. Call the non-emergency dispatch number to report the details, let them know you have a picture of the incident and the responding officer may follow up with you. Please don't put yourself in an unsafe situation in order to grab a photo.

Q: Could the police officers check the beaches for drinking and intoxicated people regularly?

A: Yes, and I would encourage anyone to call the non-emergency number as soon as possible when incidents like that are observed so officers can respond.

Q: Is there ever two officers on duty at the same time who are not very familiar with the island?

A: No. When there are two officers on duty on Peaks, one of them is triple-trained and EMT certified.

Officer Sauschuck encouraged everyone to use the non-emergency dispatch number (207) 874-8575 to report any non-emergency incidents that need attention and follow up.