NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE

Jeff Pastor, Chair
Wendell Young, Vice Chair
Amy Murray, Member
Christopher Smitherman, Member

Monday
September 16, 2019
11:00 A.M.
Council Chambers
Room 300

Kourtney Porter
Clerk to the Committee

Alex Peppers, City Planning
Samantha Brandenburg, Asst. City Solicitor

AGENDA

2-201901353 REPORT, dated 9/5/2019, submitted by Patrick A. Duhaney, City Manager, regarding City's Helpline 591-6000. (SEE DOC #201801852)

3-201901354 REPORT, dated 9/5/2019, submitted by Patrick A. Duhaney, City Manager, regarding pothole repairs and claims process. (SEE DOC. #201801862)

4-201901384 COMMUNICATION, submitted by Councilmember Mann from Dan Prevost, MLCC President, regarding the Kilgour Place development on Herschel Avenue.
To: Mayor & Members of City Council
From: Patrick A. Duhaney, City Manager
Subject: City’s Helpline 591-6000

Reference Document #201801852

Councilmembers Greg Landsman and Chris Seelbach referred the following item for review and report:

MOTION, submitted by Councilmembers Landsman and Seelbach, WE MOVE that the Administration provide two reports related to pothole repairs, and overview of the claims process, ways in which we can make it more reliable for citizens, recognizing that recommendations may have budget implications. We would to better understand those budget implications with 60 days of the new year. The Enquirer recently reported that five people they spoke with had “...been through the city’s pothole-claims process – three of whom had their claims denied-and each offered the same piece of advice: Follow up. Submitting the paperwork once is not enough, they said. The process requires multiple follow-up calls and e-mails, or the claim just gets lost.” Second, a report on the city’s helpline,” 591-6000 – for “Citizen Service Request.” The report would include general usage data as well as top requests, average wait times, holiday coverage and other customer service measures we might be tracking. The report should also include recommendations from the Administration to improve services, recognizing that many of these recommendations may have budget implications. We would like to better understand those budget implications within 60 days of the new year.

The Department of Public Services (DPS) is responsible for the 591-6000 Call Center, which serves as the gateway to the City of Cincinnati. This non-emergency call center is aimed to help residents gain access to a wide range of City services. It is utilized by citizens to locate information about various City services, file complaints, request services, and report problems in and around the city. Through the use of several technologies, citizens can report and request City services in various ways. This includes calling 591-6000 to speak with a live representative, as well as utilizing the online platform at www.5916000.com or the mobile application at “Fix It Cincy” to submit a request.

The Call Center operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In 2018, the Call Center was supported by three fulltime Customer Relations Representatives, who answered an average of 427 calls per day. Thus far, in 2019, the Call Center is supported by two fulltime Customer Relations Representatives, who answer an average of 337 calls per day. These employees also support the service requests and responses from the online platform and mobile application. Additionally, the Call Center is supported by two Equipment Dispatchers and two Senior Customer Relations Representatives, who work
directly with front-line field staff to service citizen requests and/or complaints. The Call Center is managed by one Senior Administrative Specialist (Call Center Manager).

Below, illustrates the current Table of Organization for the Call Center:

The Call Center used to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week with a staff of 14 fulltime employees until workforce reductions began in December 2010. Budget cuts required drastic operational and service adjustments, which led to the current fulltime employees who interact directly with the citizens of Cincinnati each day. Today, the Call Center is closed on weekends and holidays. However, an after-hours phone tree is assessable via 591-6000 to allow citizens immediate access to limited City services when the Call Center is closed. These services include direct accessibility to staff to report traffic and road hazards and inoperable traffic signals. Citizens also have the option to connect directly with the Greater Cincinnati Water Works, Metropolitan Sewer District, Health Department, and Duke Energy.

Below, illustrates the usage data for the Call Center:

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**2018 CALL CENTER STATS**

- Total Incoming Calls: 107,353
- Calls Answered: 71,390
- Calls Abandoned: 35,963
- Average Wait Time: 6 mins 36 secs

**2019 CALL CENTER STATS (January 1st – August 1st)**

- Total Incoming Calls: 64,743
- Calls Answered: 49,167
- Calls Abandoned: 15,576
- Average Wait Time: 4 mins 22 secs

**Common Reasons for Calls Abandoned**

1. Caller didn't have time to wait
2. Caller hung up; questions answered by automated messaging
3. Caller realized they had the wrong number
Below, illustrates the top 10 requests received by the Call Center in 2018:

**CSR MANAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT**

**CSR MANAGEMENT SUMMARY BY SR TYPE, FOR DEPT 'ALL'**

Customer service requests entered from 1/1/2018 thru 12/31/2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SR TYPE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF SR's</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SR'S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metal Furniture, Spec Collectn</td>
<td>34117</td>
<td>29.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash, request for collection</td>
<td>5787</td>
<td>4.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tall grass/weeds, private prop</td>
<td>5607</td>
<td>4.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pothole, repair</td>
<td>5533</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter, private property</td>
<td>4158</td>
<td>3.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building, residential</td>
<td>4039</td>
<td>3.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yard waste,rtc</td>
<td>2788</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tires, Special Collection</td>
<td>2430</td>
<td>2.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Default, police (and junk veh)</td>
<td>2375</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash cart, registration</td>
<td>2036</td>
<td>1.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below, illustrates the top 10 requests received by the Call Center in 2019:

**CSR MANAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT**

**CSR MANAGEMENT SUMMARY BY SR TYPE, FOR DEPT 'ALL'**

Customer service requests entered from 01/01/2019 thru 08/01/2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SR TYPE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF SR's</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SR'S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metal Furniture, Spec Collectn</td>
<td>20415</td>
<td>29.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pothole, repair</td>
<td>5895</td>
<td>8.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tall grass/weeds, private prop</td>
<td>2905</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash, request for collection</td>
<td>2887</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter, private property</td>
<td>2398</td>
<td>3.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building, residential</td>
<td>2346</td>
<td>3.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yard waste,rtc</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>2.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Default, police (and junk veh)</td>
<td>1553</td>
<td>2.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slippery streets, request</td>
<td>1458</td>
<td>2.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tires, Special Collection</td>
<td>1419</td>
<td>2.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mission of the Call Center is to be a strategic link in the customers’ communication process by providing access to City services and City information with the highest level of customer service. DPS is working with the City Administration to review the staffing needs to improve call response times to make services more efficient, convenient and reliable for citizens.

The Call Center strives to help City agencies provide efficient and thorough service delivery to citizens. As public servants, both field crews and call center representatives have a responsibility to communicate more effectively and work cohesively together to achieve greater results and build a spirit of community in our City. However, based on data provided by the Aspect system, a total of five Customer Relations Representatives would be needed in order to bridge-the-gap in the current wait and response times. Additional staffing would support the needs of the Call Center by decreasing call abandonment, while increasing service levels and improving the call quality during peak hours. Additional staffing would also reduce attrition and turnover, while increasing productivity and customer satisfaction, and ensuring business continuity.

Below, illustrates the proposed Table of Organization for the Call Center:

Below, illustrates comparisons from other municipalities with similar Call Centers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY COMPARISONS</th>
<th>Louisville</th>
<th>Columbus</th>
<th>Cincinnati</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Call Takers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Calls per Day</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1170</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Hours</td>
<td>Monday - Friday 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.</td>
<td>Monday - Friday 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.</td>
<td>Monday - Friday 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To: Mayor & Members of City Council

From: Patrick A. Duhaney, City Manager

Subject: Pothole Repairs and Claims Process

Reference Document #201801862

Councilmembers Greg Landsman and Chris Seelbach referred the following item for review and report:

MOTION, submitted by Councilmembers Landsman and Seelbach, WE MOVE that the Administration provide two reports related to pothole repairs, and overview of the claims process, ways in which we can make it more reliable for citizens, recognizing that recommendations may have budget implications. We want to better understand those budget implications with 60 days of the new year. The Enquirer recently reported that five people they spoke with had “...been through the city’s pothole-claims process – three of whom had their claims denied and each offered the same piece of advice: Follow up. Submitting the paperwork once is not enough, they said. The process requires multiple follow-up calls and e-mails, or the claim just gets lost.” Second, a report on the city’s helpline”, 591-6000 – for “Citizen Service Request”. The report would include general usage data as well as top requests, average wait times, holiday coverage and other customer service measures we might be tracking. The report should also include recommendations from the Administration to improve services, recognizing that many of these recommendations may have budget implications. We would like to better understand those budget implications within 60 days of the new year.

The Department of Public Services (DPS) is responsible for the removal of snow and ice from our roadways in an efficient and rapid manner. DPS is also responsible for street repairs and potholes that are caused by harsh winter weather conditions. A pothole is a structural failure in a road surface caused by water seeping beneath the pavement through cracks. Contrasting temperatures and the weight of road traffic leads to potholes. Factors such as insufficient pavement thickness to support traffic during freeze/thaw periods, poor drainage areas, pavement defects, and cracks left unmaintained and unsealed can result in pothole development. Both snow removal and pothole repair fall under the Traffic & Road Operations Division (TROD) of DPS.

In 2018, TROD completed 5,496 service requests to repair potholes and filled 31,937 potholes. Service requests on average were completed within 3.1 days of submittal.

Potholes result from several factors including the following:

1. Insufficient pavement thickness to support traffic during freeze/thaw periods without localized failures.
2. Temperature fluctuating above and below freezing.
3. Insufficient drainage.
4. Failures at utility trenches and castings (manhole and drain casings).
5. Pavement defects and cracks left unmaintained and unsealed so as to admit moisture and compromise the structural integrity of the pavement.

*Note that road treatment during snow events that includes plowing and salting can factor into potholes but is necessary for public safety that helps reduce vehicular accidents in the winter.

TROD conducts a pothole Blitz every year during the month of March or April that shifts crews from other daily task to address pothole requests throughout the City. The following sections within TROD are utilized to staff the blitz: Traffic/Street Signs/Painting, Street Lights, Street Rehab, Stormwater Inlet Cleaning, and Snow Removal. Between 50-70 staff are utilized during the Pothole Blitz period, which is 2-4 weeks depending on the severity of the number of requests. During the blitz we rely on the citizens as well as the employees of the City of Cincinnati to help us identify locations of potholes. Potholes can be reported by contacting the DPS Call Center at 591-6000, entering a service request at 5916000.com or reporting locations utilizing the Fix It Cincy app on a mobile device.

The City of Cincinnati has certain immunities from liability for vehicle damage as a result of a pothole. Ohio Revised Code Section 2744.05 addresses these immunities. In general, in order to recover in a suit involving damage proximately caused by roadway conditions, including potholes, the party claiming damage must prove that either: 1) the City had actual or constructive notice of the pothole and failed to respond in a reasonable amount of time, or responded in a negligent manner, or 2) that the City, in a general sense, maintains its roadways negligently.

The City of Cincinnati has a damage claims process that can be utilized for vehicle damage as the result of a pothole. Below illustrates the process:
Damage claims for vehicle pothole damage can be submitted by calling the DPS Call Center at 591-6000. A specific address, description of the lane (ex. Inbound, outbound, curb lane, etc.), along with any insurance damage claims is needed. The damage claim process was at one time handled in the City’s Law Department but since 2008 been processed within the departments.

The following table provides pothole service requests, repairs, claims filed, and granted. The average number of days a pothole service request has been open over the last three years is 3.3 days. The response to pothole repair service request is dependent on other activities and events required of DPS including snow/weather events or landslide issues that utilize the same staff of Laborers and Truck Drivers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019*</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pothole Service Request</td>
<td>5,895</td>
<td>5,496</td>
<td>3,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potholes Repaired</td>
<td>26,372</td>
<td>31,937</td>
<td>14,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pothole Damage Claim Request</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pothole Claims Granted</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1/1/19 - 8/12/19

DPS is working with the City Administration to review staffing needs to improve pothole repair times and the damage claims process to make services more reliable for citizens. The request and impact will be submitted in the upcoming budget process.

cc: Jerry Wilkerson, Director of Public Services
August 29, 2019

Mayor Cranley, Members of Council, and Director Dahlberg –

As you are all aware, the Mt. Lookout community has experienced substantial development activity in recent years through a combination of home additions and new construction. MLCC has always expected construction activities to abide by City building standards and to be considerate of our community members. While we have found the vast majority of builders to be responsible and many have even gone beyond the minimum standards to be a good neighbor, some have fallen far short. Unfortunately, I am writing you in regard to one of the latter.

The Kilgour Place development on Herschel Avenue has been a long-running problem in our community. Neighbors have endured issues ranging from drainage problems to violations of construction hours to outright harassment. I have attached a letter sent to the MLCC by several neighbors providing a full description of the issues.

We have attempted to resolve these issues with the developer directly without success. The MLCC finds this experience unacceptable and is asking for your assistance in enforcing the City’s construction regulations.

Sincerely,

Dan Prevost
MLCC President
July 15, 2019

Dan Prevost
Mt. Lookout Community Council
Sent via email: prevost.dan@gmail.com

Dear Dan,

Thank you for your offer to help address Mt. Lookout neighbors’ ongoing issues with the Kilgour Place Development, now in its fourth year of active construction. The following letter includes a brief history and summary of the troubling concerns faced by residents living in close proximity to the development.

History
This development spurred community outrage in March of 2015, when a large Tudor home was torn down, calling for five homes in its place. Several builders signed on, then backed out – until March of 2017, when Justin Doyle Homes planted its sign. This was the first multi-home development in the City of Cincinnati by the builder group, based in Liberty Township.

Today, five enormous, 3,000 + square foot modern homes are sandwiched into small lots, ranging in size between .234 – .280 acres each. All will have a LEED, 15-year tax abatement. Two are occupied and three are under active construction.

Here’s a summary of the concerns:

Water Issues: Inadequate Drainage System
During the four years the site has been in transition, neighbors have endured flooding issues, standing water with every large rainfall and mosquito problems due to sitting water all over the property.

The development changed the topography of the landscape, putting our adjoining lot, which previously was higher than the development, into a bowl, causing water to flow into our property and properties on Suncrest. We were forced to construct a large rock landscape solution to control the water flow, costing us several thousand dollars. This solution prevents us from planting trees to address privacy issues caused by the new homes. We learned recently that the entire drainage system needs to be modified, which will involve a complete redo of our driveway, another significant expense we are forced to endure. The water issues continue to this day for us and neighbors on both sides. There’s also inadequate silt fencing in place to stop water during the construction process – something we have constantly asked for during the process.

Privacy is Gone
One of the things that attracted us to move here 17 years ago was the privacy (within city limits) in our back yard. Once we knew construction was happening, we approached the home builder and tried to proactively address it. They promised to discuss solutions on several occasions and nothing has happened. We now have zero privacy and there’s nothing we can do about it. Homes on Suncrest have the same issue.
The site is not properly maintained
Living next to an active construction site brings dirt and dust – but the site is infrequently cleaned and maintained. For example, there have been weeds taller than the fence line, overflowing dumpsters and trash/construction debris, construction fences falling over and blocking the sidewalk (a main walking route for Kilgour students and local runners). Workers show up and leave a trail of debris and trash behind, which blows into the neighbors’ yards.

Last September, neighbors endured 36 days of standing water, mosquito issues and safety concerns due to deep standing water in a foundation – all because the builder didn’t place a pump in the foundation. A Mt. Lookout Community Council member intervened and the water was finally drained.

Ongoing Construction Outside of Ordinance Times
Since June of 2017, construction inside and outside of the homes frequently takes place outside of approved noise ordinance times. A carpenter, who lives 3 hours away, lived in the home as he worked on it. His van was parked in the corner of the lot with a license plate that reads: "If you value your life as much as I value this truck, don't mess with it!" We brought this to the builder's attention several times and they did nothing until we called the police.

The landscaping company works late into the evening, frequently working past 9 p.m., breaking the noise ordinance by operating heavy equipment. This has continued. This past week, he operated heavy machinery until 9:45 p.m. We have brought this to his attention (see below) and the builder's attention. It continues.

Harassment
Interactions with workers have been unpleasant. Neighbors have to frequently ask workers to stop after hours, which is uncomfortable. We’ve asked the landscaper to stop several times as he’s worked outside of ordinance times, and have been told to “get a life” and “you’ve been a problem all along.” Calls left for the builder to address were not returned. Families on Suncrest have also endured uncomfortable interactions with this crew and other workers.

Frequent Construction on Evenings and Weekends
For a builder who promises: "we want to make the construction process as pleasant as possible," it would be nice if they could consider the families who are living right on top of the development. We’ve dealt with major construction on most weekends and evening for the past two years. There has been no consideration. On Christmas Day, we listened to banging as our kids opened presents. Outreach to the builder resulted in this response: “I guess they don’t celebrate Christmas.”

In summary, neighbors would very much like to see the following:
- After-hours construction to stop (stop operating machinery after 9 pm).
- A drainage solution to be put in place (and adjoining neighbors to be aware of the solution).
- Frequent clean-up of the job site (garbage sweep, dumpsters emptied, entrance and sidewalk cleaned).
- Proper fencing in place on bordering properties to prevent water flow.

Photos:
We have plenty of photos to illustrate the above concerns. I’ve included four:
(1) An example of the condition of the construction site; (2) A photo of workers in a house working after 1 am; (3) The van parked on the property for weeks at a time, with the owner living somewhere on the property as he worked on the home. (4) The deep water in a foundation that sat for over 30 days.