SEX OFFENDER LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

A G E N D A

January 10, 2007 - 4:00 p.m. - Council Chambers - City Hall - City of Dover
Public comments are welcomed on any item and will be permitted at appropriate times. When possible, please notify the City Clerk (736-7008 or e-mail at tmcdowell@dover.de.us) should you wish to be recognized.

1. Adoption of Minutes - Regular Sex Offender Legislation Review Committee Meeting of December 13, 2006

2. Stranger Safety DVD

3. Presentations - Sex Offender Notification Procedures
   - Delaware Department of Education
   - Capital School District
   - Caesar Rodney School District

4. Adjournment

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THE AGENDA ITEMS AS LISTED MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED IN SEQUENCE. THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OR THE DELETION OF ITEMS, INCLUDING EXECUTIVE SESSIONS.

SEX OFFENDER LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Sex Offender Legislation Review Committee Meeting was held on December 13, 2006 at 4:04 p.m. with Chairman Slavin presiding. Members present were Ms. Bell, Lt. Bernat, Dr. Goaté, Mr. Hare, Ms. Levitt, Ms. Mercer, Ms. Ratliff, and Ms. Shroyer. Ms. Ingram was absent.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mr. Hare moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Ms. Mercer and unanimously carried.

Adoption of Minutes - November 27, 2006

Ms. Bell moved for approval of the Minutes of the November 27, 2006 meeting, seconded by Ms. Ratliff and unanimously carried.

Dover Police Department, Sex Offender Procedures

Lt. Paul Bernat, Special Enforcement Unit Commander, provided a presentation on Sex Offender Management (or Megan's Law) and discussed how the Dover Police Department tracks and manages sex offenders. He also provided information on the three (3) tiers of sex offenders, statistical information, and frequently asked questions *(Attachment #1)*. Dr. Goaté requested additional information depicting trends with a break down by age.

Responding to Dr. Goate, Lt. Bernat stated that there have been recent improvements in the notification and tracking of sex offenders who reside in the City; however, there is room for additional improvements. Lt. Bernat suggested that the committee consider prerequisites that require homeless sex offenders to account for their activities on a weekly basis.

Mr. Slavin stated that the City currently uses a two-page insert with utility bills to get information to residents. He suggested that the insert could also be used to inform residents about potential sex offenders and it could also be used as an educational tool.

Responding to Mr. Slavin, Lt. Bernat stated that local ordinances can be made stronger to close the loopholes that exist on the state level. Mr. Slavin stated that, moving forward, the committee will endeavor to tighten the gaps that currently exist.

Responding to Mr. Slavin, Lt. Bernat stated that the Police Department has not received negative feedback from residents regarding the door-to-door notification process; however, there is an increase in the number of calls received when a new neighborhood is notified regarding a sex offender. This gives the Police Department the opportunity to communicate openly and educate residents. Mr. Slavin stated that he would like for the committee to examine the relationship between the number of registered offenders and police department staff.

Mr. Slavin relayed the concerns of a constituent regarding local parks, pools, and other recreation areas being notified of Tier 2 and Tier 3 sex offenders in the area. Lt. Bernat stated that the library, local daycare centers, and schools are notified when tier 2 and tier 3 offenders are living in the area. Mr. Slavin suggested that the committee recommend modifying the notification process to include local parks and other recreation areas, such as Silver Lake.

Dr. Goaté suggested the creation of programs that reach out to the surrounding towns. He also stressed the importance of communication with adjacent communities. Lt. Bernat informed members of several programs, including tagging sex offenders' license plates and driver licenses.

Ms. Bell expressed concern regarding the importance of having the appropriate type of education in local systems. Responding to Ms. Mercer, Lt. Bernat stated that it is the responsibility of the school to communicate to parents upon receiving information about a sex offender. Mr. Slavin suggested inviting representatives from the Delaware Department of Education and the Capital and Caesar Rodney School Districts to discuss the notification process and the procedures that are in place.

Ms. Polly Funk, Public Policy Director for the Sexual Assault Network of Delaware (SAND), provided information regarding the structure, mission, education, and training offered by SAND. She informed members that all schools are required to keep a binder in the front office that contains information on sex offenders in the area. Responding to Ms. Mercer, Ms. Funk stated that schools include information about the binder in their handbook, which is distributed to parents at the beginning of the school year. Ms. Funk suggested contacting Robin Case at the Delaware Department of Education, since she is familiar with notification procedures and would be an excellent source of information. Mrs. Levitt suggested extending the same invitation to Chris Fennimore as a representative of the Home Schooling Network.

Ms. Mercer provided members with a brief description of a safety video that is child friendly and interactive. The video will be viewed during the next committee meeting.

Recent Legislation Banning Sex Offenders

It was the consensus of members that the committee will not entertain any legislation that bans sex offenders from living in the community.

Mr. Slavin informed members that he will request that the meeting minutes be placed on the agenda for the next scheduled meeting of City Council to inform Council of the consensus regarding legislation banning sex offenders.

Ms. Ratliff moved for adjournment, seconded by Dr. Goaté and unanimously carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:18 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy A. Slavin
Chairman

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Attachments to Original Minutes and File Copy:
Attachment 1 - Sex Offender Management "Megan's Law"