



**Liberty Park Public Safety Meeting - Notes**  
**Sept. 4, 2019, 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.**  
**SLC Public Safety Building - Community Room**

 [www.facebook.com/libertywellscommunitycouncil](https://www.facebook.com/libertywellscommunitycouncil)  
[www.lwccslc.org](http://www.lwccslc.org)

**In Attendance**

- Tim Cosgrove, SLC Mayor's Office
- Erin Mendenhall, SLC Council
- Sgt. Sam Wolf, director, Salt Lake City Police Department Community Intelligence Unit (CIU)
- Det. David King, CIU officer, District 5
- Sara Adelman, Liberty Wells Community Council (LWCC) chair
- Zach Bartholomew, LWCC parliamentarian
- Valerie Vaughn, LWCC Liberty Park Market committee chair
- Ann Penman, LWCC safety and preparedness committee chair
- Bekka Carlson, Central City Neighborhood Council chair
- Jason Stevenson, East Liberty Park Community Organization (ELPCO)
- Darryl High, ELPCO
- Members of the community sat in on the meeting.

**SLCPD Park Patrol Update**

- Funding for the new patrol unit takes effect in October.
- The process for recruiting, hiring and training new officers takes about 10 months.
- Target date for the new patrol would be late summer 2020.
  - **NOTE:** At an event hosted by the Ballpark Community Council on Thursday, Sept. 5, SLCPD announced that they are working to accelerate the start of the park patrol program to end-of-year 2019 with the use of overtime hours.
  - Once the bike patrol funding becomes available in October, they can offer overtime shifts to off duty officers who want to help out. This would be a temporary measure until the new patrol officers they are hiring have completed training, which takes about 10 months.

- Patrol structure: one sergeant, five patrol officers. They will be outfitted and equipped as bike patrol officers.
- There are 67 parks in SLC. Five parks are currently being prioritized for patrol:
  - Fairmont Park
  - Sugarhouse Park
  - Liberty Park
  - Jordan Park
  - Pioneer Park
- The program is still a work in progress. Chief Brown is handling the development.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Community should lobby SLC and SLCPD to make sure Liberty Park stays on the priority list. Look for opportunities to weigh in on program development, timeline, and launch.

### Current Patrol Activity

- SLCPD staffing was at about 160 patrol officers for Salt Lake City, but they lost 40 officers. They have the budget to increase their staffing to 180 officers.
- SLCPD has an average backlog of 20 calls each patrol shift, which means officers are going from call to call and are prioritizing active calls. This doesn't leave much time for standard patrol.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Community members should continue being the eyes and ears of the park. Report, report, report! You can ask for:
  - **A callback from a police officer.**
  - **A case number.**
  - **Later, you can also call dispatch and ask where in the priority list your call ranks.**

### Overnight Camping and Park Curfew Violations

- The park curfew is 11 pm to 5 am.
- SLCPD policy changed slightly following a 9th Circuit ruling from Boise, Idaho
  - Only time not to cite is when the shelters are full; otherwise they cite and move on. Camping is not an arrestable offense, it's a misdemeanor citation (criminal ticket) with a court date.
- Camping citations often get thrown out in court. If you are a witness and are willing to sign the citation, the charge often holds more weight in court.
- If an individual reports illegal camping at Liberty Park after 11 pm, the graveyard shift will show up to work on it when they clear their call log.
- However, the curfew applies to everyone!

- Members of the Salt Lake City Police Department Volunteer Corps (<http://www.slcpd.com/community-engagement/volunteercorps/>) would be “exempt” from the curfew.
- **Action Item:** LWCC to coordinate with current Volunteer Corps and Neighborhood Watch groups in the area. Invite other residents to get trained as a Volunteer Corps member.
- **Note:** Sweeping the park for illegal camps won’t necessarily solve the problem. If we “solve” the problem in one area, it will likely show up in another area. We still need a comprehensive approach that includes addresses root causes (substance abuse, mental health, homelessness).

## Drug Waste / Park Bathrooms

- The state of the bathrooms in the park is atrocious. Drug waste (pills, needles) and bodily waste are a common occurrence.
- Some suggested solutions:
  - Locking the bathrooms to all users.
    - Pros: Eliminates a place where people can hide.
    - Cons: Also prevents other park users from having access.
  - Pioneer Park pays someone to staff the bathroom.
    - Pros: Dedicated resource to help
    - Cons: Liberty Park is much larger than Pioneer Park. Which bathroom would remain open? Also, where would the funding come from?
- In general, these are “surface solutions.” By pushing one problem away, it just goes somewhere else.
- What’s the best way to report drug paraphernalia? The police? SLC Mobile App? Utah Harm Reduction Coalition?
- SLC Mobile App has geolocation functionality, which would allow you to pinpoint exactly where in the park a needle or other item is located. It also creates a reporting trail for the case that is easy to follow up on. But is that the best way to report?
- **ACTION ITEM:** LWCC to reach out to Tim Cosgrove about the best person to talk to us about the SLC Mobile App.
- **ACTION ITEM:** LWCC to contact Salt Lake County Department of Health and Utah Harm Reduction Coalition to ask about reporting health and drug issues.
- **ACTION ITEM:** LWCC to learn more about Pioneer Park solutions (staffed bathroom and recent Capital Improvement Project funding for a kiosk in the park). Can this be replicated in Liberty Park?

- **ACTION ITEM:** LWCC to explore possibilities of doing a community-led park cleanup with the help of trained officials to make sure no one gets hurt.

### **Engaging the Community**

- How do we discourage vigilantism among our neighbors?
- The best way to help in a suspicious or criminal situation is to take photos, be a good witness.
- People who engage directly with suspicious activity can sometimes escalate the situation and get into trouble themselves; face charges.
- Unless it is a life or death situation, don't intervene.
- How do we engage the members of our community to be champions of park and of the broader neighborhood?
- Salt Lake City Council can provide small grants to assist communications, team-building, messaging, etc.
- Idea: Posting "see something, say something" signs at bathrooms or other key locations with the BEST information for reporting issues. Also include social worker contact info.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Can SLCPD host a regular "coffee with a cop" during the early morning hours in Liberty Park? This could involve meeting at a specific location and walking around to visit areas of concern.
- **ACTION ITEM:** LWCC public safety committee to look into hosting a "how to be a good witness" class.
- **ACTION ITEM:** LWCC to look into "see something say something signs." Other communications ideas?

**Adjourned at 5:30 p.m.**

**Notes submitted by Sara Adelman, LWCC chair.**