



It may be convenient but... would Dr. Spock approve?

Citizen board reviews few complaints against Lincoln Police Dept. officers

By Gail Stork

Although Lincoln's police review board has handled only one complaint against police this year, chairman Ed Wimes said the board is a necessary buffer between the community and the Lincoln Police Department.

The citizen's board was formed in 1975 despite the argument that citizens already had the internal affairs division of the police department to hear their complaints, Wimes said.

He said the seven-member board is there to resolve complaints that cannot be handled in internal affairs.

"It (the board) is there in case someone feels they didn't get a fair shake from internal affairs," said Mike Merwick, administrative assistant to the mayor.

The board fills a need for a citizens' body looking at the actions of police, he said. It is a method for resolution of a citizen's complaint by his peers.

Merwick said out of the 200 to 300 complaints handled this year by internal affairs, only one, involving excessive force, needed referral to the review board.

Wimes said the complaint was not resolved because of a lack of evidence.

However, Wimes said just because the board is not used often does not mean it isn't needed.

That's like saying there is not a surgeon at the hospital today because no one thought they would be needing surgery, he said.

Merwick said the small percentage of complaints referred to the review board shows that the internal affairs division is doing a good job of handling them and provides enough information on police actions.

The board is required by ordinance to meet at least once a year, but Wimes said the members have been meeting more lately to make procedural changes within the board.

Wimes said he does not agree with the review board's closed door and suppressed name policies, but that they were majority decisions.

He said it may be important for the public to know if the same citizen always complains or if a policeman's name recurs often in complaints before analyzing the situation.

It may be only a problem with one citizen or one officer, but the public currently has no way to tell, Wimes said.

Wimes' term expires this year along with two other board members. Persons to fill the positions will be appointed by the mayor, Wimes said.

A taxpayer should have a voice in police activity, and if that is not the case, "give me my money back," Wimes said.

"As a citizen of Lincoln, I would like to see it (the review board) stay. I hope it does, and I think it will."

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Fees task force meets in first closed-door session

The president's university-wide task force on student fees met for the first time behind closed doors Tuesday, barring the press and public.

The committee is meeting to complete a proposal on the future on NU student fees and must make a final report to the NU Board of Regents in December.

The committee closed the doors to "speed the process and allow a free range of opinions to be expressed about different student fee programs," according to committee chairman Hans Brisch. He said there will be several more meetings during the next six weeks.

Following Tuesday's meeting, Brisch refused to comment on the meeting's proceedings, but did say a statement would be issued to the press following each meeting "so the vital information will not be withheld from students."

Following is the complete text of the statement: "The meeting was convened at 3:05 p.m. with one member (a UNMC faculty representative) of the task force absent due to a prior commitment.

The chairman informed members of the task force that he had made a presentation on University of Nebraska Program and Facilities Fees (UPFF) Friday, October 21, 1977, to the Alumni Association board. Dr. Brisch's remarks were confined to factual matters concerning the 1973 board of regents policy creating UPFFs, rate schedules on the various campuses and allocations on the various campuses.

The chairman of the task force sub-committees gave summaries of the public hearings on the three campuses.

It was noted that 35 persons testified at UN-L (sic), 8 at UNMC, and 13 at UNO. Most of those who testified at the UN-L (sic) and UNO hearings were representatives or past affiliates of organizations that receive UPFF allocations.

The members of the task force started to discuss their own personal viewpoints on UPFF, voluntary fees, and user fees. This discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

The format for the preparation of the task force's study was discussed. Tentative agreement regarding the study format was reached. Members of the task force agreed to handle the preparation of various points of the study format and to report back to the task force.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 1, 1977, at Regents Hall in Lincoln, Nebraska."

Editors note: No other details of the meeting were available.

Street completion meets obstacles

By Rod Murphy

Unforeseen problems with sewer lines, gas mains and the weather have contributed to the delay in completion of the downtown street project, according to Tom Cast, project manager for the city of Lincoln.

Rod Schwartz, deputy city engineer said the contract with the construction companies specified a \$250 charge be assessed for every day the work was behind schedule.

The total number of days for which they will be penalized will be determined when construction is completed. Allowances for rain and other uncontrollable problems will be made, he said.

Schwartz said, Aug. 15, 1977 was the deadline for completion of the project, excluding planting of trees and shrubs. Planting is to be completed by May.

Schwartz said he thinks the project will be completed sometime next spring.

While the work on O Street is complete except for minor tree planting and brick work, the construction at Que Place has been slowed, Cast said.

Que Place construction includes work on 11th, 12th and 14th streets north of O Street and part of P Street.

Cast said there were four reasons for the hold up in the repair work.

The first dealt with old utility lines, including sewer, gas and water services. Cast said there were no records of the locations of these lines, so many were found unexpectedly.

The lines had to be replaced, Cast said, because of their age. The utility lines also caused the contractor to change locations from the ones originally planned, Cast added.

Rain has been another factor in the project's slow pace, Cast said. The final reason Cast gave was in the contractual requirements; work could only be done on half of the street at a time.

The best way to do this type of work, he said, was to get in and get out, like was done on O Street.

Cast said he had hoped the work on 12th and 14th streets would be finished this fall. If snow or other weather sets in, however, the streets will be closed temporarily for the winter.

Cast said construction north of O Street will continue for a year.

Construction on 11th Street work will be completed next spring, he said. Also, plans will be made for work on P Street between 9th and 14th, and Q Street between 9th and 17th streets.

ZZZZZZZ...

When you turn in Saturday night, curl up for an extra hour of sleep.

The clock for daylight savings time runs out at 2 a.m. Sunday, and that means an extra hour of z's for all weekend revelers. Central Standard Time officially resumes Sunday and that brings sunrise an hour earlier and nightfall around 6 p.m., rather than 7 p.m.

inside friday

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Downtown street project completion has been held up recently because old utility lines needed replacement. Photo by Bob Pearson