

Work Group on Gang-Related Violence October 15-16 Meeting Summary

The Work Group on Gang-Related Violence held its fourth meeting October 15th-16th 2007 in Vancouver, Washington at the Clark County Sheriff's Office West Precinct. Below is a summary of the two-day business meeting and community meeting.

Business Meeting 10:00AM-3:00PM

Workgroup members in attendance: Rep. Christopher Hurst, Rep. Charles Ross, Sen. Adam Kline, Brad Blackburn, Dan Fessler, Don Wilbrecht, Ken Irwin, Ron Wilson, Bob Hicks, Tanya Kim, Chris Johnson, Terry Hayes, Steve Lowe, Scott Blonien, and Craig Daly.

The meeting began with a series of introductions and announcements. Two new members were appointed to the work group: Dave Gowan, Adams County Juvenile Court Administrator, and Craig Daly, Snohomish County Juvenile Court Administrator. Kathy Jo Kristoff resigned from her position on the work group. Darryl Roosendahl retired from his position at the Attorney General's office and will no longer serve on the work group; Scott Blonien will be replacing him on the work group. Brad Blackburn is appointed to serve as co-chair of the suppression sub-committee. Also, the work group implemented some new procedural rules: only members appointed to the work group will be called upon to talk and work group members are not to argue with presenters.

Presentations:

1. Summary of Current Nuisance Laws & their Application at the Local Level
 - a. Yvonne Walker, Counsel, House Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Committee
 - b. Philip Gigler, Assistant City Attorney, City of Vancouver, WA
2. Presentation on Oxnard, California's use of civil anti-gang injunctions
 - a. Detective Neil Holland, Oxnard Police Department
3. Presentation on State Statutes Authorizing Civil Anti-Gang Injunctions and Completed Case Law
 - a. Steve Lowe, WAPA
 - b. Scott Blonien, AGO
4. Presentation on Concerns with Civil Anti-Gang Injunctions
 - a. Jennifer Shaw, Legislative Director, ACLU of Washington
 - b. Dan Fessler, WACDL

Discussion on civil injunctions – The work group discussed whether civil injunctions would be appropriate in Washington. A conclusion was not reached.

Community Meeting – 4:00PM-6:00PM

The Vancouver Community Meeting was held at the community room at the Water Resources Education Center. An estimated 60 members of the community attended, 16 of which testified. Below is a summary of the testimony presented:

Summary of community suggestions

- There was a gang task force in Vancouver in 2002, but it was abandoned due to a lack of funding. Funding should be provided to reinstate the task force.
- There have been multiple gang-related shootings in the last week, give us enhancement tools to couple with prevention and intervention.
- Prevention should be very visible and start at an elementary school age.
- Funding for prevention programs is necessary; earmark money specifically for prevention.
- The key to solving the gang problem is relationships.
- Involve the Hispanic community.
- Don't neglect SW Washington any longer.
- Create communication with the gangs and create relationships with gang members.
- Labor laws prevent kids from working, so they turn to gangs. Give us the chance to allow children to get a job if they want one, it helps provide them with a sense of belonging.
- Remove the gang authority and remove gang intimidation.
- Finance school resource officers and school probation officers to help solve the gang problem in schools.
- Help people understand diversity in the schools, they will be less likely to join a gang.
- Need to bring all of the different pieces of solving gangs together – there are already a lot of programs that exist – they just need to be funneled through a central effort.

The announcement for the community meeting was sent to the following people/organizations:

Vancouver Police Chief
Clark County Sheriff
Water Resources Education Center
Vancouver Lobbyist
Clark County Lobbyist
Vancouver Mayor
All Vancouver City Council Members
Vancouver City Manager
Vancouver Asst. City Manager
Clark County Board of Commissioners
Human Rights Commission
Commission on African American Affairs
Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
Commission on Hispanic Affairs
49th Legislative District Legislators
15th Legislative District Legislators
17th Legislative District Legislators

18th Legislative District Legislators

Business Meeting – Day 2, 9:00AM

During the second day, the work group discussed and made decisions about the following issues to be included in the report.

Additional Data – There was a suggestion that the final report include a request to have more data collected specifically on gangs. There are lots of data sources, WASPC NIBRS, GJJAC, FBI, etc. But none of these sources collect data specific to gang-related crime. More data specifically on gangs would help programs be better targeted and implemented. It was agreed that this suggestion would be included in the report.

Prevention/Intervention Pilot Programs – The group agreed that 5 pilot programs relating to prevention/intervention efforts will be recommended for the 2008 legislative session. These pilot programs will serve as the basis for additional, statewide funding in the 2009-2011 biennium.

Statewide Database – The group agreed that the report would recommend a statewide database. However, it was also agreed that the group was not charged with selecting a vendor.

Immediate Action for Graffiti – The group agreed that on the subject of graffiti, immediate action was needed in order to address the problem. The group is flushing out ideas on a proposal to cover up gang graffiti within 24 hours and recommend that the Legislature provide financial assistance to local jurisdictions to assist this effort.

Civil Injunctions – The group felt that civil injunctions have benefits and consequences, but could be useful in certain circumstances. The group discussed the idea of requiring that certain prevention/intervention services be available if a civil anti-gang injunction were to be granted.

Juvenile Justice Reforms – The group agreed that it would not pursue juvenile justice reforms in 2008, but wait until the prevention/intervention pilot programs were authorized and in place and take a holistic look at the juvenile justice system. That review would include juvenile penalties, prevention efforts, intervention efforts and more.

Gang definition – It was decided that some kind of gang definition is necessary. The definition will inevitably be a hybrid of the California definition. Dan Fessler, Steve Lowe, Scott Blonien, and Sen. Kline will discuss and provide a definition for the group to approve at the next meeting.

Representative Christopher Hurst, Work Group Co-Chair, facilitated this discussion and will present draft findings/recommendations to the group at its next regular meeting.

Meeting Adjourned.