

Surveillance Study Committee
Minutes for May 21, 2018

Attending: Adam Chapdelaine (Town Manager), David Good (Information Technology), Julie Flaherty (Police Department), Doug Funkhouser, Jon Gersh, Christina Hildebidle, Gary Horowitz (Human Rights Commission), Sayed Khodier (Information Technology), Steve Nesterak (Facilities), Ian Pilarczyk, Stephen Revilak, Mark Streitfeld

Introductions. Committee members introduced themselves.

Discussion: Committee Charge. Adam Chapdelaine talked about the committee's charter and mission. Stephen Revilak stated his motivations for proposing the committee: to inventory the town's use of surveillance technologies, to see what policies we had in place for this equipment and data collected (data retention, sharing, access, etc), and to consider adopting policies as appropriate.

The group identified several areas where the town uses cameras:

- Fire stations
- Police headquarters
- Arlington high school
- Gibbs school
- Veteran's memorial rink
- Treasurer's office

The town may install surveillance cameras in the DPW yard, but there are none there now.

The Arlington Housing Authority has an extensive surveillance camera network, but this is not under town control.

The committee identified several areas to focus on

- Inventory of existing systems. (This is mostly complete)
- Verify retention schedules. (Is there a uniform 30-day retention period?)
- Learn some history behind how the cameras have been used (e.g., disciplinary action)

By statute, the police department has cameras in their cell blocks, with a set retention schedule. There's a question about whether cell block footage can be obtained via public records requests. APD will not release footage (or police reports) while an investigation is in progress. All of the video footage is stored on servers in the public safety building.

APD gets frequent requests for copies of 911 audio recordings. The department has 911 recordings going back three or four years.

The town does not have any traffic cameras.

Julie Flaherty stated that the town has an automatic license plate reader (ALPR). It can be programmed to identify specific categories of plates (e.g., automobiles whose owners have outstanding warrants). Plate numbers are sent to the RMV (for lookup), and the RMV may store copies of the plate lookup requests. ALPR targeting profiles are set by the police department, and not individual officers. Office Flaherty offers to provide more information at a future meeting

Adam Chapdeliane believes that drone cameras might be in scope of this committee's study. The committee may want to anticipate the use of future surveillance technologies.

The committee felt it would be useful to know the procedures involved in setting up a new town camera.

There's a question about whether the town can regulate the use of cameras at public businesses (i.e., where the camera records a public space). After discussion, the committee felt this question was best left to Town Counsel.

There was a question as to whether the town uses third-party services to process camera data. The was not a definitive answer available; this will require investigation.

Christina Hildebidle believed it would be good to have a dialog about the benefits of surveillance cameras, and the cost to civil rights.

Doug Funkhouser recommended an article about Berkeley's police surveillance laws:
<https://www.fastcompany.com/40558647/berkeley-mayor-we-passed-the-strongest-police-surveillance-law>.

Another committee member suggested a review of surveillance camera polices in Somerville, and similar municipalities.

Stephen A. Revilak