Cincinnati Police Mounted Patrol

CINCINNATI POLICE MOUNTED PATROL

1987 – 2013

The use of mounted patrol officers ended during the early 1900's with the advent of motorized vehicles. In 1987 a group of downtown businesses formed a committee called "Downtown Focus Group" to focus on concerns of development and public safety. This committee was chaired by Marc Comisar, co-owner of the Maisonette restaurant. The committee concern for public safety focused on more police visibility and recommendations were made that mounted patrol was used in other major cities for that purpose.

The committee took action and made a proposal to City Council to form a mounted patrol unit. Council was luke warm at best because of cost, but suggested that Council member Steve Chabot form a committee to further pursue the matter and determine if there was a potential for private funding. That committee included, Frank Cleveland MD, Shari Einsel Cincinnati Restaurant Assn., John Geary CEO Ohio River Co., Pat Kellison West Shell Realtors, Robert Manley esquire, Don Pepper Provident Bank and Lieutenant Colonel Dale Menkhaus as liaison from the Police Department. After much research the committee reported back to City Council that there was significant interest and that private funding could be raised. Council approved the motion on a trial basis.

Private funding permitted the Police Department to move forward and Sergeant Robert Lierman and Police Officers Cleon Wingard, Philip Vickers and Robert Oliver were selected as unit members.

After considerable training the Mounted Patrol officers were assigned to the Downtown Business District and were an instant success in public acceptance and high visibility. To further enhance training a request was made of the Canadian Royal Mounted Police to provide training and the Cincinnati unit became the first outside agency trained by that distinguished group.

After several years of very positive performance City Council agreed to fund and expand the unit and patrols were utilized throughout the city based upon need. Even in high crime neighborhoods there was great interest in the horses and enhanced public relations.

City purchasing is a cumbersome process that negates quick purchase and when additional horses were needed decisions had to be made quickly. The Mounted Patrol Committee was still active and continued to raise money and an agreement was reached with the city for the Committee to make purchases and would then be reimbursed by the Purchasing Department. The Committee also purchased separately new saddles at no cost to the city.

The Mounted Patrol expanded to two Sergeants, seven Police Officers and nine horses, but in 2013 City Council decided the cost was too great and the unit was disbanded.