

UNIFORMS

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to issue new uniforms to the DPS officers and inform the public about them.

Hicks said DPS uniforms, which have the "LAPD blue" color, are "virtually identical" to other Oregon University System public safety officers' uniforms.

He said several features differentiate DPS uniforms from those of EPD or other security agencies. First, there is a shoulder patch reading "Public Safety OUS, University of Oregon," and a badge reading the same thing, he said. Second, he said the officers are issued patrol jackets that use a combination of light and dark blues, which help them stand apart from EPD uniforms.

Parisi said other security agencies were worried they would have to continue changing uniforms if EPD were to make uniform changes. A

possible solution would be to add a clause to the ordinance stating a security agency would not be considered non-compliant if EPD changed its uniform, she said.

Parisi said the basic purpose of the commission is to compare various types of uniforms used in Eugene and determine whether they are confusing to Eugene citizens.

One of the group's first tasks was to research how other cities have dealt with this issue. Parisi said the group has found about a dozen ordinances dealing with uniform confusion, and the group used them as examples to work on creating a possible Eugene ordinance.

The task group also has held meetings to get feedback from public and private security agencies, Parisi said.

But any proposed ordinance will have to clear a few hurdles before it would go into effect.

First, the task group must recommend the ordinance to the Police

Commission. If the Police Commission agrees with the recommendation, it must then pass the Eugene City Council.

If the recommendation makes it through all of these steps, various security agencies would have ample time to make the necessary changes before the ordinance would be enforced, Parisi said.

In the meantime, the task group will meet with DPS and the Police Commission to discuss the issue.

"(DPS) is an organization that we want to work closely with and create a win-win (situation)," Parisi said. "The last thing the Police Commission wants to do is strain the relationship between DPS and EPD."

Brown said a decision about the potential recommendation will be made in the fall, when students return to Eugene.

Contact the crime/health/safety reporter at lisacatto@dailyemerald.com.



Tim Bobosky Photographer

Wal-Mart employee David Parrish pushes flowers to the store's Garden Center.

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COUNCIL

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have much effect because stores such as Wal-Mart and Costco have already moved to Eugene.

"The horse is kind of out of the barn," he said.

He added that he has not seen evidence that big-box stores negatively affect the community, saying restrictions should be "empirically based, not attitudinally based."

Ward 8 City Councillor Nancy Nathanson said other cities have given large subsidies to volume retailers, causing economic problems in those cities that would not happen in Eugene. Nathanson also stressed that restrictions in Eugene would force shoppers elsewhere, increasing traffic.

"People would just drive farther to go to their next favorite retailer," she said. "I'm still very dubious that any kind of restriction we adopt will have the intended effects. We're not going to turn around the ship of consumerism."

She also said the moratorium might hurt local businesses that want to expand.

"I think we're trying to address too many things and these are the wrong solutions," she said.

Ward 6 City Councillor Jennifer Solomon agreed, saying she gladly shops at Wal-Mart.

"I have a right to shop (for) the lowest prices," she said.

Solomon also said big-box stores attract other ancillary businesses, helping the economy.

Torrey admonished the council to consider the "real reason" it was debating the issue, saying he would use his first veto if the council approved a moratorium.

"I'm definitely opposed to something that would stop the process right now," he said. "We shouldn't pick on those things we don't like."

After the first motion for a moratorium failed, Ward 1 City Councillor Bonny Bettman proposed that the mayor's Economic Development Committee address the issue, which passed unanimously.

Hope Marston, organizer for the Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network/Justice, said she

favored a moratorium, but the council's decision was expected.

"It was not surprising to me at all that the moratorium was defeated," she said. "There was a lot of comparing apples and oranges at the meeting."

She added that citizens should have a say in approving big-box construction in the city.

"We just need a chance to have a shot at protecting our community," she said.

Wal-Mart's Northwest Community Affairs Manager Eric Berger said the government should not tell customers where to shop.

"These types of actions limit customers' choice," Berger said. "We're against these types of actions."

Berger also said concerns that Wal-Mart stores hurt local economies are unfounded, adding that local Wal-Mart stores are encouraged to give back directly to the community.

"We pay our workers at a rate above minimum wage," he said. "We believe that we provide good jobs for the community and associate with fair wages and good benefits."

Sophomore Daniela Balboa said she has seen large retailers affect smaller shops in the Tualatin area. She said the council should investigate the effects of big-box stores, especially because Eugene has many small shops.

"It's something that should definitely be looked into," she said. "City Council should have a lot of say in what shops come into the area."

Balboa said big-box stores provide jobs but may take business away from existing stores.

"I'd personally rather work for a small mom-and-pop store than a large, impersonal store," she said.

Graduate student Tim Young agreed.

"I typically like to go to mom-and-pop businesses because the money is going to be reinvested in the community," Young said.

Contact the city/state politics reporter at parkerhowell@dailyemerald.com.

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