

## **Noble becomes Austin department's new Detective/Major; ordinance officer is announced**

Written by Marty Randall

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A veteran with the Austin Police Department has become the agency's new detective.

Lonnie Noble, who had served as the APD's Director of Public Safety since January, 2007, received his new title of Detective/Major on Monday, April 20.

"I really struggled with this decision. Lonnie has done us and every resident of Austin a terrific job as Director. He understands budgets as well as anyone I've seen, and that made me reluctant to put him in this position because we'll lose a very good man as director. But everyone I talked with told me that we've already got the best man for the (detective's) job and that man is Lonnie," Austin Mayor Doug Campbell explained at a press conference called at City Hall on Monday afternoon.

The Mayor started out the occasion by advising he normally "...has these meetings for the opposite reason, bad news. This time, we've got good news." He also used the press conference to announce that former police chief, now Major, Donald Spicer is serving as Officer-In-Charge (OIC) and that the voluntary position of ordinance enforcement officer has been filled by Larry Stout, a retired resident of Austin.

The Mayor said his decision to put his director in the detective slot became apparent as he talked with other mayors and officers to determine how best to fill a vacancy on the police department's roster. "I was interested in doing something this time that was really going to help the department and this city. A detective was the way to go because we have to have a person free that can conduct investigations and make good arrests of people who are breaking the laws," he explained to the small group who gathered for the announcement.

Because one pitfall to having a detective is that the officer often becomes involved in other duties, the Mayor was particularly pleased to announce that Det./Maj. Noble was moving into his new office that day. The office is right next to Mayor Campbell's office at City Hall, not at the police department. A separate phone line for the officer will be installed this week.

The new detective will be paid the rate of an Assistant Chief of Police, \$17.50 per hour. He will not wear a police uniform. His work week is 40 hours, but Noble can make his own schedule since detective work is not normally a 9-to-5 job.

"What we want to see are results. I want him to start concentrating on Class C felony offenses and higher," stated the Mayor. "I feel that as this economy gets worse, so will crime. We must protect our citizens." He described Det./Maj. Noble as "...a man with broad shoulders. He knows what's expected of him." The Mayor publicly thanked Noble for his service to the department the past 16 months. "He's done us a whale of a job," he remarked.

As Noble stepped away from the director's position, Major Donald Spicer stepped up to serve as the department's Officer-In-Charge, in essence the acting police chief. Spicer began as a reserve officer in 1994, the year after Noble joined the department. He said he was happy to be allowed to serve as OIC and said he intended to apply for the police chief's job.

That position will be advertised in the next few weeks, related Mayor Campbell. "We welcome all applications," he said.

In other news, Larry Stout will join the department in a voluntary position as the city's new ordinance enforcement officer.

Stout has lived in Austin for ten years and is serving as a member of the Austin Comprehensive Plan Committee.

The ordinance officer "...isn't somebody that wants to issue you a citation. He wants to work with you, especially if you aren't aware that you are violating a city ordinance," the Mayor stated.

Stout will patrol city streets in a police car. He will wear a uniform but will not be issued a weapon.

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When he sees a violation, Stout will stop and attempt to make contact with the resident and/or owner of the property. If he cannot talk with that person, a letter will be issued explaining the violation and providing the property owner with a time period to correct it. Only if there is no action on the part of the owner/resident to correct the problem will a citation be written.

"We haven't given people any reason to have trash around their houses. We've done away with the SASCO bags, and we provide a dumpster service on the first Friday and Saturday of each month. There's no reason they should have junk in their yards or not mow their properties," advised Mayor Campbell.

If a citation is issued, it will be followed up and it will be pursued to the full extent of the law, the Mayor continued. "We ask for the public's support for this new officer and for all of our police officers. The avenues are open for all of this to work for us so Austin can become a better community," Campbell said.