

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2016, IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING.

The meeting began at 7:36 p.m.

Members present were: Rick Ransom, Kevin Hammett, Dea Zugby, Sherry Burks, Daniel Hamlin, Edward V. J. Putens, Council Liaison and David Moran, Staff Liaison.

Other City officials present were: Mayor Emmett Jordan, Mayor Pro Tem Judith Davis, Konrad Herling, Council Member, Leta Mach, Council Member, Chief James Craze and Captain Thomas Kemp, Police Department and Cindy Comproni, Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) Chair.

Also present were: Selim Boukabara, Alejandra Berumen, Carolyn Lambright-Davis, William Davis, Cynthia Newcomer, Lois Rosado, Michael Hartman, Lore Rosenthal, Lowell Owens, Bob Rand and Bill Orleans.

Welcome

Rick welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Council Referral – Forum/Community Discussion with Police

Rick described the referral from Council. He indicated that everyone who interacts with the Police Department deserves respect and fairness. Rick asked Community Relations Advisory Board (CRAB) members to share what they hoped to achieve at the forum and then asked for comments from the audience.

Sherry hoped the forum would share information.

Dea was interested in learning more about Police training.

Kevin believed the forum was about dialogue and hearing different perspectives in the community. He wanted to hear from members of the community and get their viewpoints.

Dan wanted hear from as broad a variety of citizens as possible. He wanted to hear what people's experiences had been.

Lois needed to understand why racial profiling was continuing in certain areas in Greenbelt. She referenced a State report and wanted to know how the City had responded to this report. Lois indicated many people in Greenbelt feel they are racially profiled and we need to reduce that perception.

Michael indicated that when an officer finishes the Police Academy, they are assigned to a training officer and wanted to know if that training officer stressed appropriate behavior. He believed new officers model the behavior of these training officers.

Cynthia stressed that both the format and facilitator for any forum were very important. She believed that the facilitator needed to be experienced. Cynthia suggested using a small group format for people who might be uncomfortable speaking before large groups.

Jim introduced himself and indicated he had been with the Police Department for 45 years and Chief for 29 years. He also noted he was Vice President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). Jim stated that race relations was a big issue right now and noted he had talked with other Police Chiefs including Mount Rainier. He stated forum logistics were important including the need for a facilitator. Jim wanted to see a broad representation from the community. He reported that Greenbelt Police had seen significant and much appreciated support from the community during recent incidents.

Jim suggested that the NAACP, clergy leaders, and elected officials be invited to the forums. He stressed advertising the forums. Jim referenced the six pillars listed in President Obama's report. He stressed the need to get buy-in from the community and citizens.

Lois indicated that Greenbelt's own statistics show a problem.

Carolyn suggested the City plan for Police to dialogue and engage with youth. She suggested a separate forum/meeting for youth with a facilitator.

Bob indicated that Greenbelt had a largely white police force and leadership. He suggested the Department was out of touch with people of color. Bob hoped the forum would be opportunity to start the discussion and liked the use of a small group format. He suggested the City hold the meeting in Franklin Park.

William stated that some young people might not want to talk in front of the Police and so a small group, anonymous format was needed.

Michael wanted to look at how the forum was organized, who are the planners, and how it's done.

Dan suggested CRAB welcome assistance from those attending to help plan the forums.

Kevin recalled the Spellman Overpass issue and indicated that CRAB planned that forum. He noted tonight's meeting was an opportunity to hear ideas and concerns about how the forum might be organized.

Rick stated the idea of a facilitator as a good idea. He also liked the idea of a separate anonymous meeting for youth and any others. Rick believed CRAB needed to focus on procedures. He also wanted to know the process to appeal or request a review by a neutral person if the Police did not find a particular concern/complaint valid.

Michael wanted to open the discussion about CRAB facilitating this. He was not sure CRAB had legitimacy in communities of color. He noted CRAB was mostly white and did not think CRAB could successfully conduct the forum.

Rick responded that CRAB had been assigned this referral by the City Council and if Michael and others did not want CRAB to handle this, they needed to take that up with Council.

Cynthia indicated that young people of color needed to participate in the forum and if those people were not included, it's going to be a failure.

Kevin indicated CRAB needed to use a venue that accommodates people and suggested the forum be held in Franklin Park.

Carolyn hoped the forum would be held in Franklin Park. She indicated the Eleanor Roosevelt High School (ERHS) Auditorium was not the appropriate style (lecture) venue. She stressed the need for dialogue between Police and the community and stated that more than one meeting may be needed. Carolyn stated she had respect for the Police, but there were concerns.

Kevin agreed that multiple forums may be needed and agreed that dialogue and being heard was very important.

Jim stressed the importance of listening and hearing what the people had to say.

Lois suggested it may be helpful to have additional people on the planning committee. She liked the idea of listening opportunities and multiple forums. She also wanted to hear from the "cop on the beat" and get a sense of foot patrolman about how they encounter community members. Lois stated "We in the community need to hear back how we're perceived."

Konrad indicated there was a need to figure out a way to get turnout from Greenbelt West otherwise the City won't get the needed input. He believed there was a positive reception to the input received. Konrad indicated that a Saturday session with smaller circular tables where people can talk to each other might be a useful format. He referenced the City's visioning process as a model.

Cynthia suggested different times for the multiple forums since schedules vary. She encouraged the City to offer child care and language interpretation services.

Emmett stated that we are all in this together. He agreed that more than one forum was needed and suggested holding such forums on a regular basis. Emmett stated that communication was discussion, but there was also information being shared. He wanted a data driven approach and to focus on problems that were actually happening and why are people being pulled over by the Police. Emmett referenced the implementation of body cameras and online police reports that are available.

Judith noted that elected officials present at the meeting we're all chiming in. She suggested that CRAB may want to hear from the citizens present.

Leta indicated that she appreciated the discussion and cited the National League of Cities (NLC) resources she shared with CRAB.

Bob discussed metrics and indicated a desire for more information as part of these forums/discussions.

Cindy announced she was the new chair of the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) and they had discussed this and wanted to know how they could help.

Alejandra indicated that 50% of people she works at her school are Latino. She indicated that people come to this country with a lack of education. She reported a need for basic civic education and cited certain behaviors which are a result of lack of education. Alejandra asked for empathy and resources for foreign born residents.

Dan summarized that there was consensus to utilize a facilitator, hold forums at multiple sites and at multiple times. He indicated that he was not here to serve the City Council but here to serve the community. Dan did not want to be apologetic for City government. He indicated that other communities had held similar forums and that we can learn from their experiences.

Dea wanted to follow-up on the NLC Race & Equity Leadership information that Leta had shared.

Salim, a student, agreed that the auditorium was too big. He suggested a voluntary event where people could improve relationships with the Government and police officers. He encouraged CRAB to try an option for anonymous comments.

Kevin stated that a small group format was important. He noted at the visioning exercise there was a set of topics or questions for the small groups to follow which fostered the discussion.

Lore suggested a forum/meeting for youth might be co-hosted by the Youth Advisory Committee, in addition to forums in east, west and center sections of Greenbelt.

Salim heard some people were afraid of retribution from Police and suggested an anonymous comment box. Rick announced there would be a CRAB table at information day during the Labor Day Festival.

Ed liked the idea of holding forums in different parts of the City. He suggested coordinating with PSAC. Ed suggested sharing the format with others (such as GEAC, HOA's etc.) for input about the process.

CRAB agreed to hold the next CRAB meeting on September 8 at Franklin Park.

Table at Labor Day Festival Information Day

CRAB agreed to move forward on reserving and staffing this table.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 5/17/16 and 6/9/16 were approved unanimously by acclamation.

Council Referral – 13th Amendment/Freedom Day Holiday

It was noted that pages 17-25 in the meeting packet covered this referral. Leta explained that a colleague on the National League of Cities (NLC) Human Development Committee had suggested this idea. She was looking for CRAB's input on a holiday versus some other type of celebration.

Other Business

CRAB discussed the size and make-up of CRAB noting the need for geographic and racial diversity. Dea shared information about an article in the *New York Times* on Syrian refugees.

The meeting ended at 9:15 p.m.