

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD  
ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 VIA ZOOM TECHNOLOGY.

The meeting began at 7:34pm.

Members participating were: Dan Hamlin, Jamie Krauk, Rick Ransom, Sherry Burks, Lisa Lake and Kevin Hammett, and David Moran, Staff Liaison. Also participating were Nicole Ard, Julia Arbutus and Bill Orleans.

Welcome & Introductions

Rick welcomed everyone and Sherry read the Community Pledge.

Approval of Minutes

Lisa moved approval of the Minutes from July 9, 2020 and August 13, 2020. Kevin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Community Feedback

Julia indicated she was a Master's student at University of Maryland and was here to listen. Nicole also stated she was there to listen. There was no additional community feedback.

Greenbelt Fair & Just Policing Act Proposal

Rick stated that at the last meeting, CRAB had discussed the Mayor's presentation and was also discussing next steps. He indicated CRAB was also awaiting any further referral from Council and asked if there had been anything.

David responded that Council had not held a regular meeting since CRAB's last meeting on August 13 so there was no additional referral. David indicated that Mayor Byrd had expressed a willingness to attend a CRAB meeting if CRAB so desired. He also noted an Ordinance was being drafted and that when Council received the proposal, they had discussed holding a work session, a public hearing and making referrals to advisory groups.

Jamie stated that at the last meeting, CRAB had expressly "applauded" the Mayor's proposal and the balance of recognizing both the merits of the Police Department as well as the need to continuously improve. She also noted that CRAB agreed to wait until they see what the actual draft looked like and digest it and then potentially weigh in officially.

Rick was not yet at the point to support the entire proposal. Kevin liked Jamie's recap and wanted to see the actual legislation. He also like the idea of having the Mayor attend a CRAB meeting.

Sherry also agreed with Jamie and Kevin's comments that CRAB needed to see the actual legislation before taking a position.

Lisa also agreed with the comments by Sherry and Jamie. She did not recall hearing specific concerns about how Greenbelt Police conducted themselves and that she did not see any problem

with how Police conduct themselves. Lisa asked what CRAB would be recommending to change.

Rick reiterated the need to see the actual draft language of the legislation. He believed this issue was appropriate for CRAB to consider. Rick observed that the Mayor indicated that some of the items are already in place but the Mayor wanted to codify these items.

Sherry stated her experience with Greenbelt Police had always been positive. However she understood that that might not be everyone's experience. Sherry believed Mayor Byrd was trying to get ahead of any future problems.

Rick also noted there may be items that CRAB wanted to add to the Mayor's proposal.

Dan didn't have any new ideas but wanted to see the technical legislation. He wanted to see how this law would interact with other laws already in place. Dan did note that he had heard from folks who still want a Police Department to call when there is a problem. He wanted to be proactive so that the things that occurred elsewhere did not happen in Greenbelt. Dan indicated his personal experience with Greenbelt Police had been very positive.

Lisa observed that the vibe in Greenbelt was a more personal relationship and that officers are known to the community. She believed that this helped to counter problems like those in Ferguson. There was a question about officers living in the City.

David responded that some officers live in the City and that the City does provide a residency bonus. He indicated that the majority of officers do not live within the City. David noted that Lisa's description of the relationship between police officers and the community is what community policing is about.

Rick believed the term "defunding" was a misnomer and that what people meant was diverting resources from Police to mental health, counseling and other services as a way of preventing crime before it gets to the Police. Rick liked the idea of asking the Mayor to attend a CRAB meeting to discuss his presentation.

Jamie asked if CRAB members had a preference about talking to the Mayor first and then seeing the draft Ordinance. CRAB members agreed that this was the preferred order.

Bill commented that some people wanted to abolish the Police Department, noting that this was not his position. Bill believed a reallocation of resources was more accurate.

Rick wanted to hear how Greenbelt Racial Equity Alliance, the Fraternal Order of Police and the Police leadership as well as individual residents, felt about this issue. He noted that any meetings would likely be virtual via Zoom.

Kevin also wanted to hear from as much of the community as possible. He also expressed positive interactions with Police. Kevin wanted to continue to foster opportunities for the community to meet with the Police. He agreed with most of what he had heard so far.

Jamie suggested that CRAB write down its questions about the Mayor's presentation, collate them and provide it to the Mayor in advance.

Lisa liked this idea and believed CRAB's input could help inform the legislation. Lisa did not want to see Police Departments be punished and noted a "national bandwagon". She agreed that bad Police need to be fired or indicted. Lisa stated that Greenbelt Police were pretty good and wanted the approach to be reasonable.

Rick stated that part of CRAB's role was to inform the Council and be open to the different sentiments in the community.

Lisa asked how CRAB gathers this community sentiment and suggested a community-wide town hall.

Rick responded that CRAB could hold Zoom forums. He indicated that CRAB could also allow for comments on social media. Rick liked Jamie's idea of a providing a set of questions for the Mayor and then meeting with him.

David responded that an Ordinance had not been introduced by Council. He also indicated that such an Ordinance would have to be drafted and that Council would likely refer it to CRAB and potentially other advisory groups.

Jamie suggested CRAB collate its thoughts on the presentation to inform a discussion with the Mayor as well as inform the drafting of any Ordinance. She further suggested that CRAB provide and collate these comments and share them with the Mayor in advance of a future meeting.

Rick agreed with this approach and asked others on CRAB. There was consensus on CRAB to proceed as Jamie outlined. CRAB members agreed to provide comments to David by September 25.

David agreed to invite Mayor Byrd to CRAB's October 8 meeting.

#### Reports from CRAB (ear to the ground)

David noted that Bill had joined the meeting.

Bill stated he had not seen the agenda package for that CRAB meeting. Bill indicated his sense that CRAB was expecting a referral from Council on the Mayor's proposal. Bill reported that this had come before Council and that the suggestion was made to them that this item did not need to be referred out, but that members of CRAB, PSAC and other organizations in the City could simply weigh in to Council with their views. He believed that once Council introduced the Ordinance it should begin to debate the Ordinance and not refer it out. Bill suggested that members of CRAB listen in to the next GREA meeting.

Jamie recapped that CRAB had decided to collate and provide their questions and comments to Mayor Byrd and invite him to the next meeting.

Rick thanked Julia for participating in the meeting.

Rick asked Nicole if she had any additional comments. Nicole thanked CRAB for allowing her to listen.

Jamie reported that parents everywhere were dealing with back to school challenges. She noted upcoming diagnostic testing.

Lisa agreed that this was a challenge particularly the timing being so early. She noted the ERHS Parent Teacher Student Association had a really good Google group with helpful information.

Kevin asked if Bill's perceived timeline raised any concerns. Rick did not believe this was a problem. There was discussion of accelerating CRAB's timeline to submit member comments and questions on Mayor Byrd's presentation by September 18.

#### Next Meeting Date

CRAB members agreed that the Board should hold the next virtual meeting on October 8. Rick thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting ended at 9:10pm.