

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2020 VIA ZOOM TECHNOLOGY.

The meeting began at 7:55pm.

Members participating were: Jamie Krauk, Rick Ransom, Dan Hamlin, Rev. Ray Raysor and Kevin Hammett and David Moran, Staff Liaison. Also present was Bill Orleans.

Welcome & Introductions

Rick welcomed everyone and Jamie read the Community Pledge.

Approval of Minutes

Dan moved approval of the September 10, 2020. Ray seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Community Feedback

There was no community feedback.

CRAB Representative for the Greenbelt SCMaglev Task Force

Rick asked for volunteers. Ray volunteered to serve as CRAB's representative on this Task Force. There was consensus to designate Reverend Ray as the CRAB Representative. CRAB thanked Ray for agreeing to serve.

Greenbelt Fair & Just Policing Act Proposal

David reported that he was trying to get clarity to share the draft Ordinance with CRAB.

Rick read from a News Review article indicating that Council would hold a public work session, and before second reading occurred, there would be a public hearing separate from a Council meeting. Rick asked CRAB if they should hold their own forums before Council held these meetings.

Dan indicated that since Council would be holding public meetings there might be a redundancy, which wouldn't be helpful. He believed CRAB should continue to foster police and community relations.

Kevin understood Dan's comments and wouldn't want to complicate the issue. He indicated that to the degree CRAB could play a role in Council's process, that would be great.

David noted that Council had agreed at a minimum there would be a work session and a public meeting and there could be more than one. He indicated these had not yet been scheduled.

Jamie agreed with Dan that CRAB's role was to be helpful. She believed that CRAB had questions for Council regarding work sessions and hearings as follows:

1. Is it useful for CRAB to help publicize or facilitate in any capacity?
2. Might CRAB propose a clear/tangible set of questions about the proposal at such a session?

Ray asked about CRAB's commitment and the anticipated outcome.

Rick wanted to get community input that helped Council. He noted that there had been some concern that there might be a second reading, and now it was apparent that these Council sessions would occur before a second reading.

Jamie summarized that she was hearing that CRAB preferred not to have duplicative sets of meetings/forums and that CRAB was open to playing a role.

Dan questioned how CRAB would moderate a work session or public hearing on behalf of the Council. He was open to hearing from Council.

Jamie observed that there may not be a role for CRAB. She wondered if there was precedent to ask Council, stressing that CRAB wanted to be helpful not hurtful.

David believed that it was within CRAB's purview to communicate these questions to the Council.

Rick thought it was a little premature to hold forums without the draft legislation.

Bill stated that at the last Regular Meeting, the Mayor had introduced three ordinances to Council. He noted there was discussion by Council that these items should be referred to CRAB. Bill also believed there was a referral to PSAC. He stated his opinion that a majority of Council was trying to stall consideration of these ordinances.

Bill indicated that two groups of people had formed in Greenbelt who are daily and weekly holding vigils in front of the Municipal Building, informally. He stated there are many residents who have formed groups to protest inappropriate police actions. Bill also referenced a group called "greenbelt citizens for public safety" who had also held vigils. Bill's concern was that very hard opinions are being formed regarding policing questions. Bill suggested that CRAB, independent of any referral from Council, might want to engage the community in a conversation about what questions concerning policing have merit. He suggested CRAB hold a forum that was not heavily moderated where people can state their views. Bill believed it was important for people with differing views to ask questions and have a conversation with one another. He stated this was entirely separate from a Council referral.

Jamie asked what, if anything, linked to CRAB's prior work around police community relations and specifically around the continuing youth forum. She stated that what she was hearing from Bill, in many ways, there is a need for police-community relations work to continue. She wondered to what extent CRAB could continue to play that role and appreciated Bill's feedback.

David was not sure exactly which three ordinances Bill was referring to. He noted that Council had been discussing multiple pieces of legislation, including two draft pieces of legislation which were the next item on CRAB's agenda, and had been referred to CRAB. David also indicated that Council had been discussing an eviction freeze, a rent increase freeze and late fee freeze and

did not believe these had been referred to CRAB yet. Finally, there was the Mayor's Fair & Just Policing Act proposal which CRAB was discussing.

Rick observed that a forum which captures more public comment on policing in general may help enrich the process for Council.

Kevin observed that the main question being talked about is what is CRAB's role. He indicated that Bill's remarks reminded him of the previous "Spellman Overpass" issue several years ago where CRAB played a unique and effective role where people had different perspectives and CRAB held a forum where Council did not speak but wanted to listen. Kevin noted that one of the benefits was people could speak openly to each other and Zoom might not provide the same interaction.

Ray expressed support for a citizen review board. Rick indicated that CRAB had previously made this recommendation in a report to Council.

Jamie stated that this was included in Mayor Byrd's proposal. Jamie indicated that CRAB could pose a series of questions to Council including a question about holding a more general forum.

Rick summarized that CRAB would work to prepare a communication to Council with the questions that CRAB discussed. Rick asked if there was consensus to this approach.

Jamie summarized that CRAB wished to be helpful and not harmful and/or be a barrier. CRAB could have a set of forums, or have a role during Council's work session/hearings.

Dan mentioned an issue of timing. He indicated that if time permits, Bill's suggestion of a series of general forums could have value and encouraged people to listen to one another and be more open to a variety of perspectives.

Jamie and Rick agreed to draft a communication to Council and circulate it among CRAB members via email for their feedback.

Council Referral – Racial Equity Legislation

Jamie reported that CRAB members have not yet taken this under consideration. She noted that this legislation had also been referred to other advisory groups. Jamie believed CRAB members needed an opportunity to review and digest the legislation. She suggested that members review/digest the legislation and get back to one another with feedback.

Rick indicated he would email CRAB members, including those not present tonight, with some thoughts and ask members to reply to all within a couple of weeks. David agreed to email a clean copy of the referral and legislation.

Reports from CRAB (ear to the ground)

Jamie reported hearing a lot about how could Greenbelt allow more sidewalk seating and outdoor eating opportunities. She suggested CRAB discuss this in the future. Jamie also reported there is talk about the rest of school year and what will happen regarding in person attendance and if there was going to be a statewide approach.

Next Meeting Date

CRAB members agreed that the Board should hold the next virtual meeting on December 10.

Rick thanked everyone for attending. Ray wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

The meeting ended at 9:16 pm.