

Community Police Forum
Session 1
07/08/21

What do you like that the Greenbelt police dept is doing right now?

Mayor Byrd – engage with community, like trunk or treat, basketball game, etc.

What does community policing mean to you?

Toni Mathewson – walking the beat

Officer Thomas – school resource officer, get out in the community, drive by or walks at mall, conduct premise checks and interact with residents whenever possible

Zoe – mental health interaction as social worker

Michael Hartman – referenced deaf brunch at New Deal Cafe and accompanying closed caption Sunday matinee at the movie theater

Dea Zugby – Chief Craze empowered community members in neighborhood crime watch and citizen police training

Is that still in operation?

Dr. Kressler – center city used to have one but it has stopped. They attempted to restart it recently but couldn't generate interest.

There is one on the east side; not one on the west side

Could restart it... I'm sure Chief could help us with a police officer rep. Dr. Kressler willing to help train

Dr. Marsh: as you complete the survey, if you are interested in restarting neighborhood watch, feel free to enter that in the survey.

Fyn Holland: some times old greenbelt has crime that isn't reported in the police blotter/news review... need to publicize it.

What is one thing you'd like to change about policing?

Fyn: listen to the people who make reports... had to go to Council in order to get action to happen. Had trouble getting the police to listen

Lois Rosado: not only is old greenbelt never reported in police blotter, but west greenbelt is overly reported and that is prejudicial

ASK: Let's get a balanced reporting effort

Let's listen to young women if they say there is a problem

Emmett Jordan: perception of transparency vs. actual transparency

Takes time to review/investigate crimes, active investigations delay release

Kyla:

ASK: interested to compare what is reported from the police to the News Review vs. what the News Review prints... might be a disconnect

Another community member shared that it was difficult to get the police to listen after an incident.

I understand compassion fatigue and training is available. Let's consider it.

On the flip side, I received a ticket for running a stop sign (which I did) and the interaction was very positive... so I've experienced both sides.

Marsh: ASK: is there a disconnect? Should there be additional customer service training for front-facing staff?

Stan: I work for the News Review. The police blotter is printed as received. I also review the police blotter and can attest that there is crime in old greenbelt.

Capt White: police blotter is also on website... but all auto crimes are lumped together, so harder to see Old Greenbelt, nothing is left off

Mayor Byrd: I appreciate Ms. Holland and Ms. Hanington's willingness to talk about their experiences. It highlights the need to understand gender disparities as well and the behaviors that may not technically be crimes (or are crimes), but are important. We also need to look at the trends.

Council will start to hold public hearings with the police chief every couple month to discuss crime but also trends. Do we need quality control on the data?

Dr. Marsh: as simple as "things to know" added to the police blotter could be helpful... even if a crime has not been committed.

Bill Orleans: I think this is not what this forum was intended to do. I thought we were here to have a conversation between those who want no reform vs those who want reform.

There are real tensions in town and I don't see them being addressed tonight.

There have been a variety of closed sessions between city management, FOP and police dept. They should be open

Dr. Marsh – **can someone speak to those closed sessions?**

Mayor Byrd: they occurred, yes, as it relates to collective bargaining agreements.

At some point, they will be agreed to by all parties.

The CBA will be available for public inspection as well as any other matters that ultimately the City Council will have to take action on.

No action will be taken related to the CBA or any action related to the police, without the opportunity to

Chief Bowers: At the direction of Council, we are working to ensure that the details of the CBA are publicly available prior to Council vote.

Public hearings prior to collective bargaining, then typically they bargain in private, then make available public prior to Council vote.

Other closed session were personnel related.

Dr. Marsh – I'm hearing that there are tensions between community and police. What do we think about that?

Dr. Rosado – I can't speak to that, but I need to know if the general orders re: stop and frisk are still in play.

Chief Bowers: That is an NYPD policy. That is different than the Supreme Court case re: Terry vs. Ohio

That supreme court case has not been rescinded.

You can NOT just stop someone and search them.

If you have reasonable suspicion that a crime is in progress, and you expect a weapon is in play, you may conduct a pat-down for weapons.

Fyn: the tension comes from not being listened to... either from sexism or ageism. They don't even pretend to care.

Peggy: I'm a member of PSAC; PSAC submitted a report that examined general orders... need to examine the order to aggressively pursue suspicion/stop and frisk

Mayor Byrd: there have emerged factions
Some that think the police need no changes

Bill Orleans: tension is actually between different groups of Greenbelt residents that feel differently about the police

Rick Ransom: Question to Fyn: do others share your views? Did you ever engage your school officer when you were at Roosevelt?

Fyn: universal sense of those with whom I spoke with, was as follows:

- I didn't report it because I knew they wouldn't listen
- I reported but they didn't listen
- I asked my Dad to report it for me

Officer Thomas: I think that Fyn's example is a reason to have SROs in the school... so they have someone to speak to.

Officer Roberson: I don't want to miss an opportunity to speak to our residents

We care very deeply about this community.

I grew up in Greenbelt and went to Roosevelt.

Can we do a better job? Yes

But we are members of our community and are woven into the fabric of the community.

Chief Bowers: Hard to top Carl. I came on at the end of 2018.

We continue to be better every day and we strive to be better every day.

I'm proud of the men and women in the police department every day.

We want all of our residents to be safe and comfortable.

We'll take what's said tonight and take it back and get better.

Mayor Byrd: thank you to all of the residents, Dr. Marsh, and our police

Community Police Forum
Session 2
07/18/21

Jamie welcomed members of the community on behalf of CRAB, PSAC, YAC and City

What do you like that the Greenbelt police dept is doing right now?

They are engaged in activities

Police provide security and protection at their public events. (Lore)

Interactions with the police have been respectful (Lore)

Concerns with having this on Sunday morning

Lore and Michael expressed concern at having this on Sunday morning

Limits ability for church attendees to participate.

Dr. Marsh recognized the challenge and outlined the thinking that CRAB – ASK: how do we get more residents engaged and participating?

Mayor Byrd – recognized that churches often have earlier services, and virtual services, and he has intended to go to his 8:00am

Council Member J Davis – expressed gratitude to CRAB

Noticed that many on the call are the same people that

Why are people not here?

Church attendance

Lore and Michael asked about the survey

CRAB responded that it is ongoing and the data will be incorporated to

(note: to date we have received 26 surveys and will keep the survey up for a few more weeks)

Other options for outreach

Try Clubhouse – an audio-only platform

CRAB used flyers, Greenbelt News Review and Facebook posts. Desire to empower influencers to

CRAB expressed openness to other methods

How to reach younger black males, for example? It might be more nuanced than church attendance

Lore shared info for Thursday July 22 7:00 pm Public Safety session... will see if more attend

Mayor – concerning that the demographics of the meeting participation (racial, age, geographic) do not reflect the demographics of the City. We need to work on outreach.

J. Davis – several issues with meeting attendance

- Time is precious, especially weekends, and sometimes folks just don't have the time
- Smaller sessions or focus groups, might be more attractive to some participants

Challenges with police

Rick Ransom: Troubling trend of many incidents of police violence that begin with traffic stops. What/why are the differences with these stops and pedestrian stops? Seems the police have more leeway on traffic stops. Are the rules for traffic stops explicitly defined?

Lore: appreciate Mayor bringing more transparency to the Collective Bargaining Agreement process

Also appreciate the Mayor's Fair and Just Policing Act – need to review PD General Orders (*note: PSAC just completed a comprehensive review*)

Dr. Marsh – General Orders can be changed at any time and there should be a constant and ongoing review to ensure they stay current with best practices. Council and residents should be informed of GO changes in a timely manner.

Dr. Marsh – conversation at the county level – starting to examine whether we can automate some routine issues to minimize stops (level of tint, broken tail lights, air fresheners on the mirror).

What does Community Policing mean to you?

Opportunity for sports games involving community and police

Opportunity for police to attend community events and speak, also PD could attend HS basketball games – allowing them to build trust slowly and bring their personal relationship

A good example is Citizen Policing Academy – would like to see it extended to junior and senior high school

Other examples include ride alongs – it offers a different perspective.

Also – stop into businesses, walk the beat. Go to the local café

Michael highlighted an example of former chief meeting with deaf community at the New Deal Cafe

Michael – we also need to recognize that police are at risk daily during their shifts and work in the midst of potential danger

Dr. Marsh highlighted the need for consistency in practice on the part of the police – for example, don't approach cars in a traffic stop by unbuttoning their holster unless they do it all the time, for all drivers (race, age, gender)

Lore raised the example of a black officer showing his humanity, joining their “circle” and saying at a George Floyd rally last year “I am an officer 8 hours a day but I'm black 24 hours a day”

We have to be all open minded in order to move the conversation forward.

Mayor Byrd – how to include more young black men

Sudhanshu – we have homeowners association list but it is outdated. Can the City do that?

J Davis – City can't dedicate time to keep that updated

It's not an easy job , Council has tried

Building a comprehensive list of businesses has comparable challenges. Our Econ Dev coordinator is working on it

We have a list of orginaztions that use our fields and recreation assets. This could be helpful.

301-caller: Does the police have a mental health worker or other support? City has the CARES program and partners with the County for mental health issues.

Dr. Marsh – does it include businesses out of the home?

Only if they have a permit

From Lore:

<https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/government/departments-con-t/recreation-parks/clubs-and-contacts>

<https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/community/homeowner-associations>

<https://www.greenbeltmd.gov/business/business-directory>

Lil Dan Celdran:

Would like to do a focus group to discuss how to reach a broader audience

Daniel Thies – great service with the de-escalation process, but the message isn't landing well. Have to read your audience. Use of the PD heavy equipment may have the opposite affect and may actually escalate the issues.

After session

Some have given up on the system

Identify our influencers:

Partner at existing events

e.g., food truck Friday

