TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE

Community Police Collaborative

Hosted Remotely Via WebEx

Thursday, June 11th 2020
7:30-8:30

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 7:44pm by CPC Chair Bobby Brown

ATTENDANCE

CPC Members: CPC Chair Bobby Brown, CPC Vice Chair Jocelyn Ryan, Recording Secretary Sara Wakefield, Lt Adrian Acevedo, Freddy Arsenault (Alternate), Ramiro Green, Brendan Gioello, Judy Goodwin, South Orange Police Chief Kyle Kroll, Stephanie Lawson-Muhammad, Annemarie Maini, Lt Eric Moore, Alan Noel

South Orange Village Trustees: Donna Coallier, Summer Jones

Community Members: Approximately 25 residents attended via WebEx

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 28th, 2020 Meeting Minutes approved

INTRODUCTIONS OF CPC MEMBERS

TOPICS

- Moment of Silence for George Floyd and other victims of police violence led by Chief Kyle Kroll
- Reading of Statement on Behalf of Voting Members of the CPC:

  The Community Police Collaborative (CPC) Committee is an official standing committee in South Orange and was formed as a direct response to the publication of The Force Report. The report acted as a catalyst, bringing the community together to demand more accountability and a closer partnership with our police department.

  After several months of community meetings that allowed residents to offer input on what the CPC should be, the first meeting of the full committee took place on May 28th. In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, and of an excessive

use of force by a SOPD officer, the need for the South Orange CPC could not be greater.

Police violence in this country is not perpetrated by the occasional racist individual. Rather, it is the result of a long history of institutionalized racism, implicit biases, and unchecked authority. We must all identify the inherently racist aspects of our government systems, commit to advocate against them, and insist that anti-racist change be put in place.

Emotions are running high, nationally and locally. We as a committee are collectively sad. We are angry. And we are ready to get to work. We are disappointed that the Essex County prosecutor declined to prosecute the SOPD officer who repeatedly punched a handcuffed man in the head. But we are pleased that this was discovered quickly through internal processes and we commend Chief Kroll's decision to seek the officer's removal. And we are grateful for his recent statement of support for the community and for the Black Lives Matter movement.

We are heartened by the willingness of the Chief and the SOPD to listen to us and work with us and we invite you to do the same. Please join us as we work to define our goals more clearly and set up sub-committees to look in depth at training, data collection and analysis, and community outreach.

We hope that you will do this work with us (you can volunteer here). We also hope that you will hold us accountable to prevent us from falling short. Together, we can make a difference.

- "These are my police," a discussion on who the police serve. CPC Member Lawson-Muhammad played a short audio clip of a protester and a bystander at a recent community protest.
    - South Orange Police Officers discussed the responsibilities that fall to them that may be better handled through other avenues, for which the town and CPC should work to create alternatives. Examples included people not wearing masks, business code violations in the parks, noting SOPD presence escalates disputes and noting the lack of alternative services for residents and visitors to resolve disputes. Discussion also centered on dispatcher practices for non-emergency calls.
    - Community members utilized the chat and messaging functions to offer their ideas on areas where police involvement could be reduced ("For the community, which activities do you feel the police should not be a part of?"). Topics offered included police involvement in schools, interactions with homeless people, de-escalation strategies, code enforcement, services for food insecure elderly residents, culturally-biased calls, issuing citations for false 911 calls, residents also offered the Tuxedo Park Diversity and Inclusion Committee's guidelines to reduce police calls for service.
- Discussion of CPC Sub-Committees, introduction of sub-committee chairs
- Discussion of de-escalation training to follow up in May 28th meeting discussions

- Discussion of process and transition for a new Chief of Police upon Chief Kroll's retirement and the civil service requirements for promotion. CPC members asked for input into this process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Resident Casey Kait offered comments on educating the public on police calls for service, de-escalation strategies, defunding police, and police culture
- Resident Mia White asked whether SOPD has a duty to intervene in cases of excessive force and about how difficult it would be to fire a police officer here (referencing recent comments by Greg Lembrich in the Village Green)
- Resident and MAPSO Youth Coalition member Jordan Muhammad offered comments on the thin blue line/Blue Lives Matter flag, also raising the experience of Camden NJ in disbanding and rebuilding their police department. (Chief Kroll responded that he has barred SOPD officers from putting flags or patches on their uniforms.)
- Resident and MAPSO Youth Coalition member Sage Territo asked whether the CPC would commit to defunding the police, noting that training has not worked to reduce force in other locations and money allocated to the SOPD should be allocated to other sources (citing mental health supports as a specific example). Various CPC members responded with a variety of thoughts on de-funding and reallocation of resources.
- Resident Michelle Miaiaszek spoke in appreciation of the CPC's work and offered a variety of ideas for how to bridge the gap on these questions.

NEW BUSINESS

- Discussion of protests (both announced and unannounced), safety for protesters
- Homework for CPC members: https://www.wbur.org/radioboston/2020/06/03/americas-history-race-policing

NEXT MEETING DATE July 11th, 2020

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The CPC moved to executive session at 10:02 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned by CPC Chair Bobby Brown at 10:20pm.