



York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office
Citizen Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 13th, 2021
0900 a.m.
301 Goodwin Neck Road
Yorktown, VA 23690



Meeting Minutes Approval by Co-Chair/Committee: YES

PRESENT: LeRoyce Bratsveen; Penelope Carroll; Latonia Chavis; Janine Espinal; Andre Gaines; David Gorwitz; Beth Hoer; Jennifer Joyner; Linda Hutchinson; Eileen O'Brien; Krysten Reid; Steven Roane; D'Shawn Wright;

ABSENT: Melanie O Bond-Artis; Robert Carpenter; Lauren Dunbar; Debra Goff; Willie Rose; Jason Yarema

STAFF: Major Ron Montgomery, Chief Deputy

AGENDA TOPICS

1. Call to Order

Ms. Penelope Carroll called the meeting to order on at 0900 a.m. via virtual Zoom meeting. Roll call was taken.

2. Opening remarks: Ms. Penelope Carroll

Ms. Carroll announced to the group that Officer James Robinson was participating in today's meeting and would be answering any questions that the group may have in regards to the agenda items that were going to be discussed.

3. Brainstorming on what communities mean: Ms. Linda Hutchinson

Ms. Hutchinson was the facilitator for the discussion in regards to what communities mean to the group. The purpose of the discussion is to hone in on what communities that the CAC wants to target in the future to foster effective communication with law enforcement. Ms. Hutchinson stated that it is important to note that communities also focus on demographics, gender and location. Mr. Steve Roan stated that communities exist within multiple virtual communities and may also overlap. Mr. D'Shawn Wright stated that communities can seem to be common on the surface, but may be different when you get to know them. It is important to understand the community first. Ms. Latonia Chavis posed the question of joining different communities. How do we do this and who do we target? How do we share who we are. Ms. Janine Espinal stated that there are sectors of the communities that may be disenfranchised and they may be 'micro communities' within the county. Mr. D'Shawn Wright stated that we need to hone in on why there is fear in our communities. Are we projecting who we are?

Ms. Hutchinson stated that when speaking to communities, it is important to talk for healing and understanding. Ms. Carroll stated that the disparities within the county are not glaring; there are diverse communities and that the group needs to focus on education to understand what the



York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office
Citizen Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 13th, 2021
0900 a.m.
301 Goodwin Neck Road
Yorktown, VA 23690



issues and concerns are for the community. Ms. LeRoyce Bratsveen stated that we need to recognize that communities are different. The difference does not just stem from a collective sentiment of anger and frustration. What the CAC has to do in the long run is to acknowledge both our differences and common goals from different communities. Ms. Carroll stated that we have to come together as a group and have direct contact with the community with open lines of communication so citizens can have an outlet to voice community concerns. Mr. D'Shawn Wright stated that the community as a whole is looking for more transparency from the police department to bring communities together.

Ms. Carroll asked Officer Robins: What are the different experiences to share within the communities that have different needs? Officer Robinson stated that people used to talk to each other within their communities. Now communities use law enforcement as their communication tool. For example, if there is are children playing outside, loud music, etc. people call the police instead of talking to their neighbors. He stated that not everyone has that experience, but people have to have an open mindset. People don't communicate effectively within their communities.

Mr. Steve Roan stated that there has been a societal shift because people are busier than they used to be and there are a lot of distractions, to include electronics (i.e. phones, video games, iPads) and that takes away from human interaction. Ms. Hutchinson stated that she agreed and there is less trust amongst people. Even now with the pandemic, people are wearing masks, so you can no longer see their face. The added stress of social distancing can also foster distrust amongst the community.

Mr. Andre Gaines stated that he has lived both in Yorktown and Newport News and he stated that he knew his neighbors and the community. For him, a sense of community stems from the fact that you are all striving for the same things. People's first instincts is that we should not be a threat to each other. He also stated that he thinks that there is a stigma in the River Meade area.

Mr. Gaines stated that there is disconnect with children because parents are not home because they are busy working and an authoritative figure is not present. Also, the police sometimes does not notify people when they are out in the streets talking to children. The police do not go to the parents first and there is a lost sense of communication there. The disenfranchised communities fear the police because they are not communicating with the right people within the communities to get the right answers. When the police do come into the communities, people have a sense of fear because sometimes the police can have an intimidating presence. Mr. Gaines proposed that the police walk the neighborhoods to foster understanding and not to do it in an authoritative way.

Officer Robinson stated that the police force does drive and walk the neighborhoods. There are two deputies assigned to an area. The challenge is that the Sheriff's Office receives a high call



York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office
Citizen Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 13th, 2021
0900 a.m.
301 Goodwin Neck Road
Yorktown, VA 23690



volume. When the police comes into a neighborhood people have the perception that they are there because something bad happened (i.e. a crime was committed.) Mr. Gaines stated that it is important that the police gets to know the neighborhood because this goes a long way. Word of mouth can only go so far without action and some level of one-on-one interaction.

Ms. Latonia Chavis asked Officer Robinson if there has been efforts to recruit individuals within the community to join the police force. Officer Robinson stated that many people don't want to get into the profession. Ms. Chavis stated that people might be driven by fear. She also stated as a future idea for community engagement, the CAC can host block parties for education and awareness, which might be a good way to foster trust in communities within the area. Ms. Hutchinson also stated that in regards to Mr. Gaines comments that the CAC can expand into other communities. Officer Robinson stated that the Sheriff's Office is one of the best in the area as far as the quality of trained police officers that engage with the community. There are many excellent officer who love their communities and are dedicated to the profession.

4. Outlining the business processes of the committee: Mr. Steve Roane

Mr. Roan stated that before we execute our ideas, the CAC needs to develop a structure within the committee. The group needs to ask various questions to include:

- How does the public communicate with the CAC?
- Who do they communicate with? (i.e. Chair/Co-Chair?)
- Do we develop positions in addition to the three main positions of Chair/Co-Chair/Secretary?

Mr. Roan also stated that in addition to our mission statement, we also have to devise the CAC's 'elevator speech' in how we are going to communicate with the community. The group has to establish goals and objectives to include:

- Finalize the mission statement
- Establish lines of communication with the community
- Establish an organizational chart
- Milestones on what the CAC plans to achieve for the community

Mr. Roan asked Ms. Hutchinson that from her years of teaching the things that she has learned in how to foster positive communication within communities. Ms. Hutchinson stated that the main things that she has learned was to ensure that people within the community have an equal voice, they step out of their comfort zone, and that people have respect for each other. Mr. Roan stated that the CAC has to appoint process owners. We also have to establish goals and objectives and assign areas of responsibility.



York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office
Citizen Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 13th, 2021
0900 a.m.
301 Goodwin Neck Road
Yorktown, VA 23690



The recommended due outs to define the CAC's structure include the following:

- Develop and organizational chart
- Plan of Action and Milestones
- Establish tenure for members
- Establish bylaws and responsibilities
- Develop a budget

Mr. Roan also stated that some additional ideas for committee can include the following:

- Questionnaires for community relationships with law enforcement
- Electronic suggestion box

Mr. Gaines also stated that that a good resource for the CAC is are community centers and that the CAC should reach out to that as resources. The CAC concurred that this is a grassroots effort and that we have to flood the community with communication. Ms. Carroll also stated that she was envisioning to roll out the CAC in the spring.

Mr. Roan suggested that agenda items for the future include:

- Positive engagement with the police force and community
- The paradigm of diversity

5. Closing remarks/miscellaneous topics: Ms. Penelope Carroll/Officer James Robinson

Both Ms. Carroll and the CAC thanked Officer Robinson for his participation in the meeting.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1100 a.m.