

Livingston Avenue Area Commission

October 2021 Meeting Minutes

Commissioners in attendance: Dillard, Herman, London, Gray, Hummel, VerHage and Thomas

Commissioners absent: Craddolph

Secretary Report (Thomas) September meeting minutes approved 7/0/1

Treasurer Report (Thomas) Huntington Bank statement for period 9/1/21/ through 9/30/21 submitted, balance is \$300.

Guest Speakers:

Chief **Elaine Bryant**, City of Columbus Division of Police

614-645-4600

<https://www.columbus.gov/police/>

Assistant Chief **Lashanna Potts**, City of Columbus Division of Police

614-645-4600

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Deputy Chief **Greg Bodker**, City of Columbus Division of Police

614-645-4720

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Commander **Smith Weir**, City of Columbus Division of Police

614-645- 4600

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Director **Robert Clark**, City of Columbus Department of Safety

614-645-4116

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Haidy Carr, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein's office

614-645-0402

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Commissioner Thomas read questions submitted by residents in advance of the meeting and the guest speakers responded.

Q: 648 S. champion has been reported for dealing drugs. There is a lot of traffic coming through the alley of Oakwood behind this home all times of the day and night and it doesn't seem that anything is being done. It was reported directly to officer Kalous and on the police website. Why are drug houses so hard to close down?

A: Police received 3 service calls since 2019- this does not include 311 calls.

Haidy Carr reviewed the nuisance property abatement process. Shutting down a drug house requires a felony violent or drug or drug crime. Requires definitive proof to evict and/or condemn.

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Q: We have heard from numerous sources that city leaders have told the police they are stopping too many people of color. Now crime has increased. Is there a correlation between the two?

A: Chief Bryant - Crime has increased across the nation, including Columbus. CPD is committed to policing ethically, not biased, and the safety of Columbus residents.

Q: Shannon Hardin step(ped) across a police line and was peppered sprayed. He wrote numerous e-mails about this. As the Chief of Police, do you think there is ever a time when it is acceptable to step across a police line during a riot?

A: Chief Bryant- it has been a tumultuous couple of years and the city -and the nation -need to heal for communities to move forward.

Q: The civilian review board includes Kyle Strickland, a man who publicly stated, "Do not let anyone tell you to wait for all the facts". How can the public have faith in this review board if a member (who is a lawyer nonetheless) puts such low value on the facts?

A: Robert Clark- I've served in LA and DC. We are a new team committed to moving forward collaboratively with CPD doing the job they were hired to do. CPD is in training right now.

Q: Do you have the statistics for crime that is black on black, black on white, and white on black?

A: Greg Bodker- black on black crime is disproportionately higher. We have the statistics/data. Tell us what you want to know.

A: Smith Weir- We know from Shot Spotter that crime is moving south- Whittier corridor.

Q: While the city and the police department work out the plan for fighting crime, we are suffering. How long will this take for a plan to be put in place?

A: Chief Bryant- progress is happening behind the scenes improving processes and personnel. 2022 Comprehensive Strategy. Change takes time.

Q: City leaders were talking heavily about defunding the police. Now with the increase in crime, have city leaders changed their minds on defunding?

A: Robert Clark- Defund the Police has become a battle cry. Understand what we are asking for- police reform versus policing reform. Partner to strategize so we can serve and protect.

Q: We have seen a marked increase in using, buying, and selling over the last 3 months. The convenience store on the corner of Lilley and Livingston seems to be a spot, and creates heavy foot traffic on Lilley, Kelton, and the surrounding alleys. What, if anything, are local authorities doing to monitor and intervene in these areas of high loitering, high buying and selling, and high areas of intoxicated individuals walking on foot, endangering themselves amidst moving cars?

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A: Haidy Carr- Encourage 311 and 911 calls, volume matters when the City Attorney is deciding to file a case.

Q: We have seen substance abuse manifest in some dangerous ways in Driving Park. Individuals on foot, looking for money, approaching homeowners and requesting to complete yardwork tasks, etc. This has historically been benign, but as of late, has escalated to more threatening situations. Most recently, a knife was pulled on us in our own driveway after refusing to pay a man to pull our weeds. It took the police 23 minutes to arrive (after 3 phone calls). According to the Next Door app, this gentleman has threatened numerous residents in the Driving Park area. What, if anything, are local authorities doing to monitor and intervene these areas of foot traffic and solicitation, including addressing homelessness and prevention?

A: Assistant Chief Potts- we need neighbors to follow through on panhandling complaints when CPD arrives.

A: Haidy Carr- city is working to address homelessness

Q: Illegal dumping is a major problem in DP alleys. Residents make numerous reports to 311/the city but the needle doesn't move. How can local law enforcement intervene in this area, and what is their relationship with city officials to tackle this growing problem/ public health concern?

A: Greg Bodker- CPD works with City of Columbus Code Enforcement Franklin County Sheriff's Office has an Environmental Crimes Task Force. Anyone can call 614-525-3351 with information.

Q: Driving speed on our one way streets, with no sidewalks, is an ongoing concern. This includes vehicles and motorcycles. What steps are being taken to calm traffic and enforce speed on our residential streets, and have sidewalks ever been a consideration?

A: Smith Weir- directed patrol on Livingston and Whittier, focus on school zone, focus of traffic bureau, Annual Review of high accident areas. Call 311 with concerns.

Q: Old Oaks is without our police liaison – Terry Kalous. When will she be back?

A: Chief Bryant- cannot comment on a pending investigation. Interim CLO is Robert Medley rmedley@columbus.gov. cell 614-645-1411. Ed Daniher is supervisor of CLOs

Q: Recent findings reported on by Mayor Ginther show that a large percentage of homicides in the city are linked to gangs. What specifically is the CPD/City Leaders doing to address the gang violence that is plaguing Columbus neighborhoods? Specifically, the South East side?

A: Lashanna Potts reviewed Gang Violence Initiative press conference several weeks ago. More info from Columbus dispatch. <https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/2021/10/06/report-many-columbus-homicides-involve-gang-group-members/6009299001/>

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Robert Clark- CPD will arrest violent criminals. Mentoring is powerful and the community can provide that resource. Youth want to s"ee how much you care B4 they care how much you know"

Q: Because the absences of police in the Driving Park area people are being harassed by street people. As a senior citizen I feel I must carry protection (mace) when I go out to empty the trash or just walking in the yard. I feel city leaders made this situation through their shortsighted policies; therefore what are they going to do to fix it?

A: Covered in previous Q & A

Q: Police told me that if they stop people for speeding on my street they would be told they are profiling. I saw an e-mail from the city attorney stating this – this obviously will not work. Have you talk to city leaders about this policy and if so, what was the outcome?

A: Smith Weir- we'll be announcing new initiatives regarding traffic in the coming weeks/ months.

Lashanna Potts- when officers do things right they are backed

Q: Chief of Police Bryant, Assistant Chief of Police Potts – Do you have an open door policy so that officers can feel comfortable coming to you with issues, concerns, or ideas for improvement? If not, what policy do you have in place where officers can do this?

A: Chief Bryant- from day 1 we were boots on the ground, open communication at all times, implementing ideas from officers.

Lashanna Potts- getting commanders back in the field

Q: Is there an organization where police officers can make anonymous complaints about the organization up to and including your office Chief of Police Bryant?

A: Chief Bryant- independent Inspector General position created

Q: We want you to know that we are here to support you. It is clear that we are expecting you to work for us, however, I believe that we should be willing to work with and for you to support your efforts in working for us. How can we best support you as individual citizens of Columbus and collectively as communities and neighborhoods of Columbus?

A: Chief Bryant- we ask for patience, change takes time

Smith Weir- work with us, talk to officers, no face to face in 2020 was challenging, we need to re-establish bonds

Greg Booker- #1 hold us accountable, let someone know if you have a question. #2 Communication and Collaboration

Robert Clark- remember that CPD are human beings facing the same everyday stresses that we all face. Mentioned CPD and FD losses due to COVID. Connect with officers.

Lashanna Potts- Stand with us. Be as vocal with things are good as when they are bad.

Haidy Carr- Communication. CPD very dedicated individuals.

Public Questions/Comments

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Q: Is Ring Video footage (and similar vendors) usable by CPD.

A: Yes!

Q: What's being done to address vaccine hesitancy/refusal among CPD?

A: We are using every tool to achieve high vaccination rates.

Q: Son was killed earlier this year, what is being done to address backlog of DNA testing at forensic lab?

A: CPD answered 1:1 with resident

Q: What is the best way to share safety concerns?

A: 311, CPD Non-Emergency # and 911

Q: Why do officers shoot to kill?

A: Trained to stop the threat and if needed shoot at the largest part of the body to reduce the possibility of a stray bullet.

Recording link: unavailable