



## **Community Policing Advisory Board**

### **Minutes**

**Thursday, May 4, 2023**

*Meeting was held at the Lincoln Park Community Center – 357 Frederick Avenue, Rockville MD 20850*

**Members Present:** Donna Barnes, Michael Donahue, Jaime Espinosa, Lori Horkan, Chiara Jaffe, Matthew Perkins, Robin Prather, and Michael Scott were present. Rici Rutkoff was absent.

**Staff Present:** Chief of Police Victor V. Brito and Police Executive Assistant Andrea Escher.

#### **I. Call to Order**

Chairman Perkins conducted roll call and called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

#### **II. Motion to Approve Board Meeting Agenda**

**Motion:** to approve the May meeting agenda.

Moved by Board member Prather, seconded by Board member Donahue, unanimously approved.

#### **III. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** to approve the April 13, 2023 meeting minutes.

Moved by Board member Scott, seconded by Board member Donahue, approved 5-0-2 with Board member Espinosa and Jaffee abstaining.

#### **IV. RCPD Updates & Meet RCPD**

Chief Brito introduced RCPD Corporal Ali Zeighani and his partner, K9 BOLO. Cpl. Zeighani answered questions about BOLO, what he is trained in, types of uses for K9, etc.

Chief Brito provided an update that since summer is fast approaching, this is RCPD's busy time with community events and activities. He also noted that the community alert was put out for awareness on a black bear spotted in the West End of Rockville. He also stated RCPD will be hosting the Fair & Impartial Police program in September at the Social Hall, more information will be forthcoming for registrations.

## **V. Lincoln Park Civic Association**

**Motion:** to extend the speaking time past three minutes, if needed, for any of the guests in attendance.

Moved by Board member Espinosa, seconded by Board member Prather, unanimously approved.

Dr. Alexandra Dace Denito, the President of the Lincoln Park Civic Association read a written statement which was entered to the record (enclosed).

## **VI. Guest Introductions & Statements**

Ms. Marissa Valeri of the Twinbrook community noted her thanks to Chief Brito and shared her support for RCPD. She mentioned that she has no hesitation contacting police with concerns or questions, but she wondered how RCPD can combat the challenge of getting people who may be too scared to contact the police to speak out regarding things they have seen in relation to crime in the community.

Ms. Anita Powell – a resident of Lincoln Park, she asked for each Board member to introduce themselves, tell where they live, how often the Board meets, location and purpose.

## **VII. Crime Statistics Year to Year Comparison**

Board member Jaffe said she had developed some questions regarding the crime statistics from the past two years and was not aware RCPD had provided a response to the questions. Copies will be e-mailed to all Board members. She noted that it appears there was a decrease in crime during the height of COVID. There was discussion that theft from autos always is a major issue within the city. Chief Brito noted there was a rise in assaults from 2021 to 2022, and that in the past year there has been an uptick of crime within the city.

Board member Donahue noted that the 2021 Annual Report did not get into specifics regarding certain areas. He also stated there were not any highlights of the department's recruiting efforts, a breakdown of the success of the community events, or highlights of RCPD's major cases. He presented a document with his suggestions for a future Annual Report.

## **VIII. RCPD Community Policing Report**

This topic will be tabled to the June Board meeting.

## **IX. New Business**

Board member Barnes stated the Mental Health and Wellness Committee met with RCPD's Mental Health Specialist, Beth Loftus. The committee plans to do some promotion on what the department is doing for mental health, she will share more at a later meeting date.

Board member Donahue noted he would like to discuss the status of RCPD's following of the Maryland Police Accountability Act's regulations and if the requirements have been implemented and followed at the June meeting.

Board member Donahue advised he would like a breakdown of the demographics of the sworn personnel of the agency to include age, gender, and race.

Board member Prather advised she continues to get complaints from her neighbors regarding inoperable or abandoned vehicles in Lincoln Park. These vehicles have been ticketed but appear to be in bad shape and the owners are just moving them from street to street. Chief Brito advised he will have Parking Enforcement investigate the situation.

Board member Prather offered her thanks to RCPD's Mr. Yiallouros, Mr. Dixon Willis, Mr. Hale, and Cpl. McBride for having cars, which were illegally parked on the street, moved during a large funeral.

Board member Scott advised he saw two incidents of persons suffering from possible mental health challenges in Town Center. Chief Brito advised him to contact RCPD when he witnesses these events.

## **X. Next Meeting Date & Meeting Adjournment**

The next meeting of the CPAB will be held on Thursday, June 1, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in person at the Rockville City Police Station.

**Motion:** to adjourn.

Moved by Board member Donahue motion seconded by Prather unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Police Advisory Committee meeting- Thursday May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Good evening,

Thank you for this opportunity. I would like to start by introducing two other members of the LPCA board: the current Vice-President, Mr. Omobogie Amadasu, Mrs. Zoe Denito, our current Secretary. And I, Alexandra Dace Denito, am the current President.

This group has deep roots in this Historic African American neighborhood, dating from 1891, when the community was established. Back then, it was called “the Progressive Citizens Association”, advocating for the first free African Americans purchasing lands in Rockville, Maryland. Over time, the name changed, but the Advocacy became more important given the fact that African American neighborhoods always struggle with relentless encroachments from Industrial companies purchasing lands nearby, profiteering from the least expensive lands and regulatory-blind favorable politicians. The “Progressive Citizens Association” was advocating for Social Justice and Racial Equity. The Lincoln Park Civic Association (LPCA) differs in its Advocacy in the fact that the **purpose and mission are to foster a strong sense of community, to promote shared interests in preserving and maintaining Lincoln Park’s historical character, and to encourage neighborhood involvement in efforts to enhance the well-being of its residents.**

With time, given inflation and rising cost of housing, there are few places left in Rockville, Maryland with affordable housing opportunities, with access to top-level schools. Lincoln Park is attracting a very diverse population due to its affordability. The LPCA is guaranteeing that all neighbors, no matter their background, origin and socioeconomic status, benefit from an organized and strong effort to preserve their quality of Life.

We, LPCA members, advocate for access to transportation. Examples includes the case of a petition brought to Montgomery County Public Schools’ Transportation Department in 2017, on behalf of Lincoln Park’s parents. There wasn’t a school bus for High School Students living in Lincoln Park due to a 2-mile rule, ignoring the conditions of precarity for pedestrians risking their safety while crossing an industrial zone and a 6-lanes road to reach the other side of the City. We advocated and obtained a school bus.

We also advocated for Environmental justice, when an asphalt grinding/recycling plant established itself at 1 mile from Lincoln Park habitations. We demanded inspection and revision of the machines to obtain Environmental Protection Agency’s Standards.

We usually advocate for less traffic for neighbors’ safety. Trucks and other traffic from the industrial zones usually try to cut-through our neighborhood, speeding, regardless of the Community Center’s activities with children. We advocated and obtained construction of sidewalks in our neighborhood for Pedestrian safety. One of the most important work of LPCA is to provide a space for City Police and County Police to engage with the residents.

Our activities demand that we stay vigilant and participate to Mayor & Council meetings, Public hearings from the Planning Commissions of both the City Government and The County Government. Even though LPCA’s activities require that we interact with Politicians or

**Religious leaders, LPCA does not endorse any politicians nor play a pro-active role in any religious activities.**

We participate in summer camps, advocating for socioeconomically vulnerable Children to get access to Scientific programs. Supported activities include helping with Activity tables set-up and snack distribution in community clean-up event, Historic remembrance events, National Night out with Police Department staff event, etc...