

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
 Falcon Heights Inclusion and Policing Task Force
 City Hall
 2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

MINUTES
 April 18, 2017 at 6:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

ANDREWS	X		JOHNSON-POWERS	
BALLENTINE			LEEHY-CO CHAIR	X
COLOND	X		THOMPSON	X
DEMERATH	X		WADE	X
JOHNSON	X			

STAFF PRESENT:

MAYOR LINDSTROM	X
CO-CHAIR/COUNCIL MEMBER GUSTAFSON	X
CO-FACILITATOR QUICK	X
CO-FACILITATOR MORRIS	
ADMINISTRATOR THONGVANH	X

I. Call to order
 6:14pm

II. Review Agenda
 Suggestion was made to swap items six and seven of the agenda and there were no objections.

III. Review of April 11, 2017 meeting minutes
 Sack will forward these this week.

IV. Community Relations Guest Panel with Specialists and Discussions
 The panelists were Ebony from the U of M Law School and James from Metro State in St. Paul. They provided their expertise on policing and community relations.

One study cited involved 2000 traffic stops in counties across Minnesota which showed that African Americans are more likely to be stopped and searched but police are less likely to find anything. Heavy traffic enforcement is seen as a way to catch bigger fish and reduce crime.

Regarding hiring practices, some metro police chiefs interviewed 400 candidates but there were only 10 that they were interested in. Chiefs were looking for recruits with empathy, communication, and people skills. Training programs don't often focus on these areas although the 400 candidates were all license eligible. More emphasis tends to be on the "warrior" skills rather than interacting with the community.

Trust needs to be restored between the police and communities. Many times the focus is on the

community not trusting the police but distrust can go the other way. Police can feel unsafe while on foot however in Camden NJ the number of calls declined when foot patrols were implemented. Ownership can be a challenge with a contracted police force. Reconciliation is needed and opportunities need to be provided for authentic interaction to occur so all involved can see each other as human beings.

Evaluating a police force involves many variables. What is the reputation? What statements are made by leadership? What training is provided? Implicit bias training has shown positive results. Surveys of the community and the police can be a helpful tool. Define what success looks like. What outcomes are you looking for?

Marginalized communities need a transparent complaint process. Accountability is needed without unduly penalizing the police.

The COPS program has good resources. The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice is another source for information at truthandjustice.org. Their 3 pillars are enhancing procedural justice, reducing the impact of implicit bias, and fostering reconciliation. Minneapolis was one of their pilot sites.

This task force is unique and could be a model for others.

V. - Break

VI. Themes for Community Conversation #4 on creating a more inclusive community

There was an extended discussion around inclusion and the conversation that the task force is not having. This involves the treatment of people of color in the community and the issue of white privilege. Task force members shared examples of mistreatment, some of which were overt and others that were more subtle but still painful and burdensome. Black and brown citizens are being affected and the task force is not giving it the attention it deserves. Many in the community do not believe there is a problem but if people of color do not feel safe in our city then there is a problem. Think about the definition of community and what community is without people of color. If people were actually treated equally and white privilege did not exist then white people might realize they could be harassed by police too.

People of color can be on guard every day and often need to wear a mask to function in the dominant culture. Minnesota is known as one of the hardest states for African-Americans to live in. One example was given about being stopped by security in a department store while a white person walked out the door with a stolen item. A couple of examples of condescending comments include, "you speak well" or "you're smart." Some behavior that is simply different is called "wrong" by a white person. If people of color get angry about this then they become the "angry minority". White people lose out as well, especially in the area of losing their culture are just "white".

The first step is to admit there is a problem. Be willing to call out others for insensitive remarks. White people are going to need to bring those who don't think there is a problem to community conversations. One of our panelists tonight said we can be a model for other cities. We can build momentum in the community and racial reconciliation is possible.

This was just the start of the conversation that requires a long term outlook for repair. We need to have blinders off while working collectively and honestly, otherwise the recommendations are words on paper but we haven't put our hearts into them. We need to learn from each other's struggles and strengths and work toward unity with diversity.

Last weekend the city received a letter from the firefighters saying they support St. Anthony Police and it sounds like the council doesn't. Collaboration has occurred in the past but is now more political with the proposal that Falcon Heights assume all liability. St. Anthony claims the shooting has cost the city one million dollars. Falcon Heights can't absorb that.

The citizens of Falcon Heights provide funding for services. What does the community value? What

things are possible? We don't have a model yet but we know some directions. We have no control over what another entity has to offer or what recommendations can be successful and what won't work. Also will this be something citizens can afford to pay for?

Does this mean that marginalized communities must suffer because we can't find a police force we like? Equity and other goals are what we want to see. We can work toward the goal even if problems exist. Having unresolved issues does not mean we have failed.

The city needs a police force. People will be disappointed regardless of the decisions made. Success means having systems in place to measure our direction. Elected officials will decide which police force to partner with or to create our own. SAP is receptive to our suggestions and the chief appreciates the community conversations.

We don't have the "before" data but we will have the "now" and "after". A CRB, a complaint system and an out clause in the contract can be tools to provide better accountability.

VII. Refinement of Recommendations to City Council Policing Policies

VIII. Creation of Drafting Committee to Finalize Report to the City Council

IX. Preparation for Upcoming Meetings

A. May 1 - Community Conversation #4

Sustaining leadership around race issues and other divisions.

B. May 2 - Task Force Meeting

Kathy will have 1-1 meetings with members to continue refining the recommendations. Most wanted specific quantifiable items in the recommendations around data gathering and training. Recommendations will be resent to task force members.

Consider postponing the last meeting to May 16 which allows time for members to work through the notes from the meeting.

Please leave May 9 and 16 open on your calendars.

The next council meeting for the task force to present would be on May 24 rather than the 10th.

One suggestion is that we don't force the council to accept or reject the whole proposal. There are items that are specific to the charge they gave us then there are recommendations where we need more work.

We are also dependent on what police departments are willing to work with. The end result may be recommendations about community policing with officers getting out of their cars more. We may also have a CRB. We can state what we want to accomplish while the path may need to be negotiated or take some years to reach.

X. Announcements and Updates

There were expected absences from Jim, Dan and Ken.

XI. Adjourn

10:12