



Approved

**CITY OF YPSILANTI
POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS/
BLACK LIVES MATTER
JOINT TASK FORCE
TASKFORCE MINUTES
Monday, January 11, 2016
7:00 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL –

TASK FORCE

Council Member Nicole Brown, Chair	Present
HRC Commissioner Jennifer Symanns, Co-Chair	Present
Council Member Anne Brown	Present
HRC Commissioner John Shuler	Present
Council Member Brian Robb	Present
HRC Commissioner Darlene Scott	Absent

III. INVOCATION –

Council Member Nicole Brown asked all to stand for a moment of silence.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE –

"I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

V. AGENDA APPROVAL –

Council Member Anne Brown moved, seconded by Commissioner Symanns, to approve the agenda.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the agenda was approved as submitted.

VI. MINUTES

— November 16, 2015

Council Member Anne Brown moved, seconded by Commission Shuler, to approve the minutes.

On a roll call vote, the vote to approve the minutes was as follows:

Council Member Nicole Brown, Chair	Yes
HRC Commissioner Jennifer Symanns, Co-Chair	Yes
Council Member Anne Brown	Yes
HRC Commissioner John Shuler	Yes
Council Member Brian Robb	Yes
HRC Commissioner Darlene Scott	Absent

VOTE:

YES: 5 NO: 0 ABSENT: 1 (Scott) VOTE: Carried

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

1. Gail Wolkoff, Director Dedicated to Make a Change, stated a teen party will be held at the Senior Center this Friday, January 15th. She said this party will be a monthly occurrence and invited all to attend.
2. Russell Davis, 108 Washtenaw Rd. #12, stated he moved to Ypsilanti in 2014 and has always had a positive experience with the police. He said he recently moved to Ward 3 and his interaction with the police has become more positive.
3. Nathan Phillips, 509 N. Washington, stated he came to Ypsilanti nine years ago and was stopped by the police three times in that first year. He said as a Native American he feels that he was racially profiled. He added a year before he moved to Ypsilanti the high school changed its name from the Braves and twenty years before that Eastern Michigan University changed its name from the Hurons.
4. Lee Tooson, 107 Middle, stated there will always be an issue with the Police Department and absolutely black lives matter. He said there are good police officers and bad police officers and it is up to the administration to ensure officers conduct themselves appropriately. He added only police can stop police brutality.
5. Anthony Morgan, 1587 Congress, stated he is interested to hear what the ultimate goal of the Task Force is and if the Police Department has received cultural diversity training and what it cost the City.
6. Ralph Lange, 206 S. Huron #2, stated as City Manager he welcomes anyone to meet with him and the Police Chief to discuss these issues.

Council Member Nicole Brown stated she and other Council Members are working with the Police Chief and the City Manager to schedule a larger community forum to discuss these topics.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS –

Policing-Community Relations/Black Lives Matter Joint Task Force
January 11, 2016

1. Community Oversight/ Citizen Review Board

Council Member Robb stated he developed a fillable police complaint form that can be completed online regarding. Mr. Robb said he also made updates to Policy 16 which dictates procedures followed for a citizen complaint. Mr. Robb stated he will forward that information to the members of the Task Force. Council Member Anne Brown asked for a summary of the complaint process. Mr. Robb responded for the past four months this Task Force has been discussing the training that police officers receive, the citizen complaint form, and Policy 16. Mr. Robb said he has made all updates discussed in past meetings. Council Member Anne Brown clarified one of the concerns the Task Force had with the complaint process is the complaints are turned into the Police Department to review. Ms. Anne Brown stated the Task Force created the online fillable complaint form in order to provide an individual the ability to submit the form without feeling intimidated. Ms. Anne Brown added a hardcopy of a complaint can also be submitted at the Clerk, City Attorney, and City Manager offices.

Council Member Anne Brown asked the audience for suggestions on other locations that a complaint could be submitted. A member of the audience suggested the emailed complaint be carbon copied to a civilian body to ensure transparency. Ms. Anne Brown responded the individual making the complaint would need to feel comfortable with sharing the information. The speaker replied the information would not be available to the public only to that select body or individual. Council Member Nicole Brown stated a copy of the complaint will already be going to the City Manager and asked if that would suffice. Anthony Morgan replied he does not believe the City Manager would be impartial.

Council Member Robb stated this is a personnel issue and if a complaint against an officer is received by an outside individual or body it could be construed as a violation of the officer's rights. Mr. Robb added this is something that should be discussed with the City Attorney but a personnel complaint about an employee being reviewed by a third party might make City employees uncomfortable. Mr. Morgan asked if a state agency could act as the review board. Mr. Robb asked if Mr. Morgan had a specific agency in mind. A member of the audience suggested a civilian board that would review individual complaints and City employees would have to accept that as a part of the process.

Gail Wolkoff asked that a complaint process be developed for a youth to complain about a police officer. Ms. Wolkoff also asked if it would make sense to have a specific committee designed to hear complaints. Ms. Wolkoff stated this body could be comprised of representation from City staff, police, a community youth, business person, and other community presence. Ms. Wolkoff stated this scenario would provide accountability for the entire board. Lee Tooson added in the past Ypsilanti had a Citizen Review Board and if formed again complaints could be sent to that body. Council Member Anne Brown interjected that a Citizen Review Board is an agenda item for this meeting. Mr. Tooson added that having a discussion on who should review a citizen complaint on an officer shows how much the community trusts the police.

Commissioner Shuler stated the majority of the audience has not been present at previous meetings. Mr. Shuler explained that a complaint process existed which has been reviewed and from that review the Task Force has developed recommended changes to that process. Mr. Shuler said the Task Force also is reviewing recommending the City form a Citizen Review Board. Mr. Shuler added it is the Task Force's intention to implement the modified complaint form and continue to work on these other items.

Council Member Anne Brown stated another aspect of the complaint process the Task Force is discussing is recommending that each complaint be assigned a case number in order for that

case to be tracked. Ms. Anne Brown added another aspect of the recommendation is that each complainant be given a response within seven days of submitting the complaint. Anthony Morgan asked how it was determined there was an issue with the complaint process. Ms. Anne Brown responded the public has shared that issue during previous Task Force meetings. Ms. Anne Brown added the form is being recommended to be shortened to two pages and include if any medical attention was required. An audience member suggested that complaint forms be available in courts and schools. Lee Tooson added in the past an individual could access complaint forms at a Church in Ypsilanti and that might be a possibility worth examining.

2. Hiring Practices

Council Member Anne Brown asked how police officers are identified for hire and if the Human Resources Department was involved or if it were handled internally at the Police Department. City Manager Lange responded the motto of the City is "Pride, Diversity, and Heritage" and that is the goal of the City when hiring employees. Mr. Lange said the Police Chief has informed him that minorities account for only 3% of candidates graduating from the Police Academy. Mr. Lange said the last Police Academy graduating class included no minority candidates. Mr. Lange stated the School Resource Officer is an African American Female with hopes to have a positive influence on students becoming interested in joining the Police Force. Mr. Lange said the demands of this Police Department are very high and in turn the standards for officers are very high. Mr. Lange stated several minority officers were hired and some did not make it through the probation, others quit, and some stayed. Mr. Lange said throughout his career he has always hired minority candidates and that practice will continue. Mr. Lange stated before he was employed with the City of Ypsilanti there was one female firefighter in 100 years and in his three years the City has hired another female firefighter.

Commissioner Shuler asked if the hiring of officers is completely contained in the Police Department or is Human Resources involved. Mr. Lange stated Human Resources distribute the ads for the position but primarily it is contained within the Police Department. Mr. Lange added the Chief is responsible to him and he acts as the civilian oversight. Anthony Morgan asked if it is a conflict of interest for Mr. Lange to act as the civilian oversight. Mr. Lange responded he does not feel that there is a conflict of interest. Mr. Lange stated the Fire Department goes through the Civil Service process and the first batch of applicants did not contain any minority candidates so the process was voided and the Department was told to begin again.

Council Member Nicole Brown asked if there was anything that should be added to the memo of requests to the Police Department.

Council Member Anne Brown asked what information was gathered regarding training. Commissioner Symanns responded she has guidelines set by the state for training and was unable to obtain specific trainings that Ypsilanti Police Department participates. Ms. Symanns added it was decided the Task Force would make recommendations for what trainings for the Police Department. Gail Wolkoff stated Dedicated to Make a Change has requested that the Police Department undergo training on how to interact with community youth. Council Member Nicole Brown responded that is going to be included in the recommendations for training. Nathan Phillips suggested that officers have training on how to interact with Native Americans and Veterans. Commissioner Shuler responded one of the suggested trainings is Cultural Diversity Training. Mr. Shuler said the recommendation will ask that all training be provided by an accredited source and added that an accredited source would include Native American sensitivity training. Council Member Nicole Brown stated the memo will include training recommendations and that they will be provided by accredited sources.

Council Member Anne Brown stated a report has been brought to the attention of the Task Force this evening that discusses that African Americans are disproportionately arrested on bench warrants. Jackie Miller, Radical Washtenaw (RAW), stated her organization has been researching arrest statistics and what was found was disturbing. Ms. Miller stated African American men and women account for 57% of all arrests for failure to appear bench warrants in Washtenaw County. Council Member Anne Brown asked if this data was produced from Michigan Incident Crime Reporting (MICR). Ms. Miller responded in the affirmative. Ms. Anne Brown asked how the data is being accessed. Ms. Miller responded the data is online and added in 2014 arrests for bench warrants were much higher than any other arrest in Ypsilanti. Ms. Miller stated in 2014 Ypsilanti had 1,417 arrests for bench warrants which accounts for 76% of the county total. Ms. Miller stated the amounts have more than doubled from 2008. Ms. Miller stated one City that she found similar to Ypsilanti in terms of bench warrant arrest statistics was Ferguson, Missouri. Ms. Miller stated there is no data on how many bench warrants are issued from district courts in Washtenaw County. Ms. Miller said there might be an issue with the court but there also might be an issue with the arrests themselves. Ms. Miller said it is very difficult to decipher which agency is responsible for these arrests. Ms. Miller said her organization FOIAed EMU who informed her that they were responsible for 188 of those arrests in 2014. Ms. Miller said it was found that the motivating factor behind bench warrant arrests in Ferguson, Missouri was financial. Ms. Miller asked for assistance from the City on greater understanding of what this data means.

Council Member Anne Brown stated Ms. Miller keeps referencing Ferguson and asked if Ms. Miller has ever been to Ferguson. Ms. Miller replied that she has not been to Ferguson. Ms. Anne Brown stated Ferguson, Missouri looks just like Ann Arbor in financial terms and is very different from Ypsilanti. Ms. Anne Brown said Ms. Miller raised some excellent questions and asked if Ms. Miller was asking that the City provide a written response to those questions. Ms. Miller responded this is a dialogue that the City would want to participate. Ms. Anne Brown asked if Radical Washtenaw would facilitate that dialogue. Ms. Miller responded she thinks that is the job of the Joint Task Force and Radical Washtenaw does not have the resources.

Commissioner Shuler asked if Radical Washtenaw was able to get information from the courts regarding bench warrants they have issued. Ms. Miller responded in the affirmative because bench warrants are attached to an underlining charge. Mr. Shuler asked if the courts were asked for statistics on how many individuals failed to appear to court. Ms. Miller replied no. Commissioner Symanns added the difficulty with the data is that bench warrants are not necessarily issued in Ypsilanti and those arrests are not necessarily Ypsilanti residents. Ms. Miller replied that would suggest the arrests were made by one of the policing agencies in Ypsilanti. Ms. Symanns responded in the affirmative and asked if the data provided for Ann Arbor included the university. Council Member Robb responded the University of Michigan has its own data as does Eastern Michigan University. Ms. Miller responded then the 188 arrests by EMU is in addition to the 1,417. Council Member Anne Brown stated the Washtenaw County Sherriff deputized all other agencies partnering in the Washtenaw Safety Alliance so arrests can be made in other jurisdictions. Ms. Miller responded that raises questions and said this data is voluntary so the data sets might actually be higher. Ms. Anne Brown asked what data is voluntary. Ms. Miller replied agencies are not required to report this data to the State.

A member of the audience stated Radical Washtenaw has provided a lot of good data and asked Ms. Miller to speculate why this disparity in arrests exists. Ms. Miller responded to answer that appropriately information would need to be gathered from people who have been arrested on bench warrants. The speaker asked if other jurisdictions were compared other than Ferguson, Missouri and if there are other motives beside financial. Ms. Miller responded New York City and the "Stop and Frisk" policy. Russell Davis asked if there is a way to interview the individuals

arrested on bench warrants. Ms. Miller responded she is hoping the City would help with that investigation.

Lee Tooson interjected there is no reason to ask why this is happening. Mr. Tooson said the system is designed to create revenue from African Americans and poor whites. Mr. Tooson stated in 1983 there was a large quantity of African Americans and Latinos working at the Saline Ford Plant. Mr. Tooson explained when returning from work the only individuals that were pulled over in Pittsfield Township were either African American or Latino. Mr. Tooson added in order to rectify the situation he contacted a judge to discuss the disparity and that should be the course of action taken. Mr. Tooson said a police officer will stop African Americans on the Southside of Ypsilanti without cause in hopes to catch an individual with a warrant. Mr. Tooson expressed great concern with crooked police officers in communities.

Anthony Morgan thanked Jackie Miller and Radical Washtenaw for the report that was provided. Mr. Morgan asked the Task Force to take that information a step further and find answers to the questions posed by Radical Washtenaw. Mr. Morgan added that data does not need to be exact in order for a story to be told. Council Member Nicole Brown responded it is the first time seeing this information and from here the Task Force will be able to examine and until that examination is complete she will not comment on the report. Ms. Miller asked if this report has been brought to the attention of this Council. Ms. Nicole Brown responded she only speaks for herself and this is her first time reading the report. Council Member Anne Brown asked if this report has been shared with anyone else. Ms. Miller responded this draft was finished today and has not been shared with any other party.

3. Discussion and decision on next steps/framework agenda.

Council Member Nicole Brown asked Council Member Robb to distribute the memo to the remainder of the Task Force in order to make edits for approval at the February meeting. Commissioner Shuler asked, once approved by this Task Force, will the memo be sent to the Human Relations Commission for approval. Council Member Robb replied the process is to send items approved by the Task Force to the HRC and then to Council.

A member of the audience stated the Task Force was just presented some astonishing data and asked what the process is to respond to this information. Commissioner Shuler stated the Task Force will need to take the presented information and digest it individually before responding.

Gail Wolkoff asked when the meetings for this Task Force will be held and asked if there is a way this meeting could be setup in a fashion that allows more dialogue. Council Member Nicole Brown responded aside from this Task Force, there is a plan to host an event that would be formatted as a larger group conversation. Ms. Nicole Brown added the format of this meeting is more task oriented in order to provide recommendations to the HRC. Commissioner Shuler said this Task Force will meet the second Monday of every month until the task is complete.

Council Member Anne Brown stated this Task Force has been meeting for months and it was exciting to hear so much public engagement.

Lee Tooson suggested the hiring process of police officer should include citizens to assist in the decision of applicants.

IX. ADJOURNMENT –

Commissioner Symanns moved, seconded by Council Member Anne Brown to adjourn the meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.