**City of Vancouver Police Community Advisory Committee**

**Meeting 1 – March 14, 2024**

Bridgeview Resource Center

**Facilitator –** Christine Moses, PhD, EnviroIssues

**Presenters**

* William Cooley, community engagement manager, City of Vancouver
* Assistant Chief Erica Nilsen, Vancouver Police Department

**PCAC Members**

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| **X** | **Martha Baumgarten** | **X** | **Jean-Pierre “JP” Parent** |
| **X** | **Paul Burgess** | **X** | **Cindy Reed** |
| **X** | **Gabriela Ewing** | **X** | **Dominick Rose** |
| **X** | **Mark Frazier** |  | **Kia Simeon** |
| **X** | **Lester Griffin** | **X** | **Destiny Trevino** |
| **X** | **Josie Hyde** | **X** | **Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle** |
| **X** | **James “Jim” Kirkendall** | **X** | **Councilor Sarah Fox** |
| **X** | **Sidney Morgan** | **X** | **Councilor Erik Paulsen** |

 **Agenda**

**Warm Welcome & Introductions**

Eric Holmes, City Manager, explained that addressing community safety is one of the most complex services that the City Manager’s office provides, which includes supporting the Vancouver Police Department (VPD). Three officers were present during the meeting:

* Chief Jeff Mori
* Deputy Chief Troy Price
* Assistant Chief Erica Nilsen

Three city elected officials are a part of the committee, each of whom supported the Police Executive Research Forum work in early 2020:

* Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Mayor
* Sarah Fox, City Councilor
* Erik Paulsen, City Councilor

Community advisory committee members introduced themselves, providing insight into what inspired them to join the committee:

* **Mark Frazier** is a retired Multnomah County Sherriff’s Deputy and recently became the Criminal Justice Chair for the Vancouver Chapter of the NAACP. He wants to bring the community and police together to fill gaps and noted that trust must come from all sides – police, streets, and NAACP.
* **Josie Hyde** was born and raised in Vancouver and feels like it’s a special city. Over the last 8 years, she’s noticed and experienced concerning things happening in the city (drive by bullets, vandalism, etc.). She feels that participating in the PCAC is important to help Vancouver be safe and special for everyone.
* **Cindy Reed** is a part of the PCAC because she believes as a mom, business owner, and survivor, she has unique insights and perspectives into community safety in Vancouver. She’s also eager to learn about VPD challenges when it comes to providing services and what community gaps exist that she’s not aware of so she can help play a part.
* **Martha Baumgarten’s** previous experience in the business data sector makes her familiar with coming up with viable solutions that address complex issues. She’s been impressed with VPD’s approach and is grateful for their empathy and the way they handle themselves. She’s also had an opportunity to see how they’re challenged. She wants to give back to Vancouver by being a part of the PCAC.
* **Destiny** **Trevino** recently moved to Vancouver 1.5 years ago from Indiana. She works for the Evergreen School District. She joined the PCAC because she wants to make sure the community is safe for children to thrive and succeed. With a degree in criminal justice with a focus on law enforcement, she felt PCAC would be a meaningful way for her to be involved.
* **Gabriela Ewing** is originally from Mexico but has lived in the US for more than half her life (living in Vancouver for 20 years). She serves/has served on several commissions, advisory groups, etc. with a focus on supporting children with developmental disabilities and their families. She is currently the Executive Director of Pasitos Gigantes, which supports Hispanic families with children with disabilities. As someone who works with undocumented families, she knows the unique challenges families face when it comes to trust in police but still needing access to services. She has two children and is also a survivor of two violent crimes. One of the advisory bodies she sat on previously was for the VPD body camera recommendation pre-COVID.
* **Lester Griffin** has lived in Vancouver for 30 years. He’s a local general contractor and currently a part of an organization that does youth outreach and re-entry for individuals coming home from incarceration. He wants to explore ways to bridge the gap between the community and their perceptions of/experiences with police and the VPD.
* **Jim Kirkendall** grew up in Portland and moved to Vancouver 18 years ago. He served in the military for many years and retired as battalion chief of Portland Fire a few years ago. He joined the PCAC because he missed the public safety aspect of his work in Portland.
* **JP Parent** owns a business in Portland and opened a location in Vancouver recently. He decided to move to Vancouver 1.5 years ago. He cares about the next generation and wanted to see if he could contribute to the PCAC from his perspective to ensure that Vancouver will stay wonderful for as long as possible. Emmett, JP’s child, was present and mentioned that they go to a local magnet STEM school.
* **Paul Burgess** moved from the UK to Vancouver in 2018 to be with his wife. He worked in prison systems in the UK as an operations manager in safety, anti-violence, etc. and also has experience working in nonprofits in the Global South. He is the Executive Director at Fourth Plain Forward, whose aim is to address barriers for over 20,000 residents in central Vancouver. He joined PCAC because he wants to bring equity to the conversation and ensure that communities of color are centered.
* **Dominick Rose** is a 19 year-old student at Washington State University Vancouver. He joined the PCAC to bring a youth voice to community safety conversations.
* **Sidney Morgan** has lived in Vancouver for 15 years. She’s a career facilitator with a focus on conflict, mediation, as well as transformative and restorative justice. Her mission is about bringing relationships from the margins to the center. She has kids who grew up in Vancouver and wants it to be a great place for them. She’s eager to learn and collaborate to address the challenges ahead.
* **Main takeaways**
	+ There’s a wide breadth of lived experience in Vancouver among committee members – ranging from new residents that have lived in Vancouver for a few months to those who have lived here for over 40 years.
	+ People have a shared desire to see Vancouver thrive, with people explaining that this means **everyone** (including communities of color, children, undocumented immigrants, people with disabilities, etc.)
	+ PCAC members value collaboration and want to build bridges between the community and VPD officers

**Centering Activity**

Christine M. led a breathing activity to ground attendees into the space.

**Partner Activity**

Question prompt:

Describe a time that you helped someone in our community, or they helped you. What happened as a result?

**Committee Structure and Purpose**

William C. presented on the committee’s purpose, timeline and proposed meeting dates.

* The purpose of the PCAC is to build on departments’ recent efforts to improve police services by helping the City identify gaps in service.
* The PCAC will eventually be making a funding recommendation, which would mean an increase in taxes. From a timing perspective, the Council has expressed a sense of urgency to address known gaps. The main tools we have to raise revenue require voter approval. The next voting opportunities are November 2024, February 2025, and May 2025. The City aims to get a funding levy on the ballot by this November, so the goal is to have the PCAC deliver a recommendation to Council by end of June/early July, in order to confirm it’s on the November ballot (deadline is August 6).
* The City recognizes the importance of ensuring that the process of developing a final recommendation is community-informed and co-created.
* About midway through the meeting schedule, Holmes will update the Council on whether a final recommendation is feasible by the proposed deadline of June/early July.
* Hybrid meeting formats are being explored for future meetings. One committeeperson, Gabriela, would prefer a hybrid/remote option due to a work conflict on May 9.
* Context given by City staff: In 2020, the Police Executive Research Forum developed a list of 84 recommendations to help improve VPD culture, policies, and practices around use of force. Since then, the VPD has been adopting these recommendations, with leadership feeling that the implementation of these recommendations has set them farther ahead compared to other law enforcement agencies in the state.

**Establish Group Agreements**

The committee members agreed to the following group agreements

* **Speak from your own experience.** “I” statements not “you,” “we,” or “they.”
* **Listen to understand, don’t listen to respond**
* **Be curious.** Seek to understand something that you don’t. Helps mitigate making judgments of others.
* **Recognize that we all carry wisdom.** Lean in with curiosity about other people’s perspectives and carry those lessons to make a robust recommendation.
* **Create space for others to share.**
* **VPD will remain an open book** to questions in email. VPD will keep Eric Holmes aware of what’s being asked/shared (Holmes will do the same).
* **Trust each other.** Keep the story here, take the learning with you. Allows people to be vulnerable. If people divulge individual stories, keep it in the space.
* **Be open minded to others’ suggestions and lived experiences.**
* **Lead with grace and forgiveness.** We can say the wrong and it’s okay because we’re in a safer container/braver space.
* **Voice what your needs are.** This is complex and overwhelming work. If anyone in the group needs additional information, the staff will seek to provide it.
* **Make space in these meetings to navigate tragedy if/when it occurs.** We’re living in a dynamic time in society that may necessitate taking time to reflect and process.

Christine discusses the facilitation process.

* During discussions, Christine will center disadvantaged groups first. This is called a weighted stack. This helps ensure that historically minoritized voices are heard in the room.

**Getting to Know Our Community** (William C.)

William spoke briefly on the demographics of Vancouver. This will be revisited during the next meeting.

**Getting to Know Our Police Department** (Asst. Chief Nilsen)

Assistant Chief Nilsen provided a brief overview of the VPD, its mission, structure, and departmental divisions. Questions will be answered at the next meeting.

**Known Gaps and Needs** (Asst. Chief Nilsen)

AC Nilsen discussed key gaps and needs that the department has identified, describing how gaps impact community safety and policing services.

* When VPD needs support, they can call Clark County, Washougal, Camas, and Battleground (all will help if called upon, but these are small departments with limited resources. Portland Police will not come.
* Washington State laws are making responding to calls more complex. The number of officers responding to each individual call have gone up from 2-3 officers to 5-6 officers. Part of that has been to better respond to mental health crises. This is a good thing and has made a positive impact on outcomes of mental health crises calls. It also depletes resources.
* When half or more of VPD officers on the ground need to attend to one call, it affects how quickly they can respond to other 911 calls.
* Officers do this job to help people. They love being able to connect with the community. Because of the call load they have, their ability to do this work proactively has decreased significantly.
* The VPD knows that traffic safety has been an issue. VPD has 3 traffic officers in the city. All officers can do traffic stops, but most officers must respond to 911 calls as they come in.
* VPD wants to have the ability to be able to follow-up on investigations. Because of limited resources, they prioritize investigations based on the type of crime that’s occurred.
	+ There are 31 cases per year that have follow-up opportunities but don’t have investigators to do that follow-up. So, some of the cases fall by the wayside since VPD doesn’t have the staff to address them.
* Part of the point of this group is to get feedback on what the community wants that is currently a gap that may not be noticed by VPD.

**Discussion/Action Items**

* Provide opportunities for PCAC members to ask questions about the demographics in Vancouver covered in the meeting materials and “Getting to know our community” presentation by William Cooley.
* Provide opportunities for PCAC members to ask questions about topics covered in the “Getting to know our police department” and “Known gaps and needs” presentations by AC Erica Nilsen.
* Have PCAC members share what, if anything, surprised them about what they heard during the first meeting.
* VPD to bring ride along schedules to the next meeting in case PCAC members are interested.