

LOUISVILLE METRO HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

ADVOCACY BOARD MEETING

OFFICIAL CALL AND AGENDA

Monday, September 9, 2020

9:00 A.M.

- **ROLL CALL**
- **MINUTES**
 - ◇ **August 2020**
- **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
- **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
- **CJ ARTICLE: 09/06/2020 GERTH:**
 - **LOUISVILLE PROTEST - LMPD RESPONSE AT KENTUCKY DERBY**
- **OLD BUSINESS**
- **NEW BUSINESS**
- **ADJOURNMENT**

MISSION

of the Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission is to promote unity, understanding and equal opportunity among all people of Metro Louisville and to eliminate all forms of bigotry, bias and hatred from the community.

LOUISVILLE METRO HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

ADVOCACY MEETING MINUTES

August 3, 2020

The Advocacy Board meeting of the Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission was held Monday, August 3, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. at the Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission's WebEx Tele-video.

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Chair Reginald Glass called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: 6 – Commissioners David Allgood, Victor Eddie, Reginald Glass, Gad Niyiragira Heather Williams, and Dawn Wilson.

ABSENT: 3 – Commissioners, Angelica Matos (*excused*), Gwendolyn Pearce (*excused*), and Dr. Arthur Patterson.

MINUTES

Commissioner David Allgood moved to accept the June minutes as presented, Commissioner Gad Niyiragira seconded. Motion passed with none opposed or abstained.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Verná Goatley

- EEOC Cases – Currently, we are finishing up our cases for the EEOC fiscal year ends September 30, 2020.
- Anti-blackness and Evictions Virtual Forum – We have scheduled the virtual forum for Wednesday, August 19th at 6:00p.m. Verná communicated that the information and link will be sent out for the forum this week.

BOARD MEMBER RESIGNATION

Commissioner Olivia Kleitz submitted her resignation July 23, 2020, due to her recent move to Indiana.

CHIEF EQUITY OFFICER – Kendall Boyd

UPDATE: BOARD'S SUGGESTIONS TO THE MAYOR

1. An ongoing vehicle for black and white police officers to air out their concerns between each other – This will be part of the “*Top Down Review*” that will start in the next month or two. Selected a group who will look at all facets and policies of LMPD. Part of the RFP for the “*Top Down Review*” involved the infinity groups within the police department and giving them a platform to communicate to leadership and with each other about the issues that see inside the department and what is going on in the community.
2. Open communication with community organizations that cater to marginalized populations (i.e., immigrant, homeless, low income, etc.) – I have had several conversations with the Mayor in addition to other Chiefs about leadership in relation to ineffective communication. The Communication's team does have a list of community organizations and community organizers that do regular work within the community. Kendall noted that he liked the idea of neighborhood liaisons that we previously had and think it is a good idea for the Human Relations Commission to try and bridge the gap once the Education and Outreach Coordinator is hired. This is something that we can bring to LLT and make that recommendation with respect to communication.

CHIEF EQUITY OFFICER – *Kendall Boyd*

UPDATE: BOARD’S SUGGESTIONS TO THE MAYOR *continuation*

3. Reassignment of tasks to other organizations that should not be handled by the police – This will be part of the “*Top Down Review*” that was talked about under Item #1. This is also a budget issue with part of the work that we are with doing declaring racism as a public health crisis. It will be equity budgeting and reallocation of the budget that will go to address many of these concerns. The review is slated to be completed sometime December 2020 or January 2021.
4. Reorganize the Budget – Redistribution of funds, give more funding to other organizations. Take things that are more social work type issues away from the police – Kendall noted that in conjunction with #3 and #4 will require specific redistribution of funding from the police department or the Center for Health and Equity or the Center for Public Health.
5. Citizens panel and community forums for interviewing and choosing the next chief of police – The community forums have been taking place and there have been a lot of buy-in from the community on the selection of the next chief of police. At this time, I am not sure which next steps is going to come up because the window of getting citizen input closed late last week. Also, not sure if Chief Amy Hess will provide another opportunity for the community to have engagement with the hiring of the next chief of police.

Commissioner Wilson suggested having an open forum once candidate(s) have been chosen so that people can see and have an open dialogue.

Kendall communicated that once candidates have been selected, they will have regular community conversations with the candidates.

6. Declare racism a public health crisis across the board and that a public service declares Louisville an anti-racist city. Stop harassment of protesters. Listen to demands for “Justice for Breonna” and Jefferson Park renamed Breonna Taylor Justice Park – Kendall noted that he gave a presentation to Metro Council Health and Safety Committee on a possible resolution for an Executive Order that will do that. He recommended that in addition to declaring Louisville an Anti-Racist city, actually put some resources and funding behind anti-racism activities and towards public health that addresses the racial disparities that racism as a public health crisis creates. It will be part of the budget cycle while Mayor Fischer is in office.
7. Re-establish a monthly version of Mayor’s Night Out, renamed Metro Day Out – Kendall communicated that he will take it to the Mayor again and see what he is thinking in relation to engaging with the community.

Chair Glass communicated that this was added as a long-term kind of thing after COVID. Also, asking for a re-design of it where department heads would spend a day in a council district where citizens have access and then the Mayor can come later in the day and be available to talk to people. It would put people with authority in direct contact with the citizens on a regular basis.

8. Individual points with other police points

Chair Glass noted as it relates to other police issues is in relation to police recruitment. There was video clip/article on the Courier Journal’s (CJ) webpage. He noted the link he shared with the Board was subscribers only, most were not able to view the LMPD recruitment video and article. The video is basically a “Rambo” type recruitment piece. The video does not talk about community service or community policing. It is a very high-energy swat team stuff that appears to appeal to those who are interested in military type policing. He encourages the Board when they have an opportunity to view the video.

8. Individual points with other police points – continuation

- a) *When beat officers are not on runs, they should spend time getting to know residents, business owners, ministers and other community leaders on their beat. They should not be strangers riding through their beat community.*

– Kendall communicated that this has been discussed in the Synergy meetings. They are going to start the meetings again in the next month or so which will be virtual. Part of the Synergy work is community conversations between officers and the community, and these were one of the recommendations we have seen at prior Synergy events. We are incorporating this into in LMPD’s Strategic Plan. The recommendation has been made and do foresee it becoming a practice in the near future.

- b) *New contract with the F.O.P. – The new contract should not include terms of disciplinary process. It should only contain salary, benefits, health and safety and retirement benefits. Matters of discipline should be a matter of LMPD policy that ties into Metro’s policy. In the private sector, employees do not get to determine disciplinary policies, hiring or firing. Those things are a matter of company policy and local, state and federal laws.*

– Kendall noted that they are in middle of a contract re-negotiation and that there is work towards it and getting it changed.

WEEKEND EVENTS

Chair Reginald Glass noted that this weekend some demonstrations in NuLu caused a counter demonstration yesterday among the Cuban community. This brings up an issue we need to address in terms of educating our activists on who is what, more specifically in this situation on who is black. We need to be aware of who is who in this discussion of Black Lives Matter. There is some discord in the community now as a result of the misunderstanding.

Kendall Boyd commented that a large part deals with the utilization of local African American business owners and talents which has been a strong sticking point for a lot of people in Louisville in our African American community.

Chair Glass suggested starting some conversations around “our common roots” so that we do not get crossed in the future like this again. He commented that we need to brain storm and come up with solutions in how we can make that happen and get the Cross Cultural Connections Committee moving in the direction we need to bring people together for conversations and understanding.

Commissioner Dawn Wilson noted that the Board has attempt to do Cross Cultural events over the years at WorldFest and Americana.

Kendall noted that he would like to this conversation in one of his Lean into Louisville events around “*Colorism in non-American Countries: How Racism in America has Taught Other Countries the Darker Their Skin, the Bigger the Sin*”.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – Commissioner Dawn Wilson reported:

- *JCPS/ Education Committee Quarterly Meeting* – Questions for the upcoming Quarterly meeting were set out. Commissioner Wilson asked for the Board to review and respond with additions and/or deletions to the questions.

DISABILITY COMMITTEE – Commissioner David Allgood reported:

Will report at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioners Dawn Wilson moved to adjourn; Commissioner David Allgood seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10:20a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diniah Calhoun
Administrative Assistant

GERTH | Opinion *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

Gerth: LMPD showed at Kentucky Derby it is tone deaf when policing peaceful Black people

Joseph Gerth Louisville Courier Journal

Published 3:38 p.m. ET Sep. 6, 2020

Whatever is on the other side of all these protests, whenever they end, the one thing that will need to happen will be an effort to rebuild trust between the police and the community.

Police cannot protect a community with which it's at war. And there is a sizable portion of the community — Black and white — that sees the Louisville Metro Police Department as the enemy.

The police department didn't help itself on Derby Day.

In fact, it reinforced the image that so many in the African American community and its supporters have of police — that the police department is here to protect white people and enforce rules against Black people.

It's an age-old complaint of African Americans who see such a higher percentage of their young men arrested and hauled off to prison, often for offenses like drugs that don't land nearly the same percentage of white people in jail even though studies show white and Black people use illegal drugs at roughly the same rate.

Derby Day was a two-act play that drove home that point.

Read more: Protesters fill streets outside Kentucky Derby, calling for justice for Breonna Taylor

When a group of white people wearing camouflage, flak jackets and carrying assault weapons marched to downtown's Jefferson Square to confront Black Lives Matter protesters, there wasn't a police officer to be found.

There were some tense arguments. Some pushing and shoving.

And it wasn't clear what would erupt next.

But the police laid back, saying most of their resources were deployed protecting Churchill Downs, where they expected large protests to occur later in the day.

I call horse manure, on that.

Police knew the group, led by a fella named Dylan Stevens, who calls himself "the Angry Viking," was meeting at Cox Park and planned to head downtown at some point. Had they been following on social media, they would have known when the group left the park, regrouped at Waterfront Park, and when they started their march to Jefferson Square Park where the BLM protesters gather each day.

Had they been following The Courier Journal's Matt Glowicki on Twitter, they would have had 82 minutes notice to move officers into place to stop the two sides from confronting each other — which we know can be deadly from similar clashes in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and Portland, Oregon.

Instead, they allowed the heavily armed Trump supporters to advance on the park and then only moved officers in after most of the Trump-supporting militia members had retreated and the ones who remained were outnumbered by BLM protesters.

According to a statement from Louisville Metro Police, officers didn't intervene at first because "Due to the size of the crowd, we determined it was not safe to go in."

So, they let a situation they knew about in advance get out of hand and then refused to intervene to defuse it? Are you kidding me?

The second act played out four miles away outside Churchill Downs, which was surrounded by temporary fencing, police and Kentucky National Guardsmen, and roads in and out were blocked by dump trucks and other big vehicles.

When the group Until Freedom arrived at the fence, it was greeted by officers and guardsmen.

'Like sitting ducks': Where were Louisville police as 2 groups of protesters collided?

The group has conducted several non-violent protests in Louisville in recent weeks. Before the group left Louisville's South Central Park to march to the racetrack, one of the organizers urged those attending to step in and stop anyone who might get "out of control."

It was a mix of white and Black protesters — but predominately Black — demanding justice for Breonna Taylor, the African American woman who was shot and killed by Louisville police officers in her apartment March 13.

As Until Freedom marched around the track, a large contingent of officers and guardsmen — some of them in Humvees and police vehicles — mirrored their movements, but from inside the fences.

When Until Freedom arrived on Central Avenue, near Churchill's main gate, just before the Derby was to run, they stood behind a fence that was more than five feet tall.

Dozens of police in riot gear and carrying long sticks in case they needed to bash heads moved into position and formed an intimidating line along Central Avenue between the peaceful protesters and the track.

It looked like they were preparing for war.

And it wasn't necessary.

There could have been a handful of cops in their regular uniforms stationed along Central. There could have been more officers high up in Churchill watching the crowd through binoculars.

And there could have been more officers held in reserve just a few football fields away in case the peaceful protesters turned and tried to breach the fence.

But police allowed the white, Trump-loving, heavily armed militia to march freely through the streets and force a confrontation with BLM protesters, but sent out the shock troops wearing military gear when peaceful protesters arrived at the track.

And that's only part of why African Americans in Louisville don't trust police.

But we're not going to be able to solve the more substantive problems involving race and policing as long as police are so tone deaf when it comes to how their actions are perceived.

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