



Cambridge Peace Commission

A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Minutes of the Peace Commission Meeting • March 20, 2019

Commission Members Present: Co-Chair Elka Kuhlman, Georges Atallah, Aboma Dirbaba, Kaza Fraley, David Seeman

City Staff Present: Executive Director Brian Corr; Deputy Superintendent Robert Lowe, Cambridge Police Dept.

Call to Order

Co-chair Kuhlman called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m. Dylan Hearn, a student at Emerson College, stated that he was recording the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Fraley moved to approve the February minutes, seconded by Commission Member Atallah, and approved unanimous vote.

Executive Director's Report

Commemoration of the Holocaust

The commemoration is scheduled for Thursday, May 2nd with speaker Frieda Grayzel, a Cambridge resident and a survivor of Auschwitz. Planning for this observance is underway.

Vigil for the Victims of the New Zealand shootings

The vigil went well. The Commission discussed their experience watching the Maori ritual of mourning at the vigil. There was much discussion about the need for this event and the impact this shooting had on people in the Cambridge community.

Presentation: Cambridge Police Dept. Family and Social Justice Unit – Deputy Superintendent Rob Lowe

Deputy Supt. Lowe stated there are almost 300 officers that serve the city of Cambridge. There are three branches: Leadership, which focuses on policy and planning; Operations, which includes all uniformed officers; and Support Services, which is dedicated to follow-up contacts and detectives. Deputy Supt. Lowe works in the Support Services branch and oversees the Family and Social Justice Unit, which provides services to the city's most at-risk persons.

Deputy Supt. Lowe highlighted the Safety Net Collaborative, which is founded on a social justice approach. CPD tracks individuals over the long term to connect them with the services they need to succeed. The model wraps services around kids participating in

risky behavior. CPD interacts with kids as young as nine years old, connecting families to programs that will help them. Over the past 10 years, CPD has been able to reduce juvenile arrests by 70%.

Deputy Supt. Lowe also described the work of the Family Justice Unit which provides individuals with services that they may need. Deputy Supt. Lowe explained how CPD works with the homeless population. The District Court is in Medford and most homeless individuals cannot travel there because it's too far, thus they would end up arrested for not showing up. The court that serves the homeless moved its sessions back to Cambridge to a location on Church St. in Harvard Square. CPD also helps homeless persons connect to services and keep them out of the criminal justice system.

Deputy Supt. Lowe explained that violent crime is down, at an all-time low for 60 years.

Update from February Brainstorming Session

Commission Member Kuhlman passed out a handout with items discussed last month. ED Corr helped discern between items that he could do and those that the members could do, and explained which items were "more complicated" than that. The Commission will follow up at the next meeting.

Unfinished and New Business

Commission Member Fraley suggested that the Commission determine which three events are important to attend and conduct outreach. This will help form an outreach strategy for MLK Day, the Holocaust Commemoration, and Meet Your Neighbor Day, such as email promotion, distributing flyers and posters, etc. ED Corr stated the Commission can follow up on this at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Commission Member Seeman moved that the Commission adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Atallah and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

The next meeting of the Peace Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 17, 2019, at 51 Inman St. in the Second Floor Conference Room.