

Seattle
Community
Police Commission

Our city. Our safety.
Our police. Better together.

August 21, 2017

VIA EMAIL

Dear Mr. Fayer,

We write in response to the July 27 letter to Mayor Ed Murray, Seattle Police Department (SPD) Chief Kathleen O'Toole, and Office of Professional Accountability (OPA) Interim Director Andrew Myerberg by the "Seattle Stands with our Muslim Neighbors" Coalition (Coalition) detailing police conduct in response to a confrontation between members of the Coalition and the anti-Muslim group ACT for America during two competing rallies on June 10, 2017. The Coalition's view that police behavior at the rallies jeopardized the safety and security of Coalition marchers and ended in the arrest of three Coalition participants concerns the CPC and highlights the vital need for an on-going conversation between community members and city leaders on SPD policies and practices. We thank members of the Coalition for their willingness to engage in this critical discussion.

In support of the Coalition's request for an investigation into the incidents that took place on June 10, the CPC submitted a letter to OPA Interim Director Andrew Myerberg on August 15, 2017 requesting that the OPA prioritize the investigation of police conduct at the rally so that the OPA completes its investigation while these issues are still in public discussion. In the letter, we expressed the urgent need for the OPA to conduct a prompt investigation of these matters given the significant concerns articulated by community members including members of the Coalition.

We fully support the Coalition's call for a meeting with Mayor Murray, Chief O'Toole, and Interim Director Myerberg to discuss ways to work together to prevent similar dynamics in future demonstrations and counter demonstrations. We recognize that per policy, SPD is not permitted to publicly comment on a subject matter of a pending OPA investigation. However, we believe SPD should participate in a constructive listening session with Coalition members, and can do so without having to comment on matters related to an open OPA investigation.

Furthermore, we specifically suggest that moving forward and whenever possible, SPD solicit input from organizations or individuals who were involved in major incidents and have a view of events that may be separate and distinct from the views of SPD officers who were involved. Taking this different pool of information and perceptions into consideration in SPD's after-action assessment process may

enable SPD to prevent unintentional consequences of making certain decisions that are justifiable operationally and may be seem harmless, but nonetheless damage community trust in the department.

In light of the events on June 10, as well as the more recent rally and counter rally that occurred on August 13 in Seattle, we believe there is an urgent need for City leaders to meet and discuss these issues with community members. We appreciate Chief O'Toole's letter to the Coalition from August 8 which welcomed the opportunity to engage Coalition members. We also appreciate that OPA Interim Director Myerberg has expressed his willingness to meet with coalition members to discuss their concerns and OPA's process. As representatives of Seattle's broad range of communities and perspectives, the CPC strongly believes that city leaders can only benefit from sitting down with community members and listening in earnest to their accounts of interactions with SPD. In fact, it is imperative that city leaders engage in collaborative conversations with community members to inform future improvements to SPD and how officers interact with the communities they serve. To that end, we urge Mayor Murray, Chief O'Toole, and Interim Director Myerberg to meet with Coalition members and engage in this very important conversation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Rev. Harriett Walden, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission



Enrique Gonzalez, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission



Isaac Ruiz, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission

Cc: Mayor Ed Murray, City of Seattle
Chief Kathleen O'Toole, Seattle Police Department
Interim Director Andrew Myerberg, Office of Professional Accountability
Council President Bruce Harrell, District 2
Councilmember Lisa Herbold, District 1
Councilmember Kshama Sawant, District 3
Councilmember Rob Johnson, District 4
Councilmember Debora Juarez, District 5
Councilmember Mike O'Brien, District 6
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw, District 7
Councilmember Tim Burgess, District 8
Councilmember Lorena González, District 9
President Michael Edwards, Seattle Police Management Association
President Kevin Stuckey, Seattle Police Officers' Guild
Seattle Community Police Commission