

MINUTES

Community Police Commission (CPC)

September 6, 2017, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Seattle City Hall, Room 370

CPC Attendees: Enrique Gonzalez (co-chair), Isaac Ruiz (co-chair), Rev. Harriett Walden (co-chair), Emma Catague, Lisa Daugaard, Colleen Echohawk, Cpt. Joe Kessler, Rev. Aaron Williams

CPC Absent: Claudia D'Allegri, Melinda Giovengo, Jay Hollingsworth, Kevin Stuckey

CPC Staff: Fé Lopez, Minty LongEarth, Tracy Whitlatch, Betsy Graef, Karen Chung

CPC Staff Absent: Anne Bettsworth

Review Agenda and Approve Minutes / Announcements

Moved, seconded, and passed (4-0-3): “To approve the 09-06-2017 agenda as amended and to approve the minutes from 08-16-2017.”

Delegation of Authority Discussion

The CPC discussed the need for the commission to formally delegate authority to the commission's co-chairs to conduct commission-related work and business in between CPC meetings. The need for delegation of authority surfaced during the previous week when co-chairs felt the need to respond to the Whitlatch settlement in a timely manner, rather than waiting for a full commission vote at the next commission meeting. Delegating authority to CPC co-chairs would not change how the commission currently operates, but would formalize how the commission currently operates.

Moved, seconded, and passed (8-0-0): “To approve delegation of authority to the CPC co-chairs between regular Commission meetings to effectuate the existing duties and responsibilities of the Commission as determined by the commission or applicable ordinance(s) and/or the settlement agreement with the United States Department of Justice, and to advance and implement the Commission's past decisions and actions, either themselves or by directing or assigning staff or other commissioners to do that work within a specific scope and on specific topics. This delegation can be in a general category and need not be expressly reiterated for every step or action to be taken.”

Transition Team Update

After completing the lottery, the CPC identified an error in the police accountability ordinance language as passed. The ordinance did not assign position numbers and term dates for the 6 seats that were added to the CPC. CPC staff are working with the City Attorney's Office to rectify the error as swiftly as possible. The CPC's attorney is currently reviewing language suggested by the CPC.

“Seattle Stands with our Muslim Neighbors” Rally and March Open Letter to the Mayor, Chief, and OPA Director Update

The “Seattle Stands with our Muslim Neighbors” Coalition received the CPC’s response to its letter and has requested a strategic planning meeting with the commission. Some commissioners and staff will meet with Coalition leaders on September 7. The Coalition also plans to meet with the Seattle Police Department Chief and representatives from the Mayor’s Office over the next few weeks to talk through issues and concerns.

Discussion: Cynthia Whitlatch, SPD’s Interactions with Native Communities, and Impacts of DACA Repeal

City’s Settlement with Cynthia Whitlatch Update and CPC Request for Information

On August 30, it was reported that former police officer Cynthia Whitlatch, who was fired in 2015 for biased and overly aggressive policing over the 2014 arrest of an elderly African-American man named William Wingate, reached a settlement agreement with the City and would receive backpay and have her status changed from “terminated” to “retired in lieu of termination” so she can receive her full pension.

Per the CPC’s authority to request information on closed cases to review them to identify areas for systemic reform, the commission requested all of the files related to this case so it can review and understand why there was a settlement agreement and identify gaps in the system, in policy and with personnel, that led to this outcome. The CPC also requested a meeting with the SPD Chief or her designees, as well as the City Attorney’s Office to discuss the settlement agreement, and decided to request that Chief O’Toole and City Attorney Pete Holmes meet with the CPC at a future CPC meeting to have an open conversation about the community’s concerns regarding this case.

Action Item – Request that Chief O’Toole and City Attorney Pete Holmes attend a future CPC meeting to discuss the Cynthia Whitlatch settlement agreement.

SPD’s Interactions with Native Communities

Commissioner Colleen EchoHawk received an email from Leonard Forsman, chairman of the Suquamish Nation regarding the recent arrest of Eagleson Williams. The letter brought forth the need to discuss how SPD officers interact with people from Native communities, and how the commission can encourage officers to utilize better de-escalation skills and recognize the trauma experienced by Native communities as we are right now on their territory and we have an obligation to uphold justice for them. Commissioners revisited previous conversations that SPD had with Native communities in 2010 and 2011, following the death of John T. Williams, when SPD met with close to 500 Native contingencies. SPD developed an action plan based on these conversations, yet SPD did not implement the action plan, which addressed many community concerns including training for officers and a plan for SPD developing relationships with Native communities.

Commissioner Echohawk will take the lead in responding to Chairman Forsman and strategizing next steps with SPD and Native communities on engagement, policy, and training.

Action Item – Respond to Chairman Forsman’s letter and follow up with SPD and Native communities on engagement, policy, and training around SPD interactions with Native communities.

Impacts of DACA Repeal

The commission discussed the impacts of the DACA repeal on individuals and communities in and outside of Seattle as well as the public safety implications of the repeal. The commission committed to looking into SPD policy on immigrants and refugee that are up for revision. The CPC committed to continuously following up on this issue over the coming weeks and months.

DOJ/Monitor Update

Monitor Update – The Monitor’s compliance report is due to be filed on September 8. The Monitor received one response from the City Attorney’s Office on the draft report. The City has requested a briefing schedule.

The CPC decided to formally request a chance to review the compliance report before it is filed.

DOJ – DOJ representatives did not have an update.

Action Item – Request a draft of the monitor’s compliance report for review and comment.

Upcoming Events

Commissioners discussed whether to and who would be available to attend several galas and foundation events this fall.

- Real Change Annual Breakfast on Sept 19
- El Centro de la Raza Annual Gala on September 30
- Chief Seattle Club Luncheon on October 5
- Asian Counseling and Referral Service: A Culinary Journey on October 7
- Atlantic Street Center 107th Anniversary Dinner and Auction on October 14
- Seattle Police Foundation Annual Awards Banquet on November 3
- Filipino Community Center Annual Gala on November 4
- ACLU Bill of Rights Dinner on November 4
- Mother’s for Police Accountability breakfast on November 16

Moved, seconded, and passed (7-0-0): “To approve two to three commissioners or staff members to attend the events and galas discussed, contingent on the commission being recognized by the organizers.”

Other Business

NACOLE Presentations

CPC Co-Chair Isaac Ruiz and Commissioner Kevin Stuckey will participate in a panel discussion regarding the relationship between collective bargaining and police reform. CPC staffer Minty LongEarth will participate in a panel on community engagement and policing. The

CPC developed a 3-minute video to use in panel discussions at the upcoming National Association for Civilian Oversight on Law Enforcement (NACOLE) conference.

CPC Group Photo

The CPC discussed two potential dates (September 20 and October 4) for taking a group photograph.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

- *Action Item* – Respond to Chairman Forsman’s letter and follow up with SPD and Native communities on engagement, policy, and training around SPD interactions with Native communities.
- *Action Item* – Request that Chief O’Toole and City Attorney Pete Holmes attend a future CPC meeting to discuss the Cynthia Whitlatch settlement agreement.
- *Action Item* – Request a draft of the monitor’s compliance report for review and comment.