

Police and Public Safety Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday January 11th, - 7:30 p.m. via Zoom

Committee

Chairperson Patricia Page, Ward 5
Vice-Chair, Jerome Brown, Ward 5
Secretary - vacant
Committee Member- 5 vacancies
Committee Member Taylor Wilder Ward 2
Committee Member Mai Abdul Rahman, Ward 1
Committee Member Mariel Alper, Ward 1, (?)
Committee Member, Julio Gomez, Ward 2

Council/Liaison

Chief of Police Jarod Towers
Council Member Danny Schaible, Ward 2
Council Member Rommel Sandino, Ward 5

7:37 p.m.- Call to order

Roll call (Page, Brown, Wilder, Abdul Rahman, Gomez present): **Quorum met**

Chief Towers (**present**)

Council Liaison Emily Strab (**present**)

January meeting Agenda **approved**

November 9th, 2022 meeting minutes **approved**

Discussion Items

1. *Select and vote on committee chair?*

Patricia thought her term expired (JB did too). No secretary – minutes were collected by Jerome and Mai.

Mai and Taylor nominated as the chair. Taylor bowed out.

Mai voted as committee chair (acting).

2. *Select and vote on committee secretary?*

Secretary - nomination of Julio as interim. **No objections** from Committee.

3. *Nominate a chair for policy subcommittee to replace Emily*

Julio volunteered for **policy committee chair**.

New committee appointments are in the pipeline that should decrease the number of vacancies and spread the work. Policy committee members will be nominated during the next meeting.

4. *Approve 2023 committee meeting calendar*

Meeting calendar for 2023 was **approved** as presented by HVLPC.

5. *Chief report and updates?*

Staffing: Department received many applications, but some applicants are not qualified, some are swept by other jurisdictions and others are waiting too long for a response from city. In addition, applicants are applying to several police departments, and other local police departments are expediting the process and issuing offers faster than HLV.

To address this issue department is redesigning application process and reducing time lines- two weeks to collect applications, a week for medical exams and fingerprinting and FBI checks- streamlining the process from application to interview and hire should help us address this problem. *Department is **Short of 11 officers at the moment.***

Responding to the Increase in night crime- department is doubling staffing on evening shifts and increasing night patrols and focusing our resources to address the problems- to address loss of few dollars to thousand dollars.

Addressing the uptick in fraud cases- we are run through some pointers on how to spot them- pausing as water and electrical company call, We are working on communication campaigns to help residents do better in this area and not fall for the schemers (family members incarcerated, gift cards, bill collectors, service companies threatening terminations of service). Some fraud victims have been in the hundreds of thousands.

Residents should not provide personal information on phone or email. Trust your instinct- don't rush and buy a gift card- call the police to help you determine whether it is a fraud or not

Car jackings: A majority of the car jacking involves residents outside the vehicle and approaching the vehicle- the time you get in the car and drive away. When residents are not paying attention to their surroundings. Entry into vehicle is the most vulnerable timeframe. Residents need to park in lit areas. Set your car settings appropriately - driver only. LOCK ON ENTRY. Start and leave. This tip when observed would have avoided these issues. Park in lighted areas - near people. A lot of issues in low and dim light and in remote and removed areas. If you fall victim do what they ask you and let them flee the area- and call police while you are safe. When compromised and approached by a carjacker, give you keys, no sudden movements. Car is not worth life. Property replaceable. Detectives have good leads, and close to solving a few.

Shift in crime trends: Department recognizes that crime has shifted overnight - it's a sharp and sudden uptick. Department is strategizing on how to get ahead of this and start to address this change. Putting more focus on tactics to start to engage and shift our strategy. Increase deployment of undercover and plain clothes officers out there in the field and working to improve response and safety.

FBI is engaged in the Truist bank (before HVL PD). They are committed to this NOT BEING THE NORM in HVL. Main throughfares seem to be the issues. EW, Hamilton, Queens Chapel.... Easy access/exit.

Youth crime is rising. But not isolated to our area... national issue - everywhere. Juvenile arrests are extremely elevated. COVID was trigger - it is skyrocketing. Violent crimes and carjacking are increasing. Again emphasized - DON'T SPOOK if you are in a situation. Causing them anxiety can get you shot - inadvertently.

HVL is growing RAPIDLY - so things will be shifting quickly and strategies and tactics will need to change. The workload on officers is tough - so we need to start thinking about hiring. Salary isn't worth it if officers are being run into the ground.

Reopening the teen center in HVL is an opportunity. It may help with mitigation of this issue - so question asked on timeline and thoughts about engagement. Possibly engage with education committee on collaborative effort to engage city youth about the damages of participating in crime. Fall 2023 Teen center's reopening target? Construction has begun now. City update: Permits active, reno mid-July early august.

Chief's vision - each ward should have a CAT team member assigned for stronger community policing. However, when staffing is short, they can't do those things - they need beat cops and 911 responders. Domino effect as senior folks not wanting to patrol - then leave.

Package thieves- what can be done about this recurring problem? With shortages in staffing with the substantial increase in crime incidents this is not an easy fix at this time- however, we are advising residents to reduce the recurrence of this issue on their end by making sure they

require a signed receipt and safe package drop offs to reduce the chance of the packages left at door steps. In the meantime, department could consider ***Resident Radio Program*** to address package thieves. Maybe starting a resident radio program... community eyes, an application based program with training requirements to mitigate issues/concerns and avoid mistakes

Developing effective community outreach: Community would benefit from listening sessions where chief can layout his vision goals, accomplishments and challenges. “Chief” ***Meet the Community sessions***”. One on one--Chief presents well, clearly cares.

Department has recently hired a communication expert this should help chief develop clearly outlined and effective communication tools to engage residents more meaningfully.