

Minutes of the Public Safety Oversight Committee Meeting (PSOC) April 13, 2017

In attendance: Russell Carey, Mark Porter, Bruce Holt, Dilum Aluthge, Lt. Donnelly, James Green, Peter Haywood, Joseph Johnson, Eli Binder, Samuel Ortiz, Sam Koch, Katie Biello, and Amy Greenwald

Absent: Eric Estes, Patricia Falcon, Charles Carroll, Justin Pace, James Simmons, Liza Cariaga-Lo and Peter Holden

I. Russell Carey, Executive Vice President for Planning and Policy, began the meeting with an introduction to the Public Safety Oversight Committee and of Kobe Dennis – a local Community Leader. Often referred to as the “Community Guy”, Mr. Dennis has extensive passion and expertise in advocating and addressing issues pertaining to the urban community. In 2009, in partnership with state and local law enforcement, community members and local businesses, he founded Project Night Vision the voluntary after school service program providing care and services for children between 12 and 18 years old during the early evening hours. Project Night Vision has serviced over 5,500 youth for free. In 2015, Mr. Dennis founded Unified Solutions, a community based nonprofit collaborative focused on providing empowerment programs lead by the community. Within one year, Unified Solutions has lead over 25 events and/or programs that have reached thousands in RI. In 2011, in partnership with the Rhode Island State Police, Mr. Dennis co-launched the Building Bridges Initiative to help improve police and community relations. This past summer after an almost 20 year hiatus, Mr. Dennis relaunched the RI Midnight Basketball League as a vehicle to provide athletic alternatives to inner city adult men during the city’s most critical times, at night. In his “spare time” Mr. Dennis facilitates anti-bullying and violence prevention training as a consultant with the Partnership to Address Violence through Education and often speaks conducts trainings on various topics. To date, Mr. Dennis is the Director of the “Princes 2 Kings” Minority Youth Mentorship Initiative. A federally funded grant issued through the RI Dept. of Health in collaboration with state and local law enforcement, RWU, BGC Providence, and PPSD.

The invitation was extended to Mr. Dennis to discuss his work and how it ties into national conversation about community relations and policing as there are lessons to be drawn from his experiences.

The minutes from November 17th were approved.

II. Colonel Porter provided a comprehensive report on campus crime activity and fielded questions from the committee. On a monthly basis the department reviews all crimes and incidents that occur on Brown’s campus and in the vicinity of Providence with a focus on seven

(7) crime categories: Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Simple Assault, Sex Offenses, B&E/Burglary, Larceny and Motor Vehicle Theft. Comparison data (2016 and 2017) reflect a consistent downward trend across categories. Special note made regarding the 2017 - Sex offense - third party incident – counted as a Clery crime.

Additional comparison data reviewed showed a reduction in crimes against persons.

Data reflects an increase in bike thefts on campus. Locations of thefts on campus vary and the type of lock has been an issue; cable locks are easily cut. The department's Outreach and Investigations personnel have initiated a targeted bike theft prevention and awareness campaign to include the giveaway of free U-shaped locks.

When speaking of robberies, assaults, B&E, and larcenies, Colonel Porter mentioned the downtrend can be attributed to a combination of effective deployment strategies and awareness initiatives of the department. Crime and incident trends inform department patrol deployment strategies.

Question of Providence Police Lieutenant: Does PPD see same downward trend? Answer: Trends tend to carryover to campus – Brown DPS regularly attends PPD crime meetings for information sharing, etc. The Lt. references a spike of cell phone robberies in Providence.

The committee engaged in a group discussion about the bike theft issue addressing questions about the effectiveness of bike registration efforts and the rate of bike recoveries. Group does not feel students talk about bike theft in a systemic way.

There is an ongoing conversation about where to lock bicycles in the area of the Medical School. New fixtures are available to secure bicycles.

Some of the students shared issues on Thayer Street and assault concerns as being more paramount to students and not so much bikes. Groups of motor cyclists are common in the area of Thayer Street as weather gets nicer; however, no evidence of bikers being associated with crime (emphasizing that street racing is not an issue in the area of Brown University).

III. Lieutenant Bruce Holt provided an overview of the department's Field Stop Data and Training update.

Department Complaint Information included three (3) complaints - all of which were sustained. There has been a decrease in complaints over the last two years. Lt. Hold also referenced a downward trend for stops. All field stop data categorizes persons stopped by based on race, ethnicity, gender, and affiliation. Information received is based on the officer's perception thereof.

Question: What constitutes a reason for a stop? Answer: Suspicious behavior or circumstance and for traffic stops, visible infractions to include speeding or running a stop sign.

Community concern: If an officer is identifying someone who appears to be Hispanic that could be a concern if they are stopping them in greater numbers. Response: DPS Management monitors for any disparities by person or group very intentionally.

Lt. Holt shared that the department offers one of the most robust training programs in the state, scheduling monthly in-service trainings for officers. When asked how receptive officers were to the trainings, Lt. Holt indicated reception was good to fair. The officers are mandated to participate as a part of the department's professional development expectations. Specialized training is optional for officers.

Three (3) new campus police officers have been hired. Two (2) of the officers are in the RI Municipal Training Academy and the third officer is an experienced officer.

IV. Michelle Nuey, Manager of Community Relations and Outreach shared the Community outreach report and shared an update about the recently launched 2017 Community Survey.

V: Guest speaker: Kobi Dennis, local Providence Community Leader, opened with synopsis of his experiences interfacing with law enforcement as a man of color, and how those experiences shaped his perceptions of law enforcement. Mr. Dennis offered a voice for the community when sharing that black and brown community members have expressed that they do not feel safe when walking through Brown's campus and encouraged the group to explore the dynamics between law enforcement and the community with greater intention.

Mr. Dennis shared his belief in the power of community policing to build positive relationship and his extensive experience working directly with the Providence Police Department and RI State Police to enhance the training and exposure for new recruits to these issues. The outcome of these community relations and community policing efforts have is an increased respect for the role law enforcement.