

Citizen and Police Community Relations Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
201 W. Central Avenue, Lake Wales, FL 33853
January 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

The meeting was opened with prayer.

Members Present: Tiffany Davis, Narvell Peterson, Dwight Wilson, Moe Moyer

Staff Present: Police Chief Chris Velasquez, Community Liaison Officer Ed Palmer, and Executive Assistant Judi Gladue.

2. SPEAKERS

Mr. Peterson opened the meeting up to anyone who would like to speak and advised that if there are any complaints that they are to get with Officer Palmer to file the complaint. Mr. Peterson also reminded that on-going complaints and cases would not be able to be discussed in this meeting.

Cassandra Ulysses of 334 Pearl Street came forward and spoke on an incident where her father was stopped by Lake Wales Police Officers.

Mr. Peterson advised we would be proceeding with the agenda for the meeting of going over the police department's complaint procedure and policy regarding traffic stops and search procedures.

Chief Velasquez provided copies of the police department's complaint form as well as copies of the police department's "Resolving Issues" pamphlet, which outlines the responsibilities of a driver if a law enforcement officer stops them.

Chief explained the police department's complaint process and went over the complaint form.

Mr. Peterson mentioned that it would help if the officers could get involved with the community, but it is challenging right now due to the COVID restrictions.

Terry Christian Sr. came forward and asked a question about the complaint form. He also expressed his concern that there has not been any feedback to the complaints that have been filed since this Committee has been meeting, and that these concerns and issues are coming from the black community.

Discussion was held regarding Mr. Christian's concern. Discussion was also held regarding the blocking of Washington Street over the past weekend.

Michelle Threate came forward introducing herself and advising of her background. Ms. Threate also explained her relationship with the community and that what she sees is an issue with communication between the community of the Northwest Section and officers. Ms. Threate cited an occasion of her interaction with an officer regarding the location of where her car was parked. She explained the interaction between herself and the officer. Ms. Threate explained that although the interaction was not adverse, it could have been better if the officer had communicated with her in a better manner. Ms. Threate asked if the officers could have training in better communication.

Sara Jones came forward and discussed the MLK celebration that took place over the past weekend. Ms. Jones cited a few instances of where she was involved in interaction with and between

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community members and police in part as a liaison in the communication. Ms. Jones advised that both the community members and police have a lot of work to do in regard to communication.

Sandy Odom spoke briefly in the meeting advising that body cams and dash cams would be most helpful.

Chief Velasquez continued with the meeting agenda regarding the process and procedures regarding traffic stops and searches. He also went over the "Resolving Issues" pamphlet.

Tiffany Davis asked that when complaint forms are turned in, whom they are given to.

Chief Velasquez advised that they are given to the supervisor on duty and then given to the Support Commander.

Dwight Wilson reiterated what was discussed before regarding officers getting out and talking, as it builds relationships. He also mentioned that we need to come to some resolution to make a difference. Mr. Wilson suggested officers get out there more, meet with people, and meet with ministerial people.

Narvell Peterson stated that once we get people involved in their own community, it would get better. Mr. Peterson suggested the City recognize community members with perhaps a yard sign acknowledging nice yards.

Discussion was held regarding the date and location of the next meeting. Ms. Davis advised she would ask about meeting at Lake Ashton. Ms. Davis also mentioned that she would like to have Zoom available from each location.

It was concurred that the next meeting will be on Monday, February 22, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Chief Velasquez asked if everyone could review the "Resolving Issues" pamphlet and bring up suggestions for the pamphlet at the next meeting.

Before the meeting closed, Tiffany Davis wanted to share a little bit of Police cameras of what she is familiar with in terms of police cameras. She advised that she is from the south side in Chicago where there were several cameras on poles, and she witnessed where the cameras did not work, and she mentioned a few reasons.

3. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.