



Community Policing Update

June 9, 2020

Background and Overview

The City of Bexley places extreme importance on efforts to encourage diversity, inclusion, and the increasing realization of Bexley as a welcoming community for residents and visitors from all backgrounds.

Recent efforts to this effect have included:

- Implicit Bias trainings for city staff and elected officials, including police department employees
- Mayor's Court reforms, including the creation of a public defender program and the ongoing development of a fine-free court option
- Updating police policy to adopt national best practices
- Creating and supporting new programming for police/community relations, including Cops and Kids events, Cross with a Cop, Southwest Bexley Block Party, Citizens Police Academy, and more.
- Community implicit bias training events

Updates

Citizen Complaint & Complaint Liaison

In 2018, the City of Bexley made efforts to increase the accessibility of citizen complaints by providing a uniform complaint form online, and better communicating the process. Today we are announcing the creation of a third-party Complaint Liaison service, to assist citizens in filing and following complaints, and to provide resources and support throughout the process.

Citizen Review Advisory Board

The City administration has been advancing concepts for increased accountability and transparency in instances involving complaints of bias involving City staff. In order to build trust and accountability within Bexley and among surrounding neighborhoods, the Bexley Citizen Review Advisory Board has been formed by Executive Order, effective June 9, 2020.

The Bexley Citizen Review Advisory Board provides citizen review and input into unsatisfied inquiries and complaints of unlawful discrimination or bias directed at City employees, in order to ensure full transparency and accountability of the City's responsiveness to such complaints.

Membership of the Advisory Board consists of three residents as an advisory board to the Mayor.

Members of the Advisory Board are:

Bryan Drewry

Becky Guzman

Lee Nathans

Members were selected based upon their diversity of personal and professional experience, and the relevance of these experiences to reviewing complaints of discrimination and/or bias impartially and with empathy. Any future change to membership will be communicated to City Council and the public via the City website, where a current roster is maintained.

The Bexley Citizen Review Advisory Board is charged with reviewing complaints pertaining to unlawful discrimination or bias by City employees that are under appeal to the Mayor.

- All records pertaining to a case under appeal shall be made available, in full, to members of the Advisory Board.
- Members of the Advisory Board are charged with non-disclosure of confidential information that is conveyed to them during the course of their review.
- The Advisory Board may interview individuals concerning the matter under review but the Advisory Board has no authority to compel the attendance of witnesses or to issue subpoenas.
- After all information is gathered and conveyed to the Advisory Board, the Board shall work diligently to review all material and issue a consent decision, in writing, to the Mayor.
- The Advisory Board must work cooperatively to arrive at a report that receives unanimous approval from the Board, however, unanimity is not required. If the Board is not able to reach unanimous consent, then each member may provide an individual report on their findings to the Mayor.

Use of Force Policies

We have reviewed our policies relative to the #8Can'tWait / Use of Force Project recommendations. Our policies were in keeping with seven of the eight, with the exception of allowing Carotid Holds in situations where officers were current on appropriate training and where all others available routes had been exhausted. However, we do not have any instances of the use of this hold by BPD, and in discussing with police leadership this does not appear to be a necessary tool to be made available to our officers. As of June 9, 2020, this has been removed from our policy as a conditionally appropriate use of force, and we believe the Bexley Police Department to be in compliance with all eight recommendations.

Community Accountability Reporting

Plans to develop a comprehensive and meaningful overview of key policing statistics relative to traffic stop demographics, use of force, and diversity of police officers were under development for 2019 reporting and are being expedited. Challenges to accurate delivery of this type of reporting have included a need to improve system reports and streamline data retrieval; to provide accurate parallel statistics of community and driver demographics; and constrained staff bandwidth over the past several months. A draft report for 2018 and 2019 is targeted for delivery in 6-8 weeks.

Expansion of Training

In addition to ongoing implicit bias training, additional training programs will be developed focused on empathy, understanding, communication, and trauma-informed service.

Community Engagement

The City of Bexley has a strong culture of engaging with the community on difficult topics and in prioritizing communication and understanding. The Bexley Police Department has been developing a more formalized community engagement team, and will continue to participate in a variety of forums, including the upcoming town hall with the Bexley Minority Parents Alliance.