

# ALBANY CALIFORNIA



CITY OF ALBANY  
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DATE: April 5, 2021

## MEMORANDUM

To: Albany City Council Members

From: Mayor Ge'Nell Gary

Re: Police Community Relations Advisory Committee

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council approve the adoption of the City of Albany Police Community Relations Advisory Committee. The committee is charged with offering advice to the City Council and to the Police Chief, based upon the committee's engagement with public comments and questions, in order to help the City plan and budget for public safety and to help the Chief continue to improve the department's responsiveness to community needs.

## BACKGROUND

Building policing systems that are freed from their roots in systemic racism is a topic that community members have wrestled with for many years, but that has received significant in-depth attention across the City and world following the killing of George Floyd. Increasingly it is clear to all, as has been clear to some for a long time, that negative police-community interactions must be addressed and eliminated, in order to build a relationship of trust and mutual understanding.

We all have a stake in advocating for the positive aspects in police-community relations. The City of Albany Community encompasses networking to build rapport with police staff, including local agencies as marketeers of communication, empowering community members to speak in public about the positive and negative aspects of policing, and build an engaged network of community members who understand police policies and budget. The community is now poised to offer clear advice to Council and to counter any myths or misinformation in the community. Positive community policing aims to reduce local crimes *and* the fear that some law-abiding community members feel.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Albany Police Department is devoted to community engagement. The adoption of this new Police Community Relations Advisory Committee is the first step towards a defined direction. The Albany Police Community Relations Advisory Committee is established to support the Police Chief in developing innovative community policing strategies.

In continuing with the topic Engaging Diverse Community, a heading outlined in the current Strategic Plan Dated July 1, 2019-June 30, 2021, stated that it is critical to help lead our Police Department towards more-effective policing measures. Therefore, now is the time to examine new ways to have the community relate to Police; and to help the Police serve a truly diverse community. It must be a determining factor positioned in the strategic plan to adopt and adhere to overcoming challenges related to effective community policing. This new strategy is based upon a previous subset of crime activity in the City of Albany. In 2018 the crime activity statistics, include felony arrest (118.), Misdemeanor arrest (421.), prisoners booked into County Jail based on a (3-year average, totaling individual 125), business/building checks/citations (2291), vehicle/pedestrians, (1758 violations), officer-initiated incidents, (14,466.), traffic stops, (2215), traffic citations/moving violations, (684), parking citation, (6506), other missing persons, (10), traffic collision and crime accident, (112.) These occurrences serve as the basis for the committee to focus on reducing crime activity in meeting future challenges.

The Commission's charges and duties are outlined in the Strategic Plan.

## **Committee Membership**

The Albany Police Community Relations Advisory Committee will be comprised of 7 community representatives, who live or work in Albany, California, and will report to the City Council. There are also two alternative representatives who serve in the absence of any of the 7 representatives.

Representatives cannot be council members. No individual who currently serves on a committee, commission, or board can be a member of this committee. No members may be current employees of the City of Albany. No more than two members appointed to the Committee shall have been past or present Peace Officers.

Appointments to the committee are made by a subcommittee (consisting of two City Council members and two members from the SEJC.) The Albany Police Community Advisory Committee meets monthly (typically the second Tuesday of the month from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.). An alternative member will join the committee serving in the wake of an absence in attendance, making the total number of committee members (8). Members will represent interest and experiences that are derived from education, realtors, non-profits, the Faith Community, youth organizations; and any other resident who may want to offer their expertise in evaluating issues relating to civil or criminal litigation. Information shared by members serving this committee is highly valued. The Committee Members appointed will serve a two-year term.

The City of Albany continues to support the aspects of diversity and inclusion; therefore, seeks committee members who reflect our diverse community.

Appointed Members who fail to attend three committee meetings will be considered to have left their position and will be replaced. Members of the committee receive no form of compensation. Members are invited to ride along with Police Officers to gain a basic overview of what community policing involves.

### **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The Albany Community Advisory Committee is created to be a resource for the City of Albany and the Albany Police Department to assist in the formation of strategies for community policing and for increasing public engagement and awareness, and for advising Council on budget and policy. It is critical to boldly engage in transparency efforts maintained by the Police. This committee is intended to provide a forum for discussions concerning community issues related to law enforcement activities.

### **SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS**

In the year of 2021, there has never been a more relevant time to assist organizations towards succeeding in efforts to strengthen diversity equity and inclusion. The City of Albany and The City of Albany Police Department needs to increase its efforts to turn dialogue and intention INTO ACTION. The establishment of this committee is one action item that lends itself towards the right direction. The message of UNITY must be moved Front and Center. Implementation of what is viewed as "Fairness" for all and in all applications relating to Social Equity is key. Understanding the inequalities of our organizations and being truly committed to allowing diverse groups to assist in addressing fairness issues will become a lifeline and model for Community Cohesiveness. Stating this observation boldly; The removal of mechanisms that promote divisiveness and the establishment of cohesion is key to improving Police Services and better Community Engagement. Different relationships formed with our diverse community only produces a greater overall asset to the community. We are better together when we all unite in bringing concerns; bringing Each Individual's best to the table for the highest achievement of the organization: UNITY-FORWARD.

### **CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES**

The Commission's tasks shall include addressing a wide range of public safety issues, police-community relations, and police policies and procedures, and budgeting.

These strategies may include, but or not limited to:

- Addressing rampant auto burglaries.
- Reducing punishment for non- violent offenses.
- Hearing & addressing comments from the community.
- Relaying questions from the community to the Chief to be answered in public at committee meetings.

- Reporting on potential policy changes to the Council
- Discussing how police officers respond to calls for service, i.e., evaluating service response times.
- Examining disparate outcomes involving ethnic minorities where Police Officers are involved in the apprehension of suspects.
- Reviewing Police Policies and Operations with the Community and with Police Department staff,
- Overseeing the presentation of the Police budget and advising Council on future budgets: Maintaining the highest possible level of accountability.
- Offering updates on new technology for fighting crime; examining the effectiveness of such products and the cost encountered.
- Examining the current tactics used in the apprehension of suspects, reexamining use of Force and Body Worn Cameras.
- Updating strategies to monitor/avoid Police Burnout and Stress (Mindful Policing updates).
- Improving Police Community Relations
- Educating and Implementing Crime Prevention Mandates.
- Revamping educational preparations for crime prevention mandates.
- Increasing Police/Community Relations Advocating Transparency at all levels within the department.
- Advising the Chief on best practices in approaching and working with other support agencies, i.e., partnerships that promote the empowering of the community.
- Receiving and transmitting reports on diversity.
- Addressing hate crimes
- Focusing on providing a solution for the Police as they are involved with issues related to Homelessness.
- Implementation of drones. Small drones can be programed to allow officers to scout locations and provide video streams so that no officer enters into any situation truly alone.
- Consistently utilizing foot patrol and biking as an engaging element towards residents
- Research/ Implement Apps where residents can report minor issues, such as graffiti and suspicious activity to assist police with real time awareness. Thus, prioritizing calls.

## **STAFF SUPPORT**

Staff Support to the Albany Police Community Relations Advisory Committee is provided through the office of the Police Chief. A Staff Designee will act as recording associate. The individual is expected to: Prepare Summary Minutes for Meetings. Disseminate information- agendas, minutes, etc.; Maintenance of all records related to the Committee. All information will be presented to the Chief for Implementation and Feedback. In addition, the Police Chief should attend or designate staff to have input and monitor the workplan.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The cost related to the formation of the City of Albany Police Community Relations Advisory Committee is minimal. Funding is available to maintain the existing staff participation is coming directly from the office of the Police Chief.