

# Wilshire Community-Police Advisory Board

## MINUTES May 20, 2021

*Approved by the Board June 17, 2021*

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### **Call to Order / Announcements**

The online/telephonic meeting over Zoom, was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Co-Chair, Mitchell Jacoves, who welcomed the assembled group.

### **Roll Call**

Roll Call was conducted by C-PAB Secretary, Conrad Starr.

Board Members Present were Janice Belton, Curtis Clark, Susan Considine, Loretta Eason, Sandra Germaine, Mitchell Jacoves, Greg Jones, Julie Kim, Petra King, Margaret McComb, Conrad Starr, Matthew Tallmer, Thao Tran, and Denise White.

Absent were Hazel Gantt, Kari Garcia, Medrene Gee, Starr Johnson, Kimberly Klein, Jacqueline "Jackie" McClellan, Jennifer Schuchmann, and Chlorita Walton.

*Approximately 43 civilian guests were in attendance, including a representative from the Victim's Assistance Program and field deputies from Council Offices 4 and 5.*

### **Review and Adoption of Minutes**

Mr. Starr moved to approve the April 15, 2021 minutes. Ms. Tran seconded. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

### **C-PAB Membership Update**

Sgt. Kirby reported they were again able to take volunteers' fingerprints as part of the application process. He expected an increase in membership within a few weeks.

### **Guest Presentation: Ofc. Kristina Montoya**

Ofc. Kristina Montoya said she was a Senior Lead Officer (SLO) at the Public Engagement Section of the Department, reporting to Chief Girmala. As LGBTQ Liaison, she was the Department's "eyes and ears" for situations and concerns affecting the LGBTQ+ community.

Her work included participating in a citywide LGBTQ Working group made up of about 30 community members. The group had created a 15 minute training for officers to understand the "non-binary" gender marker (individuals who identify as neither 100% female nor 100% male), as legally recognized in 2019 by the State of California. They also contributed to the Field Training Officer (FTO) update and jail personnel training; and created an LGBTQ resource card with information on special shelters and on mental health and legal resources, to be used by patrol officers working among homeless populations. She said the LGBTQ+ community didn't [always] know how to navigate through the legal system; meanwhile, many officers were unaware of the existence of LAPD's LGBTQ Liaison despite the fact the position existed since around 1995.

Montoya worked closely with the Department's Hate Crimes Coordinator, Orlando Martinez, to update the supplemental report form. She partnered with the City Attorney, division captains, and SLOs on safety meetings in the MacArthur Park area. They partnered on outreach with organizations like Midnight Stroll. One current project was to update "the policy," which was 10 years old. Another was the creation of a "historical timeline" to tell the "good and bad" of the history of LAPD and the LGBTQ community; and creating a training for the City Attorney's Office.

Montoya invited community members to join the virtual meetings. She noted the Department sent an LGBTQ recruiter to job fairs.

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There was a discussion of hate incidents, where no actual crime had taken place, but which LAPD would document nonetheless.

### **Traffic Committee Report**

Mr. Jacoves said the committee would resume meetings in June.

### **Emergency Preparedness Committee Report**

Mr. Tallmer said they were organizing blocks for Ready Your LA Neighborhood (RYLAN) trainings. Ms. Considine and Ms. Garcia were arranging “go bags” and emergency supplies for the station.

### **Procedural Justice and Equity Committee Report**

Ms. Tran reported that the LAPD’s de-escalation policy made up most of the discussion at the May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the committee.

Tran said she had completed the Volunteer Police Academy and would join the Volunteer Community Patrol (VCP) at Wilshire Division. She noted that the final VCP class was joined by Deputy Chief Vito Palazzolo, who agreed with Ms. Tran that every Basic Car Area should have its own Senior Lead Officer (SLO). A more robust de-escalation training was needed in the VCP training, so community members could “fill the gap.” According to the Wilshire CRO, the next VCP training program would include additional discussion on de-escalation.

Ms. King called the news of the police shooting of a Black man in Monroe, Louisiana “disturbing” and observed that regardless of training, “if you haven’t changed the culture, nothing is going to change.” She said there needed to be a consequence “that’s immediate and speaks to human nature.”

### **Council District Four**

Tabatha Yelos thanked Capt. Paulson a Zoom meeting earlier that day. She announced a multidisciplinary team to address mental health issues. The Mayor had assembled a Circle Team for the Hollywood area.

Su In Lee invited the Greater Wilshire community to a June 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. She referred to fires at encampments.

Mr. Jacoves acknowledged their work around Pan Pacific Park and the emergency shelter, saying, “You guys have been fantastic around working with the neighborhood.” He said the shelters were set to close on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Captain’s Report**

Capt. Paulson noted there had not been time at the Procedural Justice and Equity Committee for answers to all the questions. Sgt. Brian Churchill gave an introduction on training at Police Academy including scenario-based training around mental health.

Speaking to Ms. King’s comments, she said it was the captain’s role to reinforce training and set expectations for the field, and to evaluate the use of de-escalation tactics to calm the individual prior to, during, and following use of force, in order to avoid an even greater use of force. Police were expected to apply the most minimal level of force required. The Department’s policy was to “hold people responsible” to apply their training.

Paulson emphasized that nationwide, there were not universal standards of training, policies, accountability, and oversight, and there was a “severely less likelihood that it could happen here,” and if it did, it would be addressed differently. There could always be errors, and progress was needed. Her goal for the committee was to bring forth a focus and understanding on “both sides.”

Earlier that day, Paulson had participated in a town hall with members of the Jewish community among others, on the subject of hate-motivated attacks that had taken place that Tuesday night.

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Police were limited as to what they could discuss about the incident and could not disclose much information to avoid compromising the ongoing investigation; but Paulson said skilled, diligent detectives were on the case, and progress had been made.

Budget cuts and other factors were leading to the loss of police at a “startlingly fast rate.” Currently, they were 20% “under-covering” the attrition rate. An Academy class would graduate June 11<sup>th</sup>, but “no one else [was] in the pipeline;” they were “six to seven months behind” in terms of an ability to make new hires.

During the previous two weeks they had lost “double digit numbers” to early retirements. Paulson said a young “P1” had resigned because she was not willing to put the energy and risk into the profession, given the current climate. Paulson was “seeing that exponentially throughout the Department,” through early retirements and the departure of seasoned, well-trained officers to departments outside the state or the region. On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, there were only 9,515 officers on the force, equal to 2005 levels, and 500 fewer than in 2016-17. Even when it had around 10,000 police, Los Angeles was the “most underpoliced big city in the nation” at 24 residents “per cop,” compared with more 42 for New York City, 43 for Chicago, 40 for Philadelphia, 31 for Boston, 30 for Baltimore, 35 for Atlanta, and 37 for Cleveland. She reiterated that was “before we lost 500 officers.”

Currently there was no significant effect on the number of “black and whites” on the street, due to specialized personnel being “harvested” out of their units and reassigned to patrol, which meant a loss of expertise that could be applied to investigations; at the same time, there was an increase in patrol officers’ and detectives’ workloads. This could delay justice for crime victims, Paulson said.

Training a new hire required six months at the Academy followed by a year of field training before the officer could be trusted to work outside the supervision of an FTO or a senior partner. Paulson feared an eventual negative impact to police service, responsiveness, and coverage.

There had been a SLO vacancy at Wilshire for 1½ years, due in part to the “budget crunch” and the defund movement. SLOs’ had a critical role in crime fighting, problem solving, de-escalation, and maintaining a presence in the community to avoid the need for more law enforcement.

As a result, LAPD would continue to be creative and look for ways to divert calls that lacked a law enforcement or criminal “nexus” to more appropriate departments. Through 2-1-1 and 3-1-1, calls were being referred away, including to mental health practitioners. The use of online reporting helped address the staff shortage. Paulson qualified that online reporting would not limit follow ups by detectives. The same policies and procedures applied as did with in-person reporting.

Mr. Jacoves spoke of the “raw emotions” following the shooting in Monroe. He said LAPD officers received four days’ training with 19 training modules, and all included a de-escalation component.

Mr. Tallmer described an “intolerable” situation on Melrose Ave. At Gardner and Melrose, he had observed 50 people gambling and drinking. Ten were sitting on a car. “People cannot walk on that block,” he said. Paulson noted the area was popular with a motorcycle group. There was a Problem-Solving Model for that Neighborhood Engagement Area (NEA) — the Melrose Corridor — which was tracked by the Division and by LAPD Operations. O’Brien had coordinated a vending taskforce to address broken windows. Paulson had breached the idea of closing Melrose down during the weekends, like for a farmers market, to Council District Five (CD5). Such action could help control the street the rest of the time. She encouraged organizations supportive of such proposals to share their feedback. To address gambling, Paulson was trying to make Melrose a “no-go area” for vending, similar to Hollywood Blvd. or Staples Center.

Police resources were not the be-all, end-all answer, she noted.

### **New Business**

Members had requested a discussion about illegal fireworks. Paulson had not seen an “overall campaign” yet from the Department, though a social media campaign was likely forthcoming.

In 2020, plainclothes officers were “out and about;” they conducted “some undercover buys” that took some fireworks off the street. She reminded the community that a house in Pomona had

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exploded [from illegal fireworks]: “you don’t want that to be your neighborhood,” she cautioned. Police would be available to take action regarding any intelligence on stockpiles, but “legal thresholds” would always apply to arrests of individuals. Without observing an individual to be in possession of (or lighting) a firework, they could not [make an arrest]; still, they would do anything in their power to address community concerns and fears around fireworks.

Regarding the Melrose corridor, Paulson agreed that barriers to emergency response would need to be considered before reducing traffic on Melrose; workarounds could be developed similar to those in place during protests and marches.

A guest observed that “Gringo’s” was still open for business. Paulson explained that the restaurant located at the northeast corner of Washington and Crenshaw, was the site of a dispute which resulted in a homicide; the owner was in custody as an accessory; an investigation was ongoing. Since the business was a bar and restaurant, there were thresholds to closure related to the ABC license, which were “exceptionally challenging to revoke;” but penalties could be in the tens of thousands for violations. Police were working with State ABC and with the Neighborhood Prosecutor, and they were aware of prior complaints regarding “over-service,” noise, loud music, concerts, and patrons driving away drunk.

### **Requests for Future Meetings**

There were no requests.

### **Adjournment:**

Mr. Jacoves declared the meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

### **SLO Breakout Rooms:**

Multiple C-PAB members, guests, and SLOs participated in Basic Car Area-based Zoom breakouts following the meeting.

*Respectfully Submitted by Conrad Starr*