



Community Conversation Notes

October 2, 2020

The first “Community Conversation” was held on Friday, October 2. Attendees included City Council Members, City Staff, and members of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, led by Pastor Samuel Flint.

Below are the notes from that meeting as they relate to the Agenda.

1. Invocation & Welcome

- a. Pastor Flint delivered an Invocation.
- b. Mayor McLeer will provide brief remarks about the City’s commitment to these Conversations and the City’s desire to listen to community concerns and work together to find solutions.
- c. Mr. Atkinson took over as facilitator and began the meeting.

2. Introductions

- a. All introduced themselves.

3. Community Feedback

- a. "What have been your experiences, good or bad, with the City? Where, when, and how do you interact with the City and its services the most? (Including Public Safety)
 - i. All mentioned that overall, all experiences with the City have been positive. Those experiences were involving law enforcement, recreation, and all other parts of the City. Pastor Flint referenced a letter sent to him from Chief Hamilton which he greatly appreciated.
 - ii. Pastor Flint asked about a 2008 Mediation document which was agreed to after an unfortunate event involving the Police around that same time. This document references a “Concerned Citizens Committee”. This was discussed further later in the meeting (noted below).
 - iii. It was mentioned that some in the community are not familiar with the City, its Police, and even how things are managed. There is an opportunity to engage those individuals and help strengthen communication between the City and the community.
 - iv. Questions were asked about the City’s police around body cameras. Chief Hamilton answered them. Officers are directed to turn on their body cameras whenever they interact with the community in a public manner, car cameras are always on.
 - v. Senior Watch program was hailed as very innovative and appreciated.
 - vi. The HR needs of the City were brought up. Mayor McLeer talked about the fixes the City has put in place regarding the structure of the City’s HR staffing and policies. For the first time in over a decade, the City has an in-house HR director, which has allowed for a refreshed look at policies, as well as a single and trusted person for staff members to talk with.
 - vii. There was an emphasis on engaging the Youth in these conversations.

4. Ideas for Improvement + Dialogue + Next Steps

- a. What are some ideas from the community to help the City improve or strengthen its relationship with the community?
 - i. **Review the 2008 Mediation Agreement** to see what has or has not been implemented. The Agreement was approved in 2008, but no current Council members were around for that, and almost all department heads were also not around – so the document needs to be looked at. It was mentioned that the goal should be to take that document, once reviewed, and make sure it is better engrained in the City’s operations so that it is in front of us more often instead of on a shelf and forgotten.
 - ii. **Engage the Youth.** Deacon Neely, Mayor McLeer, and Chief Hamilton will get together in the coming weeks to look at putting a panel / demonstration together for young community members.
 - iii. **Police + Neighborhood Connections.** The Police Department just began rolling out a program where officers are assigned to neighborhoods as a way to build relationships.
 - iv. **Meeting Access.** Continue making Council meetings more accessible (live-streamed, materials posted online) so that more can participate. City Council also intends on having regular “Council Workshops” where they are able to dive deep into topics, without votes, which can help the public understand topics in greater detail.
 - v. **Use of Force Policy.** The Police Department is revising its policies, including Use of Force. The updated policy was discussed – particularly the policy around neck restraints. The new policy lays out clearly what type of restraints are allowed when – all of them only being used until a suspect is handcuffed. This policy, and all Police policies, will come to City Council for approval in the coming months while the Department seeks State Accreditation.
 - vi. **Events.** Increasing diversity at all City events should also be a priority to ensure our events are serving all of our community.

5. 11:55am - 12:00pm | Closing

- a. Closing remarks were provided by Mr. Atkinson, Mayor, Council members, and others.
- d. Pastor Flint delivered a closing prayer.