



Reimagining Public Safety Task Force

Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2021, 6:00pm-8:00 p.m. CST, Zoom

Members Present

Reimagining Public Safety Task Force Members, Community Panel, Life Anew, City of Austin Staff

Agenda

Item 1. Addressing Technical Issues and Welcome

Welcome from co-chairs, land acknowledgement statement.

Introduction of Interim ACM Shannon Jones replacing ACM Chris Shorter.

RPS Co-Chair and Task Force Member Brion Oaks announced the Austin Police Department Equity Assessments Report.

Item 2. Presentation from Community Representatives of the APD-Community Video Review Panel

Introduction of community members and presentation of APD-Community Video Review Panel. Presentation from Community Representatives of APD-Community Video Review Panel highlighting recommendations of over 50 training videos of the 112 they reviewed to be removed or edited that demonstrated overrepresentation of use of force with negative outcomes for people of color and that dehumanized subjects and victims in video, among other areas of concern. The Community Review Panel stated they felt uncomfortable using the videos within the current curriculum for upcoming cadet academies.

Task Force Member Paula Rojas questioned what the Community Panel recommended if APD is unable to revamp curriculum before having cadet class. The Community Review Panel said they would feel uncomfortable moving forward with the academy without making changes. As a Panel, they have not discussed specific recommendations and the report prepared by Life Anew does focus on recommendations. They are concerned that the temptation will be to pick better videos and stated that disrupting patterns does not occur by just replacing; the larger narrative needs to be called out with the larger cultural dynamics, which cannot happen quickly through small changes.

Task Force Member Alicia Torres mentioned she is appreciative of the presentation being accessible for community members. She questioned if the 112 videos were chosen for the Panel or not, questioned if there are more videos and if so, what might exist within that content? Community Panel Representative responded that they do not know how the videos were selected. Task Force Member Farah Muscadin clarifies that neither the Office of Police Oversight nor the Equity Office selected the videos. OPO and Equity Office recommended specific module areas where APD interacts most with the community. She

added that the cadet academy is a small piece of the pie of the officers that are policing the communities.

Task Force Member Amanda Lewis questioned the sample of training videos and if there is there a recommendation for delving into further analysis of entire video trainings.

Task Force Member Cary Roberts questioned if police representatives on the panel concurred with recommendations of the full Community Panel and if they had asked if all videos could be removed entirely. Community Panel Representative responded they will have a follow-up meeting with APD; they suggested only to remove 50.

Community Panel Representative mentioned that APD accepted all the recommendations by Panel and that trainers are interested in learning more about critical analysis of the videos. CP Maya mentions what is legal might not be best for the community and figuring out how best to train the incoming officers to think critically.

Task Force Member David Johnson motioned that the City of Austin Reimagining Public Safety Task Force formally lodge an objection for the City of Austin and Austin Police Department to move forward with cadet classes until reassessing the training of the Austin Police Department.

Task Force Member Cary Roberts respectfully objected because he states more information is needed.

Task Force Member Rey Arellano mentioned he will abstain from the vote. Task Force Member Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde mentioned that she will abstain from a vote because Council cancelled cadet classes until COA staff is ready to move forward and that COA is still gaining information from consultants.

Task Force Member Chas Moore mentioned concerns with conversations about restarting cadet classes and that the weight of decision for the vote should be placed on lived experiences and to trust the Community Panel. Task Force Member Cary Roberts responded that there is additional information that is needed.

Task Force Member Amanda Lewis reiterated the support for voting to object to reopening of cadet classes without needing additional information.

Task Force Member Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde mentioned that staff is awaiting comprehensive information and that staff can recommend or not recommend cadet classes moving forward.

Task Force Member Kathy Mitchell mentioned that APD has been downplaying the problems and that the motion might include that the cadet classes should not move forward for rest of fiscal year and that information should be brought back. Task Force Member David Johnson objected to the motion.

Task Force Member Brion Oaks motioned to have a level of demonstration or proof from APD that the various areas have been addressed in the academy, including: 1) the killing of residents by police, use of force issue, 2) the graduation rate for Black cadets and rate of disproportionate injury of Black cadets in the academy, 3) the overall injury rates in the academy training, 4) addressing the video curriculum issues, and 5) racial profiling (stop, searches, arrests). Task Force Member David Johnson agreed with the friendly amendment.

Final vote: 13 In Favor, 0 Oppose, 5 Abstain, 1 Did Not Vote

13 In Favor:

1. TF Member Jessica Johnson
2. TF Member Chas Moore
3. TF Member Paula Rojas
4. TF Member Kathy Mitchell
5. TF Member Hailey Easley
6. TF Member Amanda Lewis
7. TF Member Cate Graziani
8. TF Member David Johnson
9. TF Member Alicia Torres
10. TF Member Priscilla Hale
11. TF Member Brion Oaks
12. TF Member Matt Simpson
13. TF Member Monica Guzmán

5 Abstain:

1. TF Member Cary Roberts
2. TF Member Dawn Handley
3. TF Member Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde
4. TF Member Farah Muscadin
5. TF Member Rey Arellano

1 Did Not Vote:

1. IACM Shannon Jones

Item 3. Discussion on Work Group Progress and Process

Facilitator proposes placing detailed updates through email and asks for high-level updates. Task Force Member Amanda Lewis requested to add working group for victim services and violence prevention. Task Force Member Farah Muscadin seconded and volunteered to serve on working group.

Final vote to add a working group for victim services and violence prevention: 19-0-0; all 19 Task Force Members voted unanimously in favor.

Task Force Member Alicia Torres proposed extending conversation to end of March to have time for community engagement.

Task Force Member Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde clarified that staff can come back to Council with updates at any time.

Task Force Member Paula Rojas recommends that the mid-year APD amendments occur on the March 25th Council Meeting.

Task Force Member Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde clarified that March came about because of budget amendment/rider set by Council and that the Decoupling bucket that staff is focusing on are mostly administrative items and are not parallel paths with the Reimagining bucket. The Reimagining bucket leans heavily on the weight of the Task Force, and the Task force feedback for items being voted on in

March are welcome by COA staff. Task Force Members Cate Graziani and Alicia Torres mentioned that they believed they were going to be looking comprehensively and not as in buckets. Task Force Member Kathy Mitchell voiced concerns about items within the Decouple buckets since it is not obvious that the items will actually decouple.

Task Force Member Priscilla Hale shared her concerns about the Task Force not hearing clearly what the timeline is, and that the information should be forthright as the discussion moves forward.

Task Force Member Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde mentioned that the City is working on the administrative facets of decoupling and having conversations with Human Resources, Law, APD, Council on mechanics because of the nature of the areas the City is looking at and that the City is not as staff looking at the deeper issues of reform within Reimagining because the City believes that is where the Task Force weighs in.

Task Force Member Paula Rojas stated that the pieces of decoupling are not just administrative and that there is substance there and that the Task Force would like to provide input to the mid-year amendments that will be made.

Task Force Member Chas Moore shared his concerns about the Meadows Report and questions if the Task Force can be involved with providing their input.

Item 4. Update on Search for Permanent Task Force Consultants

Task Force Member Brion Oaks stated he will send responses and a poll to vote to Task Force via email.

Item 5. Discussion on Adding New Members to Task Force

Facilitator suggests having a short application process and application to help prioritize representation. Task Force Member Farah Muscadin requested that people interested in learning more about working groups have an easy way to plug in with Task Force leads of the working groups.

Item 6. Confirming Upcoming Meeting Dates and Setting Next Meeting Agenda

Task Force Members concurred the proposed dates are February 10th and March 10th.

Task Force Member Paula Rojas requested that one entire meeting be dedicated to receiving community listening session.

Task Force Member Farah Muscadin recommended two meetings in February and two meetings in March and to possibly extend the meeting times.

Task Force Member Brion Oaks stated he needs to confirm to see if COA staff has capacity.

Meeting Adjourned