



Hampton Police Division

Office of the Chief of Police

CITIZENS POLICE ADVISORY GROUP

February 7, 2019

SUBJECT: Citizens Police Advisory Group Meeting – 6:00pm
held at HPD's Townsend Community Rm, 5th Fl.

MEMBERS & HPD PERSONNEL PRESENT:

Robert Boester, Chairman
Chief Terry Sult
Anne Andrews
Steve Bond, Assistant City Manager
Ann Cherry
John Gately
Brandi Law, Deputy City Attorney
Lt. Col. Leo Martin & Mrs. Martin
Rev. Andre McCloud

Bishop Lamont Moss
Charles Powell
Angelo Sugg, Jr.
Jonathan Welters

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:

CMSgt. Jeremy Yates, JBLE

MEMBERS ABSENT:

James Bailey
William Beach
Jimmy Gray, Vice Mayor

OPENING:

- Chairman, Robert Boester, opened the meeting.
- Minutes from the December 6th meeting – Chairman Boester asked for a motion to approve the minutes.
 - Motion made from the floor and seconded.
 - All approved.
 - Minutes from the December 6, 2018 meeting were approved.

DISCUSSION:

- Chief Sult and Assistant City Manager, Steve Bond, discussed the crime stats, trends and then opened the floor for discussion on improvements.
- Crime is “perceived” to be a problem, because it is reported by the media, but social media has played a significant role with the increased perception of criminal problems in our city.
- Chief Sult:
 - Crime is always a problem; one crime is too many.
 - Much of social media information is not vetted and most of the information posted concerning Hampton’s crime is actually incorrect information.
 - Some statistics:
 - Violent crime for 2018 compared to 2017 is down by 70 incidents (down 18.25%).
 - Property crime is down 13%.
 - Aggravated assaults 2018 v. 2017 is down about 8.86%
 - 2018 started out much better than 2017; however, January seems to be a busy month from year to year; unable to determine why; potentially due to holidays during that month when children are out of school; but this spike in January seems to be unique to Hampton.
 - HPD does see a slight decrease usually between Thanksgiving and Christmas each year.
 - Common charge is firearm by convicted felon, which is a mandatory 5-year sentence, but does not seem to deter the criminals; this is one of the reasons HPD focuses on Guns, Gangs and Drugs.
 - Currently, many of the suspects are from neighboring jurisdiction, however, that does not seem to hold true for previous years.
 - Media has a tendency to report only a small portion of the story and does not publicize the actual facts.
 - One option posed to neighborhoods is a Court Watch group to hold the courts accountable by having cases monitored from beginning to end, especially those cases that are constantly being continued to later dates, sometimes a year or more, before a disposition is rendered.
 - HPD is working closely with the Commonwealth Attorney as a result of a study performed by PERF¹ with HPD Investigators.

¹ [Police Executive Research Forum](#)

- PERF's experts reviewed officers' process of handling investigations, in particular homicide cases, so that we can then present the best-case information possible to the Commonwealth Attorneys for prosecution.
- PERF found that our Investigators were doing a good job and only recommended a few minor areas we could improve upon which dealt with budgeting for additional Forensics positions.
 - HPD now has a full time NIBIN² Forensics Operator to analyze gun shell casings with a turn-around time of approx. 42-78 hours; prior to this, officers would have to send this information to the State Lab for processing, which took at least 6 months or longer to process.
 - One recent case, using NIBIN, HPD was able to link one handgun to one case in Hampton and to another case in Newport News.
 - HPD's Violent Crime unit makes sure that gun traces are performed on all weapons.
- Firearm by convicted felon is a 5-year mandatory sentence; HPD is trying to determine where the breakdown is on obtaining convictions; hence the reason HPD had PERF review investigations to determine what can be done better.
- HPD is doing their part in the criminal justice system by presenting the case to the prosecutor so they can have ample time to review prior to the court hearing so the prosecutor can advise officers if any additional information is needed.
- Steve Bond, Assistant City Manager (former prosecutor)
 - Sometimes cases end up with plea agreements especially when there are no witnesses; there are many factors that influence whether or not a case can be proven.
 - We have a lenient court system; juries have a difficult time convicting, while society demonizes police officers.
 - No one is looking over the shoulder of judges and the community is not holding the jury accountable.
 - Convictions are different from jurisdiction to jurisdiction; there are different dynamics involved as to how courts and juries react.
 - A community can bring pressure on what a case is really worth.
 - Mental Health Issues:
 - Law enforcement is being tasked more and more in dealing with mental health issues.

² [National Integrated Ballistic Information Network](#)

- Example: Opioid epidemic
 - Officers are serving more and more as drug abuse counselors and have to deal with strategies to get these people help instead of dealing with the criminal aspect.
 - What prepares these people for their journey once they leave jail? A re-entry program.
 - If we do not set these former drug abusers up for success, when they leave jail, they revert to their old habits and it creates a vicious cycle.
- Most drug offenders in federal prison have more than simple drug charges against them; they usually have some very serious violent charges against them; if our system is letting these people out of prison, it could potentially do harm for our communities, especially with some of the past histories of their violent criminal charges.
- Question from Angelo Suggs:
 - When you hear this statement, “Hampton is a safe place.” Is it?
 - Answer: Yes, it is safe, the problem with Hampton that other cities do not have, is that we are a very dense city in population.
 - Hampton has pockets of both non-crime and crime areas throughout the City; there is no concentrated area of violent crime; it occurs anywhere.
- Crime in Hampton – Perception v. Reality
 - There is a perception of crime in our City because of social media, the media, videos from cell phones, etc.
 - It only takes one or two incidents to create the “perception” that the world is coming to an end.
 - This is why HPD tracks neighborhood activity.
 - One common theme has also been that various neighborhoods heard of some crimes in their area but those incidents did not show up on our crime stats. Why? Because those incidents were not reported to the police, they thought others reported when in fact they did not.
 - If crimes are not reported, HPD cannot be pro-active if not made aware of the incident.
 - There is a difference between reported crimes and unreported crimes.
 - One neighborhood has a specific crime page; they encourage their residents to report all criminal activity so they can discuss.
 - NEXTDOOR is a great app for neighborhoods but HPD cannot send or receive any of the information posted, unless someone specifically sends to us.

- HPD has just partnered with RING (camera system) to encourage residents to use their [Neighbors App](#).
 - Unlike NEXTDOOR, Neighbors App allows residents to share their video of suspicious activity.
 - HPD will also receive that information via our RTIC (*Real Time Information Center*).
 - This App is not specific to only RING camera users, any video or pictures from any security system can be download to this app.
 - HPD can see every post shared and can then circulate the information to officers; HPD's analysts will review reports and compare information to determine if any leads might be generated from this information.
- Assistant City Manager, Steve Bond:
 - Has been a licensed attorney for the last 7.5 yrs, worked with the City Attorney's office prior to his appointment as Assistant City Manager.
 - Prior to this, he was a prosecutor for the City of Norfolk and Newport News prosecuting homicides and child sexual assault cases.
 - A personal concern of ACM Bond is the issue with black males nationwide; On average 85% or more of the homicides in Hampton are committed by young black males (ages 14-24) but they are also victims as well.
 - Black males ages 14-24 make up 1% of the U.S. population, they constitute 16% of homicide victims and 27% of homicide offenders.
 - In contrast, according the CDC in 2015, homicides are the third cause for white males of the same age range @ 8% behind unintentional injuries @ 46% and Suicide @ 23%.
 - Chairman Boester: With regard to Hampton's schools, there is a 93% graduation rate; but the "perception" is that we have a high drop out rate and not up to state averages; this is NOT true.
 - With the implementation of the HCS Academies there are more kids now obtaining jobs right out of high school than years ago.
 - Hampton is part of the Cities United program that is a national movement focused on eliminating the violence in American cities related to African American men and boys.
 - The 92 mayors that currently participate in this program, intend to reduce homicides in their cities by 50%, by the year 2025 and are committed to restoring hope to their communities and building pathways to justice, employment, education and increased opportunities for residents.

- HPD is a partner in this effort, but HCS, Parks, etc. will also need to play an important part in this program as the problems are viewed as a community issue.
 - August 2019, Hampton will host the Cities United annual conference.
- Chief Sult: The City recently visited with Johns Hopkins University to work on a program dealing with social autopsy of homicides to review common factors in these types of cases.
 - To review victimology and suspect-ology to look at education and other factors associated with these types of cases.
 - HPD is also partnering with ODU on a grant that will allow ODU to develop an artificial intelligence tool to improve the effectiveness of the person-based focused deterrence strategy within HPD.
 - Chief Sult and other HPD Commanders visited Nashville a few years ago before HCS Academies were implemented; Chief is a big supporter of HCS Academies.
 - HPD has partnered with HCS on the Law and Public Safety Academy.
 - Many students are able to obtain jobs right out of high school; making a true living with a job that has benefits; the program is making a difference.
 - We need intervention early, such as the Academies to help our young people lead healthy productive lives as adults.
 - Many of the younger generation of today are being influenced by family members whom are the ones creating the problems.
 - Actually, only a small percentage of the black males are the ones committing these crimes.
 - Alternatively, opioid overdose cases are predominantly white males.
 - The City is working diligently to change citizens' perception of crime in Hampton.
 - National statistics for murders were broken down to 1200 neighborhoods across the country and they found that it would only take up approximately the size of Rhode Island.
 - Chicago is perceived to be a dangerous city, only certain areas actually are; people who live in the Chicago area are not surprised when they hear this.
- QUESTIONS to consider:
 - What is our role to play and how can we impact change?
 - How do we make intervention that gives folks a real chance of hope? A better life?

- What can we do as a community and individuals working to achieve this?
- The media does not report the whole story and in turn reflects the communities' perception.
- We need to do a better job at promoting ourselves and the good things our city offers.
- Hampton has good examples of positive black male role models:
 - Mayor
 - Vice Mayor
 - School Superintendent
 - Commonwealth Attorney
 - Assistant City Manager
 - Sheriff
- HPD has taken ownership in putting out the “real” story versus allowing media to report first. See [HPD's News blog](#).
 - HPD also promotes positive stories as well but we report whether good or bad and will not mislead the public.
- Need to look at the city as a whole and take into consideration socio-economics, infant mortality, dropout rates, health rates, teen pregnancy, medical calls, and other life critical events that affect our communities.
- To improve crime, need to improve economic development as a long-term project.
- Today we focus on the perception of crime by our communities; people view perception as reality; we have to put into context what the reality is; the real issues and root causes of crime.
- HPD posts stats regularly on our website and was one of the first agencies to participate in President Obama's [Open Data Project](#).
 - HPD can only report on what is reported to police.
- HPD holds quarterly Crimes Meetings that help officers identify hot spots and strategies to deal with criminal issues.
- Collision Reporting Center (CRC):
 - Has already been rolled out; working very well.
 - Have seen about 30% - 40% reduction in officer time response for minor accidents.
 - CRC is an optional tool that citizens can use to report accidents.

NEXT MEETING:

- Thursday, April 11, 2019, 6pm
 - Location: HPD's Townsend Community Room, 40 Lincoln Street, 5th Floor.

Meeting adjourned at 1940 hours.