

**City of Tacoma**

**Community’s Police Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, June 10, 2024**

Hybrid Meeting

**6:00 p.m.**

**The CPAC is comprised of Chair Allen McKenzie, Vice-Chair Louis Cooper, and Committee Members Angela Mealing, Ralette Churchill, Esther Evans, Shepherd Southworth, Adrienne Jones, John Bordon, and Tracy Jones**

**Members Present:** Allen McKenzie, Louis Cooper, John Bordon, Esther Evans, Ralette Churchill, Tracy Jones, Angela Mealing

**Members Absent:** Shepherd Southworth, Adrienne Jones,

**Staff Present:** Staff Liaison Ted Richardson, Staff Liaison Chelsea Talbert; TPD Chief of Staff Michelle Woodrow, Executive Liaison Jacques Colon,

**Staff Absent:**  Lieutenant Katz

Called to order at 6:05pm

**Approval of the Agenda**

Approval of the agenda for the CPAC meeting held on June 10, 2024

Passed at 6:06

**Approval of the Minutes**

Approval of the minutes of the May 13, 2024 and May 29, 2024 CPAC meeting.

Motion passed at 6:07

**Briefing Items**

**City Reports**

**City Manager’s Office**

* 6:08 – No report

**Tacoma Police Department**

* 6:07 – No report

**Presentations and Discussions**

**Presentations on Policing Oversight Recommendations**

* 6:09 – Vice Chair Louis Cooper gave an overview of CPAC’s duties, advisory vs. Oversight, history of oversight recommendation, summary of charter review recommendation related to oversight and policing accountability, and summary of CPAC’s recommendation. Allen shared that Council discussed the charter’s recommendations at a recent committee of the whole and while the discussion did not indicate that council would move the charter recommendations related to policing accountability on the ballot however there was an appetite to work on oversight through an ordinance.

**Public Comment**

* 6:21 – Lester Pogue Junior shared concerns about the actions of TPD including murders and lack of oversight of TPD. Lester supports CPAC, oversight of TPD, and supports the city to offer recognition of CPAC’s work and to stand by committees and commissions that the City Council formulates in order to have the public involved in decisions, processes, and oversight of TPD. Lester shared that public including young people are becoming very discouraged by the lack of oversight of TPD. Lester is disappointed in the City Council’s recommendation and disappointed that this has been a conversation for so long. As a former CPAC member, Lester did not have confidence in the processes and 7 years later, there still isn’t proper oversight of TPD or requisite of the community to have some kind of comfort and overstanding of what TPD has been doing to the public and the people on the streets. Lester supports CPAC and the oversight committee and believes this should be moved forward and take action.
* 6:24 – Sally Perkins shared gratitude to CPAC for creating the opportunity for feedback and is appreciative of the work CPAC has done. Sally shared that we have been at this in 20 years and there has been no time pressure to get anything done because nothing has happened. Part of the reason for that is that in late in 1990 or early 1991, the collective bargaining agreement with Local 6 was changed to put the collective bargaining agreement to supersede any provision of the charter or any ordinance passed by City Council. Sally shared that the subordination clause has been in every CBA since and one of the reasons the City Council doesn’t pass an ordinance is because it has to be bargained and that takes forever or it goes to bargaining and it dies. Sally said that for the City Council to now be talking about doing oversight through passing ordinances is very hard to believe. Sally is disappointed that the Council decided not to move forward any of the charter review recommendations to the ballot and is disappointed those decisions are made during study session where they take no public comment or in special meetings on Fridays that are not advertised until the last minute. Sally shared they are skeptical that the city has any commitment to police oversight and this is why they think CPAC is so important, because CPAC has been the steady force pushing for this. Sally has friends who served on CPAC in 2005 and 2006 and developed initial recommendations for oversight and they are still mad that nothing happened with them because an ordinance was passed saying that the Council was going to do it and then they didn’t do it. Sally agrees with Mr. Pogue that there is a great deal of skepticism and discouragement among people in the City of Tacoma who want to have strong police oversight programs. Sally would like to see the City Council make a time-based commitment to passing CPAC’s recommendation with a time structure for the bargaining so that the bargaining actually gets done instead of limbo. Sally hopes to see the City Council a whole lot more focused on this and currently feels that Council is avoiding bringing this to the ballot so it can languish within the city for another 20 years or until another charter review commission tries it again. Sally feels cynical but thanked CPAC for all the work they have done and especially Mr. Cooper who has been a leader in this work for so long and it is time for CPAC, Mr. Cooper, and other members of CPAC’s work to be respected by the City Council. Sally hopes to see commitment to action.

**Committee Discussion**

* 6:30 – Committee members discussed a potential resolution. Louis mentioned to the committee that a resolution now would be in the best interest by the council. Esther shared that any path that can be tried, CPAC should do as it is important to knock on every door. Allen shared that the June 4 committee of the whole was the first time he heard multiple councilmembers express support for civilian oversight. Esther shared a preference that this work continues to live under CPAC and that CPAC has access and authority to move this work forward under budget constraints. John shared that he agrees with Esther. John feels the city is flailing and is concerned about trying to hire a unicorn that would lead to significant delays in moving the work forwards whereas relying on CPAC would help support realistic job expectations.
* 6:37 – Allen recapped the fiscal note information that council received related to the charter’s recommendation on policing accountability. Allen estimates that CPAC’s recommendation could be completed with less than $500,000 a year especially considering the level of support CPAC members are able to provide. Louis shared that what is important is that the money should be found, and that budget should not an excuse. John agreed with Louis and Allen that CPAC could be more effective with funding.
* 6:43 – CPAC discussed charter review recommendations and if there are any that they would like to see move forward if money were no object. Esther shared she did not find duplicative crime scene forensics to be important, but the information should be available to different people to review. Allen asked about investigations that get kicked back including interviewing witnesses and John shared he didn’t feel that CPAC would be effective in conducting interviews as an important set of skills is needed. Esther shared she would like to see incremental wins. Allen shared that he think’s it’s important to have someone on staff who could be able to interview witnesses and complainants. Ralette said that we are assuming that complainants don’t want to talk to the police and Ralette, respectfully, is skeptical of that. Ralette feels if someone is filing a complaint, they expect follow up and is concerned that TPD is not proactive. Ralette feels that if TPD wants to act in good faith, they would recalibrate the EIS system and provide the proper training to begin with and then we can talk about goodwill. Ralette is unsure what CPAC could do to encourage TPD to do what they should do.
* 6:55 – Allen asked what authority CPAC should have to tell TPD what to do. John is concerned about the long lag between complaints and follow up. John feels there should be an immediate response including a timeline when a complaint is filed. This could help set expectations for why the process takes so long. Louis said there needs to be another person not affiliated with the police that complainants can talk to. Louis shared an example of a time it took family a year to get any information about a murdered loved one. Tracy said that putting a process in place, even just a date for when they should expect a call back, would help.
* 7:00 PM – Allen asked how far CPAC should be able to go with being involved in the disciplinary process. Louis felt that it would not pass with local 6, at least not right away, but would like to have input and be in conversation with the chief of police.
* 7:03 – Michelle encouraged CPAC to look at the complaint/discipline policy which is broad but it does have timelines included. Michelle said that TPD is policy-driven and reviewing policy may help. Allen affirmed that CPAC would not like to take away any duties but add to it.
* 7:08 – John asked Michelle how involved CPAC should be in disciplinary action. Michelle said that anything would need to be negotiated. There is a total of 7 different labor contracts that cover TPD. Everyone at TPD is covered by a union except the chief of police, chief of staff, and community engagement manager.
* 7:16 - Ralette asked if there is leverage to recommend things beyond discipline like additional trainings or mentorship. Ralette asked if CPAC is able to red flag officers in the system to prevent future problems. Allen said this didn’t come up in previous conversations but he would be supportive of CPAC recommending retraining on policies. Ralette feels there has not been movement when she has asked about 21 CP recommendations and early intervention systems which are not part of the disciplinary process and would like to focus on that. Ralette shared that recommending trainings to officers could help improve relations with the public. Allen would like CPAC to have the ability to recommend non-disciplinary actions like trainings and perhaps even the ability to weigh in on suspension and termination decisions. Ralette and Louis agreed.
* 7:20 – Allen asked if CPAC thinks the council should get traction with respect to use-of-force investigations? Should CPAC or the public be able to weigh in on use of force review? Louis would like to see a CPAC member weigh in on deadly use of force investigations. Allen said that charter review wanted their recommended office to investigate use of force. Esther said it would add to transparency.
* 7:26 – Esther asked what kind of commitment can council give to this work? Ralette agreed that council needs to give something. Allen asked if a resolution would be a step in the right direction. CPAC member shared sentiments that they would like to see action and not talk. Allen shared he would welcome the opportunity to review a resolution before it moves forward. Louis said the full committee should be able to view it. The committee agreed that they would like to see it soon.
* 7:31 – CPAC requested a future presentation that includes an overview and update of EIS especially as it related to 21st CP recommendations.

**Police Reports Review**

* 7:33 – CPAC voted to move this item to next month’s agenda.

**Duties prescribes by Bylaws - Member Report**

**Oversight Subcommittee**

* 7:39 – No update to share

**Policy Subcommittee**

* 7:34 – John shared the work is on hold because they are no longer receiving policies from Lexipol but are working with Ted and Michelle to determine policies to review.

**Outreach Subcommittee**

* 7:35 – Esther shared they are meeting regularly. Esther reached out to TPD related to a flyer and has not heard back and is disappointed.

**Subcommittee Membership:**

* Oversight Subcommittee: Ralette Churchwell, Allen McKenzie, Louis Cooper
* Outreach Subcommittee: Esther Evans, Adrienne Jones, Angela Mealing, Tracy Jones
* Policy Subcommittee: Stephen Hagberg, John Borden, Ralette Churchwell, Adrienne Jones

**Upcoming Important Dates**

* Ongoing Tuesday Study Sessions and Friday Council Special Meetings are being devoted to the Charter Review Recommendations
* June 13, CVS 4:30pm – Opioid Settlement Update
* June 18, Study Session noon – Alternative Response
* July 6, Study Session noon – State of Courts, presented by Tacoma Municipal Court Judicial Officials
* July 25, CVS 4:30pm – Youth and Young Adult Violence Reduction Update

Upcoming Council presentations and recordings of past presentations can be viewed here: [City of Tacoma - Calendar (legistar.com)](https://cityoftacoma.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx) Live Study Session and Council meeting can also be viewed on TV Tacoma: [TV Tacoma - City of Tacoma](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/City_Managers_Office/media_and_communications_office/tv_tacoma)

**Other Items of Interest**

* 7:40 - Michelle shared that the policy review is still on hold due to staff transitions. Michelle apologized for not following up with Esther.
* 7:42 – Esther shared there is an August 24th event with TPD to help kids get ready for school. Community members can donate bikes, coats, supplies, shoes, and more. Bervin at TPD is the lead. Esther shared it would be a good event for CPAC to partner with TPD on.

**Public Comment**

* 7:46 – Allen opened public comment.
* Lester shared they like the suggestions about tightening up the complaints about TPD officers and if there's anything that the CPAC can affect aside from it being established as an oversight committee, that some type of oversight on consequences with the officers being acquitted of the murder of Manny Ellis and at the same time being awarded $500,000 to abdicate their positions in the department. Lester shared they think it's profit all around for Tacoma PD officers and that stabs the public in the back when a lot of folks are trying to establish trust. Lester said some oversight or some accountability aside from the city’s constant paranoia about having to deal with lawsuits. Lester said that the City always says it is going to get sued. Lester asked what happens when a large group of Tacoma citizens decide to do a class action lawsuit against Tacoma Police Department and the governance of Tacoma for not protecting the public. Lester said it seems like when they listen to these conversations and hear the work that's been done over all these years, it seems useless and it seems like there is no oversight and no way to hold Tacoma Police Department accountable for any of their actions. Lester said the City often says they don’t have enough staff and is always finding an excuse to not do things but it'd be nice to hear some positive things about how Tacoma PD is protecting the public, answering the people's concerns, and is able to inspire those 3000 youth that they may be present at an event to say “we apologize for what have done in the community and we apologize for the actions of these PD officers”. Lester said this would be as if there is some accountability where a PD officer that murdered a person from Tacoma, isn't able to get hired on the next county over, as one of the officers did in Thurston County. Lester said the reason why the officer had to resign was because the public of Tacoma showed up in Thurston County at those meeting to say “hey why are you hiring this officer?”. Lester asked how offensive is it that he can go one county over and get hired and get paid. Lester said there has to be something and it has to be established that city governance respects and honors the public's commitment to listening, to contributing, and to making Tacoma a better city, a more safe city, for all of us, not the North Enders or business owners but all of us, from the folks that are struggling in the streets to the small business owners who want protection in their neighborhoods. Lester commended CPAC for their work and said it seems very discouraging that after all these years and all this effort, there's been no accountability put upon local 6, especially after they went after the Mayor and Councilmember Blocker when the Mayor spoke and said “hey stop killing my people”. Lester said local 6 attacked them and it’s on their Facebook page and on City Council meetings. Lester said they are not a police hater but they love people and the community and thinks the community is asking for some protection and asking for some accountability from one of the most budget friendly departments in Tacoma. Lester concluded by saying that accountability is key and they don't think that's a lot to ask for.

**Adjournment**

Motion passed 7:52pm

*Allen McKenzie*

Allen McKenzie, Chair

*Chelsea Talbert*

Chelsea Talbert, Staff Liaison