

Chief Kott outlines plan to engage our community

The Bethlehem Gadfly Community Engagement Initiative, Police December 18, 2020

🌀 *Latest in a series of posts about the Bethlehem Police* 🌀

ref: **Councilman Reynolds requests a Community Engagement Plan outline from the City**

In a November 30 memo Councilman Reynolds prompted Chief Kott to put some thoughts to paper regarding police interaction with the community.



The Chief did that at the City Council meeting December 15.

And did so generously.

Councilman Reynolds was pleased.

Gadfly will try to get a copy of Chief Kott's detailed reply to Councilman Reynolds, but for now you can listen to her reading it (4 mins.), and Gadfly will share a few highlights below.

- General outline of the police department's plan to engage our community.
- During these divisive times, community-police engagement opportunities can genuinely and organically build understanding, trust, confidence, and respect between police agencies and the communities they serve.
- . . . seek to remove barriers . . . embrace diversity, and encourage two-way communication . . . strive to identify the community's public safety priorities, build trust, increase understanding, improve satisfaction, and initiate a collaborative effort with community stakeholders for addressing community issues and concerns.

Here are some of the "measurable actions" to be implemented. Listen to the audio for more detail on each.

- various surveys
- Your Neighborhood/Your Police Department events
- community walks
- community-police forums
- re-introduce Citizen and Junior Police Academies
- expand partnerships with other City departments
- partner with stakeholder organizations . . . listening sessions, focus groups
- increase social media presence

The Chief's comments were followed up by supportive comments by Councilpeople Reynolds, Negron, and Crampsie Smith. Councilwoman Negron highlighted for Chief Kott suggestions by earlier resident callers Toulouse and Schor that we will cover in a subsequent post. Councilwoman Crampsie Smith hoped for future collaboration with services provided by the County (so as not to duplicate) and she highlighted increases in autism that need to be addressed.

It is evident that relations between Chief Kott and Council are off to a good start.

The Bethlehem Gadfly