

# Thinking outside the box about a Public Safety Meeting

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Police July 16, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts about the Bethlehem Police 

*What's the best way to have this meeting?*

*Councilman Colon, Chair of the Public Safety Committee*

Councilman Colon, chair of the Public Safety Committee, spoke from **inside a box** at the July 7 City Council meeting.

George Floyd died May 25. Chief DiLuzio made his “George Floyd’s Death & Policing in America” statement to Council **June 3**. The first local demonstration was held **June 4**. Councilman Reynolds and Councilwoman Crampsie Smith sent their “Use of Force Directives and Community Engagement Initiative” to Chief DiLuzio **June 9**. The Mayor responded to the Reynolds/Crampsie Smith memo **June 16**. Council discussed and passed the Reynolds/Crampsie Smith resolution **July 7**. We are now on the edge of the July 21 Council meeting. Two months from the murder. Time passes.

Chair Colon wanted a Public Safety Committee meeting by this time. But COVID-19 boxed him in.

From what we can deduce from his comments July 7, Chair Colon “favors doing things in person” and would like “to see a large crowd.” But Town Hall, the Liberty Auditorium, and even the Liberty Stadium are not workable within the state pandemic guidelines or logistical efficiency.

And so he asked, “What’s the best way to have this meeting and capture the comments by as many members of the community as possible?”

A few posts back, Gadfly asked if you followers would have some alternate ideas for the kind of large-scale in-person meeting that Chair

Colon wants, a meeting that we badly need before momentum shifts away from the issue of police reform and systemic racism and before budget season gets too far along.

Crickets. So Gadfly guesses you want him to break the ice. And make a fool of himself.

Let's see if we can stir some thought that gives Chair Colon what he wants or nearly so.

So let's think a bit wild, a bit out of the box.

Instead of one meeting, several.

Let's try for a meeting in each of the 8 police districts. Would have the feel of neighborhood meetings, perhaps making exchange of views easier, drawing out a balance of views (we aren't really hearing from those believing in a status-quo yet), and encouraging views from across the entire city. Different districts no doubt have different views of the police.

Let's try for a venue in each district that could hold 30 or so safely socially distanced — school? church?

Let the moderators of the individual 8 meetings be the 7 Council members plus the Mayor — the districts they moderate chosen by lot. This integrally involves all the key people and dramatically demonstrates their commitment to working together and to listening to community voices.

Let the 8 meetings happen simultaneously. You know, like it's one big meeting. Create a PR buzz about it beforehand. Have a slogan. Do a media push. You know, "Tuesday night July 28 Bethlehem Speaks Out on Police Reform!"

Film the meetings and post immediately on the City or the Council YouTube channel.

It will be the job of each of the 8 moderators to prepare a bullet-point summary of their individual meetings (a 10-bullet maximum) that will circulate to the public and be delivered (within a 10-minute maximum) at the August 4 meeting at which there can be public discussion.

The Public Safety Committee (Colon, Negrón, Crampsie Smith) then boils out an appropriate smaller number of issues and action items for full Council to deliberate.

Does that start to break the ice, bust the box, stir some other options?

Don't leave Gadfly twisting out here all alone.

This is fun.

*Have at it!*