

A model: Restorative Justice in Detroit

The Bethlehem Gadfly Police July 15, 2020

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

Restorative justice in Detroit

<https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/restorative-justice-in-detroit/Content?oid=9697360>

International Institute for Restorative Practices

531 Main St.

Patiently but indefatigably, Peter Crownfield has been peppering us with comments reprinted below, but comments that might not have been fully appreciated.

Let's take a look at restorative justice in Detroit, facilitated by a local Bethlehem organization.

Anna Smith has suggested that an initiative be headed by someone outside City government. Gadfly has suggested doing what we are doing with the Climate Action Plan.

Worth thinking about.

1) List of members suggest a typical government-community committee. If they want to see actual community engagement, they need to be transparent about what they discuss. Perhaps they could start by beginning to organize a series of police community summits like they did in Detroit:

- Restorative justice in Detroit
[www.metrotimes.com/detroit/restorative-justice-in-detroit/Content?oid=9697360]

2) Not to beat a dead horse, but I want to repeat what I have said more than once: I think the one of the most effective ways to develop real police-community engagement would be to use a process similar to the police-community summits held in Detroit a couple of years ago — a series of in-depth meetings throughout the city. I've worked with several cohorts of students exploring the idea of Community-Based & Restorative Justice, and they were quite impressed by this process. Here's some newspaper coverage:

- Restorative justice in Detroit | Detroit Metro
[<https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/restorative-justice-in-detroit/Content?oid=9697360>]

3) Two approaches to having trained professionals take over MH cases would, potentially, involve diverting work and funds from policing — Austin TX has mental-health paramedics; Eugene OR teams with community organization to do similar things. Both can be dispatched by 911 call center.

- 911 Services That Dispatch Mental Health Counselors, Not Cops, Gain Traction
[<https://truthout.org/articles/911-services-that-dispatch-mental-health-counselors-not-cops-gain-traction/>]
- Community Groups Work to Provide Emergency Medical Alternatives, Separate From Police [<http://www.truthout.org/news/item/32782-community-groups-work-to-provide-emergency-medical-alternatives-separate-from-police>]

4) On the matter of experts, though, I'd like to see someone from IIRP, someone who was involved in the police-community summits in Detroit.

5) Community engagement — See my previous comments on other posts. No committee, task force, or meeting can come anywhere near real community engagement. What we need is an approach that is deeper and more open, like the one developed in Detroit. This would be comparable, in many ways, to the 'truth and reconciliation' processes we've seen elsewhere.

6) I didn't get to add that the best sort of process would be similar to what they did in Detroit a couple of years ago — a series of police-community summits in the various policing districts. This is real community engagement!

- Restorative justice in Detroit | Detroit Metro Times
[<https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/restorative-justice-in-detroit/Content?oid=9697360>]

7) I think the whole police-community engagement idea would be best served by a process like the police-community summits held in Detroit a couple of years ago. I'll see if I can get more detailed info from IIRP [International Institute for Restorative Practices].

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(Since they are based right here in Bethlehem, maybe we could prevail on them to help!)