

More thoughts on the August 11 Public Safety meeting

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Police August 4, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the George Floyd killing* 

Gadfly, you know, is a “good conversation” junkie.

So, he’s excited.

The online Public Safety Committee meeting is now only a week away: Tuesday, August 11, 6PM.

Counting down.

Have you **signed up** yet?

Obsessed as he is with the great potential for change opening up to us, Gadfly has a few other comments to make:

Publicity: Gadfly hopes that there is a plan aworkin’ to turn out big numbers of the public. Gadfly, who’s been living and breathing this police/race issue for weeks, was taken aback that the resident who initiated that discussion on the Next Door blog a few days ago had only recently caught up to the Reynolds/Crampsie Smith resolution. We get no substantial media coverage; posts on the City web site are passive in nature. We’re gonna be talking about major issues, and Gadfly hopes there’s a plan to drive a big turnout. For people without internet access, for instance, he wonders if screens could be set up in certain schools or in the Hispanic Center where people could socially distance congregate and be encouraged to call in.

Scope of discussion: The meeting is billed as a discussion of use of force. There are several documents relevant to use of force linked on the registration page. Gadfly wishes the meeting was not trying to handle two big topics, the use of force and the Community Engagement

Initiative. Gadfly is a divide and conquer kind of guy. Gadfly is a focus kind of guy. And these topics seem both big and, given the wide range in the way the CEI has been talked about, perhaps not all that related in the long-term. Gadfly would rather a focus on the police department here but widening the scope beyond use of force. We have linked three documents relating to use of force on the registration page. Gadfly would like to see the City budget, copies of the last two police accreditation reports, minority personnel statistics, discipline statistics, and so forth linked there as well. And you saw some of Gadfly's other topics of interest in his last post on this topic. There's a lot we could talk about. This is our chance to take a broad look at the department. Those chances don't come too often. Let's use it. Now the Chief may cover such things in the presentation, and there may be PowerPoint slides of interest, and so forth, but Gadfly would like to encourage the broadest look possible at the department and as much relevant info out front of the meeting as possible.

Format of the meeting: Gadfly has already mentioned a worry about trying to cover the two big topics at once. He knows permitting public comment at the beginning *and* at the end of the meeting is probably a bridge too far, but Gadfly hopes Chair Colon will have the public comment at the end of the meeting as he did in the last Public Safety meeting in March on the marijuana issue. Gadfly felt public comments could be more informed after hearing presentations and Council discussion.

What are you thinking about in regard to the operation of the meeting?