

City of Cambridge

Police Review and Advisory Board

51 Inman Street
Cambridge MA 02130
617-349-4396

Minutes 3/31/2010

Board Members Present: Mertin Betts (chair), Martin Small, and Susan Melucci

Board Member Absent: Richard Peters

Staff Present: Executive Secretary Marliisa Briggett and Investigative Outreach Liaison Joseph Johnson

Cambridge Police: Deputy Superintendent Christine Elow, Lt. Lenny DiPietro

Public Present: Albert Skane, Marc Levy, King Downing, David Aurelio, Brigitt Keller, David Kushner

The meeting began at 6:10 p.m. with public participation. The public asked general questions about the public case regarding the Gates incident, including the number of Cambridge residents included in the complaints and whether non-residents can file a complaint. The Board clarified that anyone can file a complaint whether or not they are Cambridge residents. With respect to the Gates case, two individuals and one group have filed a complaint regarding the Gates issue. These complaints have been consolidated into one complaint. Other comments included a request for PRAB's rules and regulations and ordinance. PRAB will work towards quarterly reports with the amount of cases filed and their status.

Lt. DiPietro of the Cambridge Police Department spoke about the department's diversion program for Cambridge children (up to age 22). The program is part of the Youth and Family Services Program. The Program operates in all of the schools and high school with 6 school resource officers. It partners with the Human Services Department, Cambridge Health Alliance and youth centers. Lt. DiPietro coordinates activities with 2 juvenile detectives, youth outreach workers. The program is strictly voluntary and it works on a case by case basis conducting risk assessments with parents and the stake holders in the community. They deal with CORI issues, mental health and restorative justice. The program is preventive, grant funded and free. Some of the services include training and counseling, working with the courts, district attorney's office and parents. One of the goals of the program is to prevent youth in Cambridge from getting criminal records.

A member of the public raised a question regarding whether youths can file complaints if they experience police misconduct. The Board responded that anyone can file a complaint.

In the Executive Secretary's report, Ms. Briggett reported that Ms. Jennifer Flagg could not attend the meeting however she informed PRAB that they were invited to the next meeting of the review panel on April 26, 2010 and that she would forward time and location information when she received it. Ms. Briggett also reported that the website has been updated to include the meeting minutes and schedules and that a goal was to make the website generally more user-friendly. She noted that, in response to a suggestion from a resident, staff has installed holders with brochures and forms for persons in the building after hours. She noted that the Board has interviewed candidates for the vacant position. Ms.

Briggett indicated that Commissioner Haas has asked the Board to work with the CPD on the issue of homelessness in Central Square. As a first step, the Board will be invited to participate in a "Walk Along" training with the CPD. These trainings will be scheduled when the new Board Member is appointed. Some of the outreach efforts include youth "Know Your Rights" workshops and Public Service Announcements on CCTV. Finally, Ms. Briggett noted that Lt. Elow is working on a mediation program for certain complaints and she'd like to involve PRAB in that work.

The Board voted to convene in executive session to update cases.