



City of Portland
Departments Committee Meeting Minutes
October 25th, 2021 at 6:00 PM

1. Call to Order

- Chair Lizanecz opens the meeting. Introductions.

2. Introduction by Ryan and brief Presentation from Commissioner Barowitz

- Commissioner Barowitz presents on policing in America to give the public more background information. Barowitz states that we live in a bureaucratized society and the police department plays a role in that. Barowitz also explains that police spend a lot of time enforcing this bureaucracy and that there is an imbalance of power when it comes to interactions with the police.

3. Dr. Lelia DeAndrade (Former Member of Portland's Racial Equity Steering Committee)

- Dr. DeAndrade gives the committee an overview of the report prepared by the Racial Equity Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was interested in exploring different models of connecting people and resources. Says the city should do more in-depth work on the topic through a racial equity lens. She finds the conflict of interest procedures to be complicated, compares it to jury duty. Dr. DeAndrade states that it can be difficult to find people who are not connected to topics in some capacity.

4. Emily West, Current Chair of the PCRS

- West explains that the Police Citizen Review Subcommittee is an auditing mechanism without any power. The members of the PCRS are the only 7 Portland citizens that see body cam footage and other potential evidence. For police oversight to be effective, transparency and accountability are key and, currently, the PCRS does not offer that. Commissioner Houston asks West if she has seen changes over time and West explains that the PCRS has made recommendations to track race and ethnicity in complaints among other things. Some changes are underway on those recommendations and others are not. West states that any changes due to recommendations from the PCRS are up to the discretion of the City Manager and Police Chief.



5. Ali Ali, Former Member of Portland's Racial Equity Steering Committee & Currently with Maine Youth Justice

- Ali gives an overview of the work that the Racial Equity Steering Committee conducted on the issue of policing. Ali reiterates that in its current form, the PCRS does not provide accountability or oversight. There is no way for the public to know what is really happening in these investigations. Ali states that the way that police departments currently operate in Portland can be harmful to communities of color if there are not adequate means of oversight in place. He also expressed concerns over the policy that ensures that people convicted of felonies cannot be on the PCRS.

6. Discussion of next steps by committee members

- The Committee works on determining priorities for future meetings. Commissioners agree to dedicate next meeting to workshopping ideas and compiling information based on the presentations that have been seen so far regarding policing.

7. Adjourn

- Houston motions to adjourn, Barowitz seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.