



Greensboro Criminal Justice Advisory Commission

**The Greensboro Criminal Justice Advisory Commission and Police Community Review Board held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, September 19, 2019 at the Central Library in the Tannenbaum-Sternberger Room. Commissioner Tom Phillips presiding**

**Commissioners Present:** Nazim, Gethers-Clark, Webb, Phillips, Jalloh, & Friedland

**Commissioners Absent:** Sevier

**PCRB Members present:** K. Brown

**PCRB Members absent:** O'Brien & Q. Brown

**Staff Present:** Latisha McNeil, Criminal Justice Administrator; Trey Davis, Assistant City Manager; Capt. Harris, GPD Professional Standards

**Visitors:** Latosha McCorkle, Sheena Beasley,

**Legal Department present:** Andrea Harrell, Police attorney

**I. Call to Order:**

Chair Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:03pm

**II. Moment of Silence:**

The meeting opened with a moment of silence.

**III. Bail**

Commissioner Phillips spoke with the group about elimination of the cash bail process. The group is looking to schedule a meeting with Guilford County District Attorney Avery Crump. CJ Admin McNeil placed a call to DA Crump's administrative assistant to get the Commission on her calendar. The Commission will gather information on other cities that have eliminated cash bail and review their processes. Commissioner Gethers-Clark moved that the GCJAC continue to learn about bail elimination in preparation for the meeting with the district attorney. Administrator McNeil will send information. Commissioner Nazim seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**IV. Discussion on Marijuana v/s smokable hemp & Expungements**



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The Commission previously received information on the number of marijuana arrest in Greensboro. This information did not address hemp vs marijuana concerns, but did identify disparities among the demographics of persons charged with marijuana possession. The data showed that Blacks are charged with marijuana possession at a significantly higher rate than other groups. Commissioner Phillips asked GPD attorney Harrell if the Department had any explanation for the disparities. Attorney Harrell stated that when you compare the number of marijuana arrest to other arrests it is not a high number and marijuana arrests are not a priority to the Department. However, regarding disparities in demographics she did not have an answer. She went on to state that per current state law the odor of marijuana does give officers probable cause to search a vehicle. Nevertheless, the odor of smokable hemp is not currently not being investigated and even ‘marijuana plus something else’ is the minimum standard today. Commissioner Phillips stated that the disparities in charges will be something that the Commission will be looking into further. Commissioner Gathers-Clark stated that the disparity in arrest numbers shows the injustice faced by people of color in American and that it shows up statistically. She went on to state that it is important that the group acknowledge that there is racial bias and racial inequity in this data. Attention has to be paid to the data adversely impacting people of color. She further stated that it is important for the group to not gloss over the issue by simply stating we don’t know why there are disparities in the data and speak truth to the situation so thoughtful conversations can lead to behavior change. Commission Phillips reminded the group of the study that came out on talking about disparities in the traffic stops and searches of blacks and that from that study the Chief enacted new policies to address the issue i.e. not stopping for minor equipment failures. He went on to ask the GPD representatives in the room how that policy changed. Capt. Harris indicated that the order was temporary, and it has been lifted so officers are now able to make traffic stops that were suspended. GPD will get further information on the issue and provide it to the Commission at a later date.

Commissioner Phillips spoke further about expungements. Attorney Harrell advised the group that the Human Relations department did an expungement project two years ago. She said that



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she spoke with DA Crump and that the DA's office is willing to work with the Commission and or the city to look at getting another expungement program started. Commissioner Friedland stated that Elon Law might be interested in collaborating with expungement projects. Discussion was held by the group about the challenge of getting expungements i.e., back log of cases, types of charges that can be expunged. Commissioner Jalloh stated that the THRIVE program through the Human Relations Commission works on expungements as well. She further stated that for the immigrant community trying to get an expungement could be detrimental to their status.

The Commission determined it would gather more information on expungement and reach out to groups working on the issue. Commission Friedland also mentioned written consent.

### **V. Street Law Youth Program**

Commissioner Friedland updated the group on the Street Law program. The program is currently in 14 different schools and juvenile detention center. Law students from Elon Law are going into those places and speaking with kids about the law and understanding rights. Commissioner Friedland's partner in the Street Law program, Marissa Meredith, will attend the GCJAC session in October to talk more about the program.

### **VI. External Complaint Data Update**

Commissioner Phillips asked the GPD for an update on the complaint data. Capt. Harris advised the group that there is currently one complaint pending in professional standards - received September 5<sup>th</sup>. There is also one mediation pending due to the fact that the third-party mediator is working to make contact with the complainant. He further explained that the professional standards department has a 45-day window from inception to adjudication of complaints. He explained the process that professional standards uses to process the complaints as well as some of the potential barriers to the 45-day completion. The question was asked if CJ Admin McNeil was receiving all the complaints that come into the police department. Commissioner Phillips stated that he would follow up with the police department because complaints should be coming to the CJ Admin so that she can keep track of the time it takes for completion. Commissioner



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Webb asked if there was any data on how many complaints are dropped when professional standards is unable to get in contact with the complainant after the intimal receipt of the complaint. Capt. Harris stated that it depends of how information is received, if the amount of information is enough to allege a policy violation then the case will be worked regardless. If there is not enough information from the complainant to move forward, the call is still documented as an inquiry. Discussion was held about possible disincentives to filing or completing complaints. The Commission would like to track how people are getting their information to file a complaint.

### **VII. Additional Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Jalloh stated that she has been receiving questions about the community participating in the hiring for the new chief. ACM Davis stated that there are forums being held throughout the city for people to express their thoughts on what they would like to see in the new Chief. The City of Greensboro website offers a survey for the community's participation. Information will be forwarded to the Commission. Commissioner Jalloh said she would be on a panel for a Community Empowerment and Participation in a democratic process forum for the immigrant community September 28, 2019 at George K's. She stated that she will have materials on the Commission available to pass out.

CJ Admin McNeil, Commissioner Webb and Committee member Q. Brown will attend the 2019 NACOLE conference in Detroit, MI in October.

### **Visitors Remarks**

Rhonda Chavis spoke about cannabis, hemp and expungement.

Latasha McCorkle addressed correlation between marijuana arrests and impoverished communities.

Sheena Beasley spoke about legal aid providing free clinics on expungements



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**Commissioner Nazim moved to adjourn the meeting with 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Webb.**

**Meeting Adjourned at 7: 03pm**