

September 9, 2015

To: Mayor and Town Council
Town of Chapel Hill

From: Community Policing Advisory Committee (CPAC)
Roscoe Reeve, Chair

Subject: Yearly Report 2014-2015

CPAC is pleased to submit to Council its yearly report for your review. The year has been very challenging for the Chapel Hill Police Department (CHPD) and CPAC is grateful to the department and its command officers for assisting us in fulfilling our charge and for letting us have participation and feedback in the process of addressing those challenges.

National incidents involving police officers have put law enforcement in media headlines with explosive issues calling into question police behavior and the motivation behind their actions. This has reflected on officers everywhere, and, while inevitable, it has been very painful for those who work so hard to fairly and fiercely protect their communities.

Related concerns were brought forward in Chapel Hill by citizens as a result of those national incidents and the department and CPAC incorporated them in their charge to identify and resolve issues arising from *community policing* and to review department rules, standards, policies and training. CPAC finds Chief Blue and his command officers to be always proactive in addressing citizen concerns and issues.

Issues addressed in various meetings this year have been: militarization of officers, racial bias and racial profiling. CPAC has reviewed, in each case, how the issue relates to Chapel Hill and how well it is addressed in existing or proposed plans, policies, procedures and training of CHPD officers. Chief Blue has met with citizens in various public forums to answer their questions and to address their concerns. In the spring, Council received – along with all law enforcement agencies in Orange County - a petition from an organized group of citizens (Orange County Bias Free Policing Coalition) to address racial bias and profiling. It included some specific incidents and data about Chapel Hill. At our June meeting we received an introduction to the document petition. Chief Blue reported to CPAC, and the coalition, that over half of the issues in the petition had already been addressed by the Department and others were in the process of being addressed. In late June, Council referred the coalition's document to CPAC and we will formally review it at our fall 2015 meetings, including coordination and cooperation with the Town's Justice in Action Committee.

In February a horrific murder occurred in Chapel Hill. The victims, all shot in the head, were Deah Shaddy Barakat, 23, and his wife, Yusor Mohammad, 21, of Chapel Hill, and her sister, Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha, 19, of Raleigh. The community and the whole nation were

shocked by this crime. The murderer was quickly apprehended but officers responding witnessed an unforgettable crime scene and a shocking arsenal of weapons possessed by the shooter.

This spring, CPAC reviewed the department's purchase of rifles for each of its patrol cars so that officers are properly equipped to respond to incidents with appropriate firepower.

This year, with CPAC support, CHPD offered another Citizens Police Academy that was well attended.

CPAC concludes this year with a great deal of confidence in Chief Blue and his department. Chief Blue has engaged our group in meaningful policy issues, and we were able to provide feedback on many of the issues he brought to the committee. We find that we have one of the best law enforcement agencies in the country with strong professional leadership and a well-trained committed body of officers whose slogan is *Guardians of the Hill*. Feedback indicates that Chapel Hill's citizens are highly satisfied with and proud of our police department. CPAC is grateful to serve in its role as your bridge between CHPD and the Chapel Hill community.