

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PLAN

GOAL 1.3 LISTENING SESSIONS



Summary: August 6, 2020 Follow-Up Meeting with the Santa Rosa/Sonoma County Chapter of the NAACP

On Thursday, August 6, 2020, Santa Rosa Mayor Tom Schwedhelm, Santa Rosa Chief of Police Rainer Navarro, Community Engagement Division Director Magali Telles, Economic Development Division Director Raissa de la Rosa, Community Engagement Coordinator Danielle Garduño, and Community Outreach Specialist Gustavo Mendoza met with members of the Santa Rosa/Sonoma County Chapter of the NAACP for a follow-up listening session and dialogue.

Previous Listening Session

On July 8, 2020, Santa Rosa Mayor Tom Schwedhelm, Santa Rosa Chief of Police Rainer Navarro, Economic Development Division Director Raissa de la Rosa, and Community Engagement Coordinator Danielle Garduño met with members of the Santa Rosa/Sonoma County NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) for a listening session and dialogue.

Discussion Points and Themes

To begin the follow-up listening session, Mayor Schwedhelm provided the group with an update on items that have occurred since the last meeting with the NAACP. These include:

1. The first City Council Public Safety Subcommittee meeting took place on July 2, 2020
2. The City Council approved a budget for the addition of an Equity Officer and will be initiating the hiring process soon.
3. The City Council completed its Goal Setting Session this week:
 - a. Tier 1 – Crisis Response: Homelessness; Fiscal Stability, Funding and Avoiding Layoffs; Public Safety Priorities and Reform; Organizational Diversity, Inclusion and Equity; and Economic Vibrancy.
 - b. Tier 2 – Continuing Priorities: Climate Change; Housing and Affordable Housing; Government/Council Reform.
 - c. Possible Future Priorities: Affordable Childcare; 2017 Recovery and Resilience; Community Engagement and Outreach; Utilities; and Focus on Deferred Maintenance.
4. In addition, the Mayor also mentioned that the Santa Rosa Police Department (SRPD) is in compliance with the 8 Can't Wait campaign and that a [recorded presentation](#) made by the Chief of Police is available through the City Council's Public Safety Subcommittee.

In addition to the Mayor's updates, Chief Navarro also provided updates on what his department worked on since the last session:

1. Updated use of force policies on SRPD website;
2. Working with Community Matters on conducting cultural competency training for school resource officers;
3. Providing resiliency training for SRPD officers using Resiliency First, Inc.
4. Looking into what other implicit bias training is available for officers
5. Joined Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)

Several questions came up from NAACP Members during the listening session, which were followed by discussion from the group. The discussion centered around two areas: officer evaluation and use of force complaints; and systemic racism and white supremacy culture in Santa Rosa.

Discussion Point 1: Officer Evaluation and Use of Force Complaints

The first question asked was how does SRPD evaluate officer performance? Chief Navarro responded to the question, stating that there are several components that go into evaluating an officer's performance:

1. Santa Rosa Police Department Standards of Conduct – is the officer meeting these standards?
2. Review of complaints

If an officer is not meeting the Standards of Conduct, there are a number of disciplinary options that can be used, ranging from officer counseling to termination.

The group then asked about accountability and what happens if there are multiple complaints against an officer for use of force. In addition, how many complaints does it take before an officer loses their job? First, Chief Navarro explained the process for complaints of use of force:

- If there is a complaint of use of force:
 - a. An investigation will be held
 - b. Body worn camera footage will be reviewed

Chief Navarro then stated that if outcome of the investigation depends on the complaint. For example, if significant use of force was used that is not in line with the department's policies, the discipline will be more severe. In addition, if an officer has multiple complaints of use of force, this will be taken into consideration and disciplinary action will be determined.

Another member asked a question about training: how are trainings for officers different from prior years, given the rise of use of force? The Chief stated that while the curriculum has not changed over the years, there have been more discussions at the executive levels given the most recent use of force events. The California Chiefs of Police Association, for example, are currently talking about reform, not just relating to training, but reform across agencies, from how officers are hired and evaluated to discipline and tracking of officers who have been terminated for excessive use of force.

The group agreed that keeping the current training curriculum is unacceptable and an authentic "shaking up of the culture" must take place so that real change can occur. City staff then asked if the Chief could expedite his community advisory committee, to which he said yes. The Mayor mentioned that Stockton, CA has a community use of force committee that meets with the city manager on a regular basis to review all use of force incidences. There was a suggestion to implement this in Santa Rosa.

Discussion Point 2: Systemic Racism and White Supremacy Culture in Santa Rosa

The conversation also touched on white supremacy culture and systemic racism in Santa Rosa and throughout Sonoma County. One member stated that the community needs to understand this concept and how it impacts our communities of color in their daily lives. This member also stated that as white people, including herself, "we need to stop taking up space" and allow people of color to step into that space and lead the dialogue. SRPD officers, City Council and City staff need to step back and listen.

Another point brought up under this topic is that the County of Sonoma recently hired an Equity Officer. This new Equity Officer spoke at a recent Board of Supervisors meeting and only focused on the Latinx, Indigenous and immigrant communities. A group member stated that once again, Black community was left out of the conversation. There is an agreement from the group that the City must consider Black

candidates for the City's Equity Officer position. The group asked for more information about the hiring process for that position.

Other Points of Discussion

- The Mayor asked the group what they would do if they were the Mayor in this situation. The group responded with the following:
 - Accountability has to start today
 - Training reform needs to be a priority. Officers may not realize or do not care how what they do affects others.
 - Take a day in the life of an African American. Spend a day in their shoes.

- The subject of healing was brought up. A lot of healing needs to happen. What does healing look like for you? The group was asked to email staff with their responses to this question.

Outcomes and Next Steps

- The Chief will work with staff to develop the Chief's community advisory committee, including roles and responsibilities of the committee, the application and selection process, and member terms.

- City staff will work with the community to prioritize other community requests/demands for planning and implementation.

- Staff will assist in setting up a meeting with the City Manager, Mayor, Chief and members from this group and other Black community members.