

Mayor Johnson:

All right, good evening. It's 6:00, we will commence. I will call to order tonight's special City Council meeting. It is a continuation of Monday night's meeting, which we adjourned due to some technical difficulties with accessing the meeting. We do apologize for that, and we're happy to have you here tonight joining us, and we apologize for any inconvenience that may have caused.

Mayor Johnson:

I am going to go over, just for those of us who weren't able to join us the other day ... Actually, I'm going to start with roll call first. Mr. Hanifan, can you please call roll call so we know which City Council members are present?

Mr. Hanifan:

Thank you, Mayor Johnson. Actually, Clerk Kaiser is here with us tonight, so I'm going to have her do that for us.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. Madam clerk, if you could call roll call?

Clerk Kaiser:

Council Member Feeney.

CM Fenney:

Here.

Clerk Kaiser:

Council Member Wiseley.

CM Wiseley:

Present.

Clerk Kaiser:

Council Member Iannelli. Council Member Iannelli?

Mr. Hanifan:

We'll come back to him. He just joined.

Clerk Kaiser:

Mayor Johnson.

Mayor Johnson:

Present.

Clerk Kaiser:

Council Member Pacheco.

CM Pacheco:

Here.

Clerk Kaiser:

Council Member Albertson.

CM Albertson:

Present.

Clerk Kaiser:

Council Member Iannelli.

CM Iannelli:

Here.

Mr. Hanifan:

Everyone's present.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. I appreciate that. All right. Again, tonight is a special meeting of council, it is a listening session. I believe each member of council cares deeply about this community and is committed to ensuring that the city of Chelsea is a great place to live, work, or visit. As you all know, we are conducting the meeting via Zoom. It is being recorded. So I wouldn't ... If you haven't already done so, I'm going to ask that you turn off your audio, and we'll go through that more a bit. So everyone can hear and we pick up the static and background noises in your homes, that's greatly appreciated.

Mayor Johnson:

Also, it helps, it can be very distracting when people are walking in the background. We will be taking breaks, and I'll talk about that in a minute, but if you are going to get up, maybe you could darken than your screen and it will help, I think, keep our focus on the people who are speaking. As we talked about, running a meeting by Zoom is imperfect as we found out last week and it can be tedious. So please be patient as we use this method and work to comply with all the rules and regulations and provide everyone with an opportunity to be heard.

Mayor Johnson:

We will be taking a break. It is a long time to sit in front of a screen, we also recognize that it's, also, for many people dinner hour, and there are other things where we may need to take a break. So we will be taking a five minute break at the end of the first hour and a 10 minute break after the second hour, and we'll follow that pattern until we end this meeting.

Mayor Johnson:

This is a meeting of City Council, and it will be guided by the city's charter and the city's policies and of course, as always general courtesy and civility. For the members of the public, for public engagement periods, please keep your comments and dialogue civil and respectful. We're going to ask that you use a hand raise function on Zoom and wait to be called on. There will certainly be a pause as we understand, as you will, unmute and mute back and forth. So recognizing that, please everyone let's be patient. One turn per person until all persons have had an opportunity to speak. We want to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to be part of the conversation, and in order to do that, our city rules, we ask that everyone speak once and then you can come back in line in the queue.

Mayor Johnson:

For council, it came up at the last meeting that there had been a request by an organization to read anonymous statements. We agreed at the last meeting that we have a City Council policy that you must state your name and where you live, and we agreed to suspend that policy to allow anonymous statements for agenda part A, for personal experiences and interactions with the Chelsea Police Department. We did note some concerns, but the majority of the council members were in agreement with that. Five said, yes. One said, no. Some of the concerns that we had about the anonymity of the statements was reliability and credibility, identifying the where and whens, and also the use of any anonymous statements. In particular, that they should be used for flagging issues and not necessarily used as fact or for making wholesale changes.

Mayor Johnson:

With respect to council, it is a special meeting and the intended purpose is to listen. However, sometimes to get the best information, we certainly recognize that it's reasonable and appropriate to ask some clarifying questions, to better understand the context of the statements. And council, we will also be guided by the same rules that we typically employ, which is please use the hand function, wait to speak until you're called upon, and one question or comment until all council members have had an opportunity to ask the questions or make a comment. Just as a reminder, the city staff and council cannot discuss matters relating to any pending active investigations regarding the altercation at Pierce Park, as well as the internal investigations regarding officer conduct.

Mayor Johnson:

In part, main reason for this, is a right to fair trial or any adjudicative proceedings. There are concerns that you may prejudice or any of us will prejudice the ability to collect evidence or statements, and whether we ultimately jeopardize the investigation of the case. Before we start, I do want to acknowledge that there are members of the Chelsea Schools, district staff here tonight. I know I saw in the participants Mr. Luman Strong, and Mr. Mark is coming. There is a request by the public that we invite them, and while this is not their meeting tonight, they are here tonight to listen as well.

Mayor Johnson:

And with that, I just wanted, I tend to go over the timing. I think I said at 6:55, we'll take our first break for five minutes. And other than that, we'll start on the agenda, which is item number 2A, and that's personal experiences or interactions with the Chelsea Police Department. And if you would like to speak, this is the listening portion for council tonight. So if anyone would like to speak, please raise their hand and we will call you as best as we can in the order in which your hand is raised. All right, Sue Vandenbosch please.

Sue Vandenbosch:

Thank you. First I would like to thank Mr. Hanifan, for so quickly shifting to a different format to try to make Monday's meeting work. I appreciated that, even with the continued technical difficulties. And I wanted to thank you, Mayor Johnson and the Council Members for unanimously voting to reschedule so that we could get everyone participating. While this meeting is in response to the handling of an incident by Chelsea police officers, I feel it's imperative that we respond to this issue in a more holistic manner.

Sue Vandenbosch:

Racism is a significant problem in the Chelsea area. Our reputation among people of color from outside our area is that we are not a safe place for them to visit. We need to take whatever steps necessary to change this and to make sure people of color feel safe coming to visit and moving to our area and working in our area. I say the Chelsea area, because there are entities inside our city that service a much larger area like the Chelsea School District. And I'm grateful that we have representatives from the school district at this meeting this evening. And while I realize that City Council and the school district are separate entities, we can't really move forward with healing and change until we acknowledge that there are Chelsea students of color who have been driven out of our school district by rampant racial bullying.

Sue Vandenbosch:

Listening to the stories of the kids and their parents is heartbreaking, we have three families personally, who have put their children in other school districts because they felt it was the only option to keep their children safe and provide a healthy learning environment. Our oldest daughter, Ava, witnessed called out and reported several different incidents of horrific racial bullying during her time at Chelsea High School. I would implore the Mayor, City Council members and everyone who's calling into this session, to strongly encourage our school district administrators, and superintendent, and school board members to have their own listing solution and to develop a zero tolerance policy towards acts of hate.

Sue Vandenbosch:

This problem is much larger than just one entity within the city. Every aspect of our community has come together to take a stand against racism, to figure out what we can do to change this reputation Chelsea has towards people of color. And I have faith in the Mayor, the City Council, and Chief Toth in investigating these issues internally with regards to the incident that happened in the park. I look forward to a resolution to that and some steps moving forward, and that's it. Thank you for letting me speak.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Miss Vandenbosch. I appreciate your time. Miss Ladio.

Miss Ladio:

Yes, thank you. I first wanted to acknowledge, I appreciate Chief Toth being on camera and so dissipate in the meeting. My comments have to do with the culture in town, and first to the police department. Chief Toth himself said publicly that culture trumps policy, that ideas can take precedence over written policy. I'm sure he meant it in a good way, but when dealing with youth and people of color, this can really go way wrong.

Miss Ladio:

Let me get this back up here. So I had an interaction with a police officer during the June 25th March, and he was squarely against the marchers, repeatedly voicing his angry disapproval. Even his chief said he believes in constitutional policing, and supporting the right to protest and dissent. Given this upsetting interchange and the events in the park later that evening, I am concerned about the culture in the department. We don't have records of how people of color are treated in town, the race and ethnic origin of those stopped for traffic incidents and the outcomes are not recorded. We have nothing to counteract the attitude of fear and concern that have been expressed to me by people of color in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, that they will be singled out in Chelsea. Whether or not we hear these stories tonight, there are stories of the singling out happening with black and Latinex persons in town.

Miss Ladio:

I asked before, if an officer saw a person of color in Chelsea would they immediately think they didn't belong there? I know that there is implicit bias training of the officers, but given the events of the last couple of weeks and the exposing of some pretty dangerous attitudes on the part of some of the officers, I'm very concerned about the culture. Chelsea has a non-discrimination ordinance. I haven't heard the police chief say that his department and every officer in it supports this ordinance. Maybe there needs to be a non-discrimination pledged by each officer and records cap to prove their non-discriminatory activity. I would also like to say quickly that I listened to Chief Toth's talk about the mental health support he received in years past that is no longer there.

Miss Ladio:

He said that he had mental health and social work resources he could easily call on to handle appropriate situations that his officers are now being asked to handle. I'd like to see some of that support reinstated, maybe there's budget to be reassigned, or the mental health money that hasn't been spent should be put to this use.

Miss Ladio:

And second, I have a statement from a father in town that I will identify, that speaks to the culture for non-white youth. He says, "My son transferred from Chelsea to a nearby district after experiencing racism in middle school. I have a high regard for school staff in general, but see two problems that negatively impacted my son's opportunity to function and succeed. First, the mindset of staff and athletics, more specifically football, is discriminatory with regard to disciplinary concerns. My son was involved in some conflicts and needed to be held accountable. However, he received more harsh treatment in such matters, being black compared with white football players. What complicates the matters of discipline is that my son also has ADHD and a mood disorder that can lead to violent outbursts. He sometimes can't control himself when faced with teasing and bullying, the white kid who teased him was treated with leniency while my son received harsh punishment for losing his temper as a result of the bullying.

Miss Ladio:

This leads to the other criticism referenced above, about the middle school administration. As a child with special needs, who had an individualized education plan to Chelsea, the staff were not effective enough when needed the most to intervene in a constructive way. The saddest example of this shortcoming, which interestingly gets back to sports was when my son was prohibited from playing football, following an incident that involved him and a few teammates. The school social worker at the

time, Fred Van Reisman objected after the fact. He informed athletic staff who punished my son, that he as a social worker should have had input to the decision to punish my son because of my son status as special needs. Mr. Van Reisman couldn't reverse the decision, but worked more closely with my son after that disciplinary step.

Miss Ladio:

He helped maintain my confidence and trust in the staff at Chelsea. I was sad to learn that Fred was no longer working in Chelsea Schools soon after he got involved helping my son. It seemed apparent that athletics has an overriding influence on administrative and disciplinary concerns. It's no exaggeration to say the effects on my son were traumatic. And in spite of moving on and doing better, the experiences remain in his awareness. I hear accounts of discrimination, again, often involving sports participants from others who went to school in Chelsea or their parents. Hoping to be heard with an open mind by those who can make a difference, Charlie Stockton." And I will say as myself that I do know that after all this, this child left Chelsea Schools because of this so his family is still in town and it's a shame he can't go to his local school.

Miss Ladio:

I will further say that records of harsh punishments for black youth is well-documented across the country, even recently by our Michigan School of Education. I appreciate the time to make the statement. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Miss Ladio. Just a couple of reminders, if you do want to raise your hand, you should have a hand raise function, depending on what type of device you're using. It may be under participants. It may be under the more function. So just if anyone does want to speak, please be aware. You can also quickly Google it, and there is a lot of tutorials out there quickly that we'll also share how to post. I know that I posted something on my Council Member Facebook Page for all the different ways in different devices to use the chat function. Kathy Melton, please.

Kathy Melton:

Hi, thank you. I wanted to thank, first of all, the City Council members for the listening sessions. My name is Kathy Melton and I live in the city of Chelsea. The reason I'm here tonight is because I heard from several people that they fear civil discourse is being threatened. Those with opposing viewpoints are afraid to speak due to the council culture environment within our own community. So I decided to learn more about the Chelsea protests by listening to last week's council meeting, to see what may be leading to this anxiety. I was surprised to learn the weekly protest group had no identifiable leadership. They described themselves as anonymous and autonomous, which meant no one was authorized to pull permits or to be responsible to coordinate the protest.

Kathy Melton:

And as such, there is no one identified to accept responsibilities or consequences for this group. Consequences such as running into traffic, kids getting hurt, too many people showing up and shutting down traffic and a lack of sufficient police presence in proximity of the event. And maybe most importantly, outside groups that neither side wants, will be able to bus in protesters to further their own agenda. One of the conversations from last week was an introduction to the idea of non-binding resolutions that appeared to be asking the police in the city to acquiesce to the group's desires, to

bypass the rules or laws to protest. Asking the police and the Mayor to come up with a plan to bypass the law, the rules, and processes could have huge unintended consequences.

Kathy Melton:

If you do this for one group, you must do it for all groups. And even those groups that community members may greatly oppose or feel threatened by. I heard members say, "We want this to be a learning experience for our children" and I agree. One of the lessons that should be taught is that there are reasons to follow the rules, and consequences when you bypass them. If the rules are wrong, change the rules through proper processes, instead of teaching them how to bypass responsibilities as this could lead to unintended consequences. Now, the reason this is so important is that following established rules and protocol lays the foundation, and also encourages the participation in public debate. People can be intimidated by large groups of anonymous and autonomous protestors that continually do not follow basic rules.

Kathy Melton:

We also have seen evidence of a council culture mentality that goes after people they either disagree with or who challenge a process that doesn't give them their desired results. I encourage the City Council members to keep in mind the value of the laws, the rules, and understand the value of civility in a society where respect is a two-way street, where laws are followed and processes should be reviewed and challenged when needed. What we cannot allow are non-binding resolutions that ask laws to be ignored. Those who allow anonymous and autonomous groups to avoid responsibility and possible consequences while demanding others to follow those same rules and laws. Currently there is no end date or proposed goals for these protests, nor are there clear directions coming from the Mayor or City Councilors to the plan of dealing with weekly streets shutdowns that violates both State and city laws.

Kathy Melton:

This presents an open-ended blank check that very few, if any community members want and are willing to accept. I would like to encourage the Mayor and the City Council to give the autonomous and anonymous group an opportunity to create a plan that doesn't shut down a State road every week, but to create a plan that can work with their specified guidelines from the State and city. Since every plan must have a goal, I encourage the city to provide this group two weeks to work out their leadership, their message to align their goals, and to present a plan of action to the city. And if by week three, there is not an approved plan then the city and police return to enforcing the laws of which every community member can depend. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Miss Melton. I appreciate that, your comments. I will now go to Debi Khasnabis, and I apologize if I did not pronounce your name correctly.

Debi Khasnabis:

Thank you. You got it pretty well. Good evening, my name is Debi Khasnabis. I'm not a resident of Chelsea, but I live in the County and I am a family member of the child who was assaulted. I have known her since she was a baby, having marveled over her growth from an infant into a teen and thus feel personally affected and horrified by what happened to her. When I heard what happened to my family member, my heart sank, and I was overcome with fear for her, her family, and even for myself and my own nuclear family. While I feel great sadness by what happened to my family member, I'm heartened

by the number of people who are here today. Most of whom I presume do not want the city of Chelsea to be a place where people of color, including children, fear for their safety.

Debi Khasnabis:

I offer my sincere thanks to the City Council members for hosting this session. In addition to my personal connection to the child who was assaulted and her family, I have worked for many years with educators across the area by offering countywide development for teachers and school and district administrators on the topic of race, racism, and schooling, which is my area of expertise. Based on my work of over two decades of experience as an educator, ranging from the role of a classroom teacher in Detroit to an educational researcher and professor at the University of Michigan School of Education, I ask you to attend to a basic truth that all my work and scholarship evidences. What children experience in their communities affects their entire being, and thus affects them as students and learners. Children of color experience high rates of discrimination and racial violence at the hands of many parties.

Debi Khasnabis:

This critically impacts their wellbeing, their feelings of safety and belonging, their self concept, and the degree to which they can thrive. Research has evidenced the devastating toll of racism on the minds and bodies of children and adults. We know, for example, that experiences of racism can affect a mother's pregnancy and the health of her infant. Children who have experienced racist microaggressions and racial violence are likely to experience hyper-vigilance, and an ongoing state of heightened stress. I hope this is not what Chelsea wants for its community members. One area of work I do is anti-biased training, where I support teachers to learn to speak up and interrupt racially biased acts that harm students of color. Interrupting hateful acts is one of the most important ways that adults can come to the aid of students who are being harmed.

Debi Khasnabis:

It is one thing to be harmed by racial violence, and it is yet another thing entirely to feel that the adults who are charged with caring for you will not protect you. When children are not protected by adults in these ways, it comes at a great cost to their psyche and ultimately can have devastating impacts on the mental health of children. If Chelsea, as a community commits to nurturing all its youth, including those who are most at risk of racially motivated violence, then the community must stand up to support and advocate for these youth. There is no way around this. I am here today as a woman of color, as a family member, and as an educational leader, to ask you the Chelsea City Council to intervene on the behalf of a child. A child who deserved to be protected from harm and violence by adults. From my perspective, this is a crisis, but it is also an opportunity.

Debi Khasnabis:

I ask that you, as community leaders, move beyond a stage of outrage to a place of action. The community is naming what they believe needs to be done. Please listen and take action. When children are violated, as adults you have a responsibility to intervene. Tonight I ask that you take up this responsibility. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. I just do want to note that, a number of people have talked about the school and some concerns that they have more broadly. I do want to note that a number of additional school members, school board members and staff members are also participating on our call tonight. Thank you. Ella.

Ella:

Hi. My name's Ella, I thank you so much [inaudible 00:27:32]. I want to mention, even though I'm not a citizen of Chelsea, I came today because I'm an extended family member of the teen who was assaulted in Pierce Park. I'm here because from the second I heard what my family member had experienced, it disgusted me. I can barely imagine how dehumanizing a situation like that would be. I couldn't fathom why this woman would punch a 16 year old girl. As a biracial girl in America, I've experienced a fair share of injustices myself, but this hits really close to home. I have a white father and a grandmother, and I'm only a few years apart from my family member in age. I live just a short drive away from Chelsea and have friends who live there, and I visit in the area.

Ella:

To be honest, I'm scared. It's hard not to see myself reflected in my family members situation. I could have been here. And I know I'm not the only one feeling this way, people of color across the County and our country share the same feeling I do. But it fills me with optimism to know that there are groups like the Anti-racist Chelsea Youth who are committed to standing up for people of color in their community. From my personal experience, generations youth is ready to fight for justice for all people, which is something everyone can learn from. Youth have a really powerful voice and their bravery is much needed during this time. I ask the City Council to continue fighting for youth who are supporting people of color because we can't do it alone.

Ella:

When no one protects you, even as you're being harmed because of your race, it can make you think that you are worthless. Like people don't value your life. I would hate for that to be the case in Chelsea, which is why I ask the City Council to step in and protect the child and give my family member the justice she deserves.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Ella. Thank you for taking the time to talk with us tonight. Annette Kennedy.

Annette Kennedy:

Hello. My name is Annette Kennedy. I do live just outside of Chelsea. I am a Chelsea address. I have a child who is straight from Africa. She is from Ethiopia. She is very dark skinned. And I can say that we have never experienced any kind of racism towards my child in Chelsea. In fact, it has been quite the opposite. We literally have people, when I go somewhere, trying to go overboard, even offering to buy her a frosty at Wendy's or this or that. She went to Chelsea Public Schools for kindergarten and first grade, and I was very comfortable with her being there. She does have an IEP. We got phenomenal help with her neurological condition, she has verbal apraxia. We needed speech therapy. I got phenomenal guidance from the three speech therapists from whom we received help.

Annette Kennedy:

We did an incredible amount of work at home, but we certainly got a tremendous amount of support and guidance from the specialists at Chelsea School. And again, just living in Chelsea, being in Chelsea every day, going through Chelsea, oftentimes with our other friends of color, I can say that I have never heard any one of them say that they felt threatened or unsafe in Chelsea, Michigan in any way

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

whatsoever. And that goes for myself with my child, very much dark skinned child. Thank you very much.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Miss. Kennedy. Jennifer. Sorry, you don't have a last name. Jennifer.

Jennifer Condat:

Hi, can you hear me? Can you hear me?

Mayor Johnson:

Yes.

Jennifer Condat:

Yeah, I'm Jennifer [Condat 00:31:51]. I do live in Chelsea, I live in Dexter township, but it's the Chelsea School District. I've lived here 28 years, and as many of you know I'm quite active in many ways with civic affairs. But I'm speaking really, I'm going to read something that my son wrote and he just turned 30 years old yesterday. He's not even living in this country right now. He moved to Stockholm, Sweden, but he took the time, he was quite tired but he wrote, when I asked him to talk about his experiences as a substitute teacher in Chelsea Schools, right after he graduated from Wayne State University in Detroit. Michael, is his name Michael [Condat Caul 00:32:34], was a substitute teacher and worked largely in the middle school and high school. In fact, I would say the predominant work he had was at the middle school.

Jennifer Condat:

So let me just start, I think that's enough background on Michael. So again, it's written informally because he was tired and this is through Skype text. Michael writes, "Regarding bullying of persons of color students at Chelsea Schools, I think there's two, three factors which contribute to the most issues. Students pick up on bad stuff and don't understand how racist they're being. As one example, I've had to tell off one student for literally going Ching Chong, Ching Chong to an Asian student before. And I'm pretty sure he was just a big fricking idiot, and not intentionally malevolent. The thing is, I'm pretty sure when I told him that was racist, he filed away the specific act of saying Ching Chong, Ching Chong as racist and therefore bad. But he probably has a load of other racist acts and words buried away that he didn't understand were racist at the time.

Jennifer Condat:

The concept of racism itself doesn't seem to be thoroughly conveyed to students effectively, and all they get out of it is racism equals bad. But not how do I identify what the heck racism is on their own or how to reflect on what they do and consider if it's racist or not. As a substitute I was never entirely sure how much I should act on a case by case basis. This is not about the school administration. I have total confidence that Mr. Angel, Nick Angel, the principal at Beach Middle School, would have agreed with any case I sent to the office and would have happily thrown the book at them. But it was also a problem of overall classroom management. I couldn't sink a lot of time into specific cases of racism and bullying because they were 20 something other kids I had to watch after often by myself.

Jennifer Condat:

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

And if I spent too much time reaming into one student for behavioral issues during class time, there were 20 something other kids who weren't getting any guidance or attention. It was difficult to fully invest the time and focus I needed in order to sort out any problem among students. I'm pretty sure this is the last, I'm pretty sure there were some real genuine racists among the student body. And I have no idea how to crack them. The best I could figure was to just isolate them from the main student body. If I couldn't fix them, I could cut them off." And that's the end of Michael's statement. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

All right. Thank you, Miss. Condat. Is there anyone else who would like to speak, Mr. Cook, your hand was raised earlier. Josh?

Josh:

No, I'm good.

Mayor Johnson:

Okay. Thank you. Just scrolling for a moment. Just want to make sure I'm not missing anybody. I'm going to ask for your patience.

Mr. Hanifan:

Could the person who is identified as iPhone with her hand up, if you could let us know who you are then I can rename you on the screen.

Joanne Barhite:

Hi, I think that's me, Joanne Barhite. Hello?

Mr. Hanifan:

Yeah, thank you.

Joanne Barhite:

Okay.

Mayor Johnson:

All right, Miss Barhite, go ahead.

Joanne Barhite:

So I was asked to read something from Daphne [Hottar 00:36:37], she couldn't make it to this meeting. So here it goes, "I was on a trip in the fall of 2018. I got a phone call from my neighbor, Brenda Hartman. She told me that there was Nazi propaganda tacked to my maple tree in the front yard. I was horrified and asked her to please take a picture and to call the police. She told me that the police were aware and that a couple of houses down the street had also been targeted.

Joanne Barhite:

I was with my daughter and son-in-law and got home several hours later. The next morning I went to the police station and asked for the chief, but was told he was gone, but would return the next day. I told

my story to Officer De Troyer, and she assured me that the police knew about it and to see the chief the next day. I was about to leave when she turned and told me that an officer was available. I demurred, but she was insistent. So I spoke with Officer Cornell. My front yard, I neglected to say was full of democratic women's signs. He seemed totally disinterested and said a couple of times that the police were on it. Leering at me, he asked why I felt targeted. The yard signs were obvious. I felt disrespected and demeaned by his conduct and left with a sarcastic thanks.

Joanne Barhite:

The next morning, the chief called me and we had a very satisfactory conversation. Can only conclude that the officer in question needed some counseling. When I asked Officer Cornell, what I should expect next, he sneered." That's Daphne Hottah, wanted to say that about officer Cornell. Since I'm reading this and I have the opportunity, I would just like to say, I didn't know about this story until I was asked to help out and read this. And I just want to say, as someone, I'm almost ready to cry. As someone whose father and uncles fought Nazis in World War two, I am stunned, I'm horrified, and I'm appalled that someone would be so dismissive of Nazi propoganda being put up in our town. So that's Daphne's statement. That's my statement. And I want to say thank you again. Thank you to everyone who's here and listening. Thank you to City Council.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Miss Barhite. I have someone by G Co. I'm sorry, I don't have a better identifier than that, but you are next in the queue.

Speaker 18:

I'll just unmute myself. So my name is [inaudible 00:39:42]. Bear with me with my accent, I'm originally from France. It was the first year yesterday, and I have no intention of chopping heads. Nevertheless, I'm the mother of two kids we adopted in Utah, from the foster care system. When we adopted them, prior to the adoption we were asked what type of kids we wanted to have. The question was surprising to me, and we replied, "Kid." Let's say, "What type of race would you like to have?" I was totally oblivious and said, "We want to help kids, it doesn't matter the race." The lady in front of us replied, "80% of white people will adopt white kids because there is sometimes issues and it's easier to integrate a white kid within a white family."

Speaker 18:

That was my first approach to racism. Well, then we were sent two kids and we did foster to adopt, and so we ended up those two kids. They were seven and nine when they arrived. We spent a year and a half with them in Utah, and then we transitioned to Chelsea and we were absolutely fantastically welcomed in Chelsea. People are very friendly, and all those nice little cute kids and so on. We can help them, they both have IEPs and they were helped. The staff and the schools really welcomed them very well and very much so. That was until things started to degrade in middle school, where some of, so my oldest son was starting to experience a few jokes. "Hey, you is [inaudible 00:42:14]. Hey, you, the chocolate kid come on the table." Things like that.

Speaker 18:

Those boys were actually reported, we had a few events. He has also a few punishment because he punished himself, the people who actually harassed him. They were both punished in general because there were witnesses that actually concur what had happened. We always wanted to have the person

who was harassing him and later on her, not to be punished but to be educated. And that's something very important, that's a very big difference. Then Joel went on to high school, and while Juliana his sister was a middle school. And before the end of ninth grade, we had to remove Joel from the high school because he was being harassed pretty much all the time. And despite the help of Mr. [inaudible 00:43:37] and the staff, we were not able to find who was doing what and could not do anything about it. So Joel never finished high school in Chelsea, despite the fact that he had, and he still has many friends, a group of a few kids, which we never knew that well were harassing him.

Speaker 18:

So today, so he's in 11th grade, we're entering 12th grade. We have to drive them, but not right now, of course, but we have to drive them to [inaudible 00:44:22]. So both kids we are forced to do so. Now we are very lucky because we are very privileged compared to many people around Chelsea, so we cannot afford to do so, but we should not have to do so. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. Ellinah [Canamo 00:45:01].

Ellinah Canamo:

Hi there. Thank you. I'd like to also echo the thanks to council for hosting this event and doing all the work it takes to host so many people. I just wanted to echo ... Actually let me just say, 25th year of being a Chelsea resident, and a story from about 20 years ago has lived in me for a long time, and is really relevant right now. It was a letter to the editor that was written in the Chelsea Standard. It was from a black family that was leaving Chelsea because, they were, I don't remember it. I Googled around a little bit to see if I could get my hands on it for tonight and I could not, but it was a story basically saying they were so sorry, but the father of the family wrote the letter saying that they had to move and they had to move away because the father was tired of being pulled over on his way home from work every night.

Ellinah Canamo:

And that he had story of, I don't remember the exact details, but I also remember something alluding to kids not being able to walk freely in the neighborhood or neighborhoods. And that Chelsea was basically not a hospitable place to people of color. So I'm somebody who is working really hard right now. I work in a white female dominated industry to understand equity social justice, to try to make a positive impact to my industry. All I would like to really add to this conversation is that, I want to encourage, implore, and plead with council and Chief Toth, and the police force [inaudible 00:47:05] Chelsea a hospitable place to all people. It's not people of color's job to actually prove that racism exists. So I'm really sensitive to that in my own learning and meeting, which is something that I'm trying to do.

Ellinah Canamo:

It actually is a very [inaudible 00:47:24], makes me feel very vulnerable and uncomfortable, and the process will continue to be that for all of us, I think. But just to remind people that we don't need anyone to prove that racism exists, that's already been proven and it's not people of color jobs to teach us that. It's our job right now, and it's council, and [inaudible 00:47:43] job to be proactive, to clearly create and send a message that people of color are welcome in Chelsea by doing the training and the work it takes to make that happen. So we have to be accountable to the behaviors that will support that process. It's not going to happen overnight, and for so many of us who have lived and love our little community, it's really important for us to actually do the work and get the education it takes to really

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

understand how to make a community hospitable. I think the accountability in the police force is really, really important. I'm not actually ... Yeah, so I think that's really important as we move forward. Thanks again.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank Miss Canamo. [Marka Everly 00:48:40], please.

Marka Everly:

All right. Can people hear me?

Mayor Johnson:

Yes.

Marka Everly:

All right. Thank you, Mayor Johnson, and Council Members for hearing the community tonight. Thank you, it's really amazing to see all of the people here who are concerned and want to come talk about the problem. I have two very separate, but similar things I'd like to point out. We were asked to comment on police conduct today, and I would say that for the majority of my interactions with our police force, they have been within like community, the officers coming to talk to my kid in driver's Ed or coming to talk to our neighborhood block party. One of the concerns I have is that the police felt necessary to show up to both of events in full Bulletproof vests with weapons, and that is not okay with me. I would hope and advocate that Chelsea could be part of the new police structure and would start to think about leaving lethal weapons at home when discussing, driver's safety at the school or when you're coming to talk to a community member.

Marka Everly:

There's no reason for you to be carrying weapons at that point. It just puts ... I mean, it's nerve wracking. I hope, one of my biggest fears is, our nation is the fact that we're having young people gunned down due to people being a little trigger happy. So I'm hoping that Chelsea can be on the forefront of not bringing lethal projectiles to places where there won't be violence or that there is a infant decimal chance. So that is my one comment on that. And then the other thing is, we seem to be talking a lot about youth culture. I have the great privilege of coaching the robotics program on the middle school, and then also, being a mentor at the high school program. I come in contact with about 100 kids a year, and I believe that Chelsea has a real problem. Kids of color have shown me messages and notes that they have received. My own sons have told me that the Confederate flag is very numerous in the high school as belt buckles and bumper stickers on cars.

Marka Everly:

We've had instances where bullying, racial bullying has happened, and while each incident was dealt with very well and firmly, I feel like Chelsea is not taking the additional step to acknowledge that there's a culture and problem with our, my dog concurs, with the fact that we are having kids who think it's perfectly okay to put Nazi propoganda on their Facebook profiles. So that is my concern with our kids is, our children are being ... Even our children who are trying to be anti-racist and trying to stand up for their classmates are put into a position where regular flags of racism and dog whistles of racism are

being ignored by the adults. So I'm hoping that we, as our inner community can stop it and can help our children. Thank you so much for the time.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Miss Everly. I appreciate your comments. It is 6:54, we're going to take a five minute break. I understand there several people in the queue, you will have an opportunity. I want to assure everyone that we're just taking a five minute break and you will still have an opportunity to speak when we resume. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

All right. Thank you very much. It's 6:59. We will resume where we are, just for those who might be joining us or coming back, as part of our agenda is the special session of Chelsea City Council. It is a listening session and we are on agenda ... I'm sorry, I'm just going to remind everyone, if you haven't already please mute. We are picking up some conversations in the background.

Mayor Johnson:

I see that there are several people who are still not muted. So if you could please mute, that would be very helpful. We are picking up some of your conversations in the background, and just a reminder, that those are being recorded and will be part of this conversation.

Mayor Johnson:

All right. Just a reminder, again, for those who are participating from home, please, please mute your audio. We are picking up many conversations in the background that are making it difficult to conduct the meeting. Also again, just as reminder, that they will also be part of the recording as well. All right. So thank you again for everyone who is participating and joining us tonight for the special meeting of City Council. This is primarily a listening session. We're on agenda item 2A, which is personal experiences and interactions with the Chelsea Police Department. We do have a number of folks who have been very patiently waiting to provide some comments and information, and dialogue with us. So I'd like to go ahead and continue with that. Miss Ava Nelson, you are up next please.

Ava Nelson:

I have a short statement, kind of a suggestion. I know this is supposed to be more oriented towards experience with Chelsea police, but I feel that this is kind of a rare opportunity to actually address the school district, and I want to do that while there are representatives listening and just address the issues in the Chelsea community overall. I wanted to speak further on the topic of racism in schools and how to fight that. I am a former Chelsea High School student and still a member of the Chelsea community. I know several people who have felt forced out of Chelsea School District, specifically the high school because of extreme harassment and racist bullying, and lack of repercussions or actions on the administration's end. I think that education is the most effective way to fight this culture in schools.

Ava Nelson:

Chelsea is one of the few schools in the area that doesn't teach black history month. I'd like to recommend, especially to the representatives of the school listening, that black history month is taught or just black history in general. Ignorance is a major factor in these racist interactions, not everyone is just inherently racist they just don't know about it. If children are taught more about this, I feel that it

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

would really help the toxic culture that we have in schools. Thank you for your time. Thank you for listening. And I want to thank everyone for creating this platform to share in the community.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Miss. Nelson. I am sorry that I don't know how to identify you other than by the following, which is +1 585-210-5337. You now have the floor.

Thomas Macias:

Hello, this is Thomas Macias, resident in Chelsea. Can everybody hear me?

Mayor Johnson:

We are picking up quite a bit of static and I actually missed your name if you could repeat that, that would be helpful.

Thomas Macias:

Absolutely. I apologize. I'm outside and I'll keep my statement brief. My name is Thomas Macias, I live on [inaudible 00:59:09] Street in Chelsea. I may not be able to attend later on, but I wanted to say thank you to the City Council for hosting this. Thank you, Mayor Johnson. City Manager, Hanifan. Everybody has been extremely receptive as far as trying to get this done, and I agree with the statements that were said earlier, as far as turning this listening session into actionable steps. I came from a mixed race household. I did not grow up in Chelsea, but I moved here seven years ago, and I feel very welcomed personally. That being said, just because I didn't experience any external racism towards me, that wouldn't mean that it doesn't exist in our society. And I know that I personally have been guilty of unintentional racist [inaudible 01:00:05] statements, interactions with my neighbors, with my coworkers.

Thomas Macias:

[inaudible 01:00:16] for working towards becoming more anti-racist, and being welcoming to all communities [inaudible 01:00:23]. Really quick, [inaudible 01:00:26] for City Council and for anyone else listening in on the phone, who may not know that you can raise your hands using a phone, I'm not on the Zoom app, I am just on my phone. You can use *9 to raise your hand and you can use *6 to mute and unmute your phone. So if that helps other people who may not have access to the Zoom app and are just listening in, and do want to say something [inaudible 01:00:56] I have to say thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. And thank you for those additional tips. All right, Josh, please.

Josh:

Thank you. Just a cool opportunity to come together and listen. I so much appreciate being a part of a community that is like this. One of the things, Marka, I really appreciate what you shared, as far as the concern, as police enter into situations that don't seem like violent situations and they have their uniform, but they also have the other things that are there, like their guns and their vests. And I appreciate that. I know as a parent myself for four kids, I often find myself when I see a police officer with a gun, I'm like, hey, I got to step and I have to [inaudible 01:01:53]. However ... Yeah, it's okay. I'll let you go.

Mayor Johnson:

Okay.

Josh:

Go ahead.

Mayor Johnson:

All right, Josh, I just was going to make a reminder because I want to hear what you have to say. That please, everyone, if you are not muted, please mute. We are picking up background noises and it does make it difficult to hear the speaker. So if you have not done that, it's difficult to keep track of all of the participants, but just a quick reminder and I apologize for interrupting Josh. So I just wanted to make sure that we could hear what you had to say.

Josh:

Yeah, thank you. So in this, I will say, I'm in a unique position where I have a chance to hear some of people's backgrounds and what they've been through. I've had the honor of doing ride along's with police officers, and having those conversations with them. I know for a fact that somebody that is on this call has lost somebody in uniform, and as they've lost that person that they love in uniform, that person and the police officers that help us in our streets and help protect us are a target sadly in our current situation at times. So as they enter situations that seem non-violent, both for the people that are on this phone call or this Zoom that have lost somebody that they love, that was not a situation in which they should have been in danger.

Josh:

I know that each police officer that I've sat down with and had a chance to talk with about what they do, know a police officer and know of a situation that when they walk into situations, even ones that seem non-violent, that because of the badge that they wear and the role that they play for our community, that they can be a target, not because of good people, but because of people that have wrong intentions. So I don't think that they necessarily want to bring those things into those situations, but I believe because of imperfect people, making imperfect decisions they are forced into situations where they, because they have loved ones that they care about, have to be put in that situation. Because they have a job if those worst situations happen, where they're the first line of defense, they are the people that step forward in order to protect us and to protect my kids.

Josh:

So I appreciate that fact that we have to take that step back when they walk into those situations. But I also appreciate the fact that they do that not because they're getting ready for a fight, but they do that because they have to be ready for a fight if it happens. So just know that I don't think the intent is fear. I don't think the intent is to cause a fight or to start a fight. I think in fact, just the opposite. I will say in the situation where somebody on this phone call did lose somebody that they loved. The reason that that situation did not hurt more people was because somebody in that area did have a way to stop that person from taking more lives. So I just want to make sure that we're seeing both sides of that and that we understand the heart and the intent behind those people that serve us and why they take those steps. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Josh. Renee Kemp.

Renee Kemp:

Yeah. Hi, can you hear me?

Mayor Johnson:

Yes, ma'am.

Renee Kemp:

Great. Hi, my name's Renee and I live in Lima Township just minutes from town. As this meeting asks that people speak to their interactions with Chelsea police, I appreciate the opportunity to share. As a youth that went to Chelsea K through 12, I had multiple interactions with police, and I must admit that my personal interactions were all very positive, and want to say that I'm thankful to have had play out the way that they did. With the events of recent, I've been looking back on those interactions and I can't help but wonder how that would have went if I did not have easily burnt pale white skin. Would have the policemen listened to me? What if the policemen believed what I was saying? Would have I gotten a call back from them? I want to think that the answer would be yes, but I simply have not been shown any other reason to truly believe that the interactions may have gone much differently.

Renee Kemp:

I would like to applaud the ARCY, because they have been working diligently to bring racism to the forefront of the conversation and Chelsea, and it's incredibly disheartening that it took a member of their group, an adolescent to get assaulted for the City Council to offer, to "listen" as they are tonight. Which nonetheless, I am thankful that the conversation is being held. As a woman who spends most of her time in Chelsea, I'm disgusted by some of the sexist, racist, and other ists and isms that a CPD officer was found to have posted on his public social media. I hope to hear soon how the CPD response to this situation, and I am hopeful to hear of the education they may provide to their officers on multiculturalism and simple human differences, such as political affiliation or economic status difference.

Renee Kemp:

The CPD has stated their dedication to community policing, and I would like to add that my personal opinion is that community policing would be for the officers to join the youth led marches, not next to you or behind, and to sit with them as they hold their open mic, not in their cruisers as if they're waiting for something to wrong. As a quick aside, before I end, I would like to note to the school district that their silence is deafening. The community is watching and the inaction and unwillingness, as it seems, to change or create policy to uphold their current anti-bullying rules or to simply acknowledge the work that their students are doing to bring the tough discussion of anti-racism to the table is incredibly striking. The time is now. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Miss Kemp. All right, John Decas. I hope-

John Decas:

Yes.

Mayor Johnson:
Okay, thank you.

John Decas:

Yeah. Before moving to Chelsea 30 years ago, I worked for a time with the Philadelphia Police Department, and I say that only to create a context and to understand that it's very easy to be able to find a villain somewhere in any direction. That said, racism is an ingrained aspect of our predominant culture in the United States. I, as a white person, I am rarely made aware of this and I'm probably never threatened by it, but I'm white. My kids had a good experience in Chelsea Schools and despite having been skateboarders, they had reasonable experiences with the Chelsea Police Department, but they're also white. This is not question of good or bad, this is an issue that is virtually a subconscious characteristic of being white in America.

John Decas:

Like fish swimming in the water, we don't notice that we're in the water. I don't believe many of us are purposefully malevolent toward people of color in our communities. However, I do believe most of us are unaware of the ways that we do harm to others by just going about our own business. Teachers, policemen, white citizens in general, we are all in need of training and experiences that enhance our sensitivity to cultural diversity in order to develop an America that lives up to our declaration, our constitution, and our moral values. Thank you very much for the time.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, John. I appreciate your comments. T, Nelson, Miss Nelson.

Tracy Nelson:

Hi, this is Tracy Nelson. I live in the city of Chelsea, and have for the past 16 years. I've had infrequent contact with the police up until the recent events that took place at Pierce Park. I know we're not supposed to talk about any pending investigations, so I'm struggling to find the best way to express my disappointment and the reaction of the police on that evening and the days following. I feel that an opportunity was lost to demonstrate to our youth who have been out protesting against police brutality and actions, that the Chelsea police are different and that they treat everyone equally, regardless of age or race. It's important that all citizens in our community feel heard and that their statements are taken seriously.

Tracy Nelson:

This was not the experience that my daughter and I had. I thought a lot about this encounter over the past few weeks, and I believe that trust needs to be rebuilt between the community and the police. One suggestion that I have is for there to be more transparency between the police and the public, especially about standard protocols and police procedures. So that expectations are level set and citizens can feel assured that they've been heard and treated fairly and professionally. My daughter is here with me now and would also like to just make a few statements.

Amedee Nelson:

My name is Amedee Nelson. I live in Chelsea, and I have to agree with what my mom just said. But I believe we do not need reforms, we need to [inaudible 01:11:57]. We do not have a broken system, the system was built to oppress black indigenous and people of color. The entire police system we have is rooted in racism. Our current police system has evolved from what originally was called slave patrol, and how police interact with people of color today remains connected to that history. The money that goes to the police should be taken and invested in social services, such as education, affordable housing and mental health services. Five years ago, there were protests after the tragic death of Eric Garner, Mike Brown, and many others.

Amedee Nelson:

They called for police reform, and police began implicit bias training, adding body cameras and police community encounter sessions as an attempt to reform. But five years later, with violence and racism of police only escalating, it has become clear that the police are not capable of reforming themselves. Police do not combat violence properly, and they do not deescalate. They are trained to combat violence with more violence. And to Chief Toth, I would implore you and your fellow officers to watch videos of the extreme police brutality that have been surfacing every day, if you have not done so already. And if you can watch these officers initiate, berate, attack and kill these men, women, and children, and you are not ashamed of that badge you are wearing, then you are the reason we need to defund the police.

Mayor Johnson:

All right, thank you Tracy and Amedee Nelson for joining us tonight and sharing your comments. Stephanie Depa, please.

Stephanie Depa:

Can everybody hear me?

Mayor Johnson:

Yes.

Stephanie Depa:

Okay. I wasn't sure I was going to speak tonight, but I just wanted to add some commentary. I think that in this day and age, I appreciate you guys giving an open forum for people to speak, especially with what's going on in the world with the pandemic and everything. I hope there will be more of these. I think it is beneficial for all to kind of see each other as human, and sometimes people wouldn't say the same things maybe on a recorded call or to someone's face as they would behind a keyboard and behind a screen that gives you some protection. So thank you for having this form available. One thing I would like to mention is, the event that obviously happened. I have a 17 year old daughter who was present and a witness of the event, and did submit a statement to the police.

Stephanie Depa:

What I would like to give as a suggestion is to have the police officers respond in some way, shape or form that they received such statement. I think that goes a long way in someone saying, we're listening, and we got no feedback after submitting a requested statement via the format that they had requested. I heard from another family, who also dropped off a statement and sort of didn't know if it got to the

right hands. So having that affirmation that, we got it, and we will, obviously take that into consideration and added to the packet, acknowledgement that people are following protocol, but not understanding if that actually got through to the right person or the right department.

Stephanie Depa:

So I would just like to, maybe in the future, when they address their processes and procedures, maybe take that into consideration of acknowledgement that you have received such documentation. Because I think it's important that somebody who was there, who did due diligence to make sure that she identified correct people that she is heard, and she's not forgotten. I think it's frustrating for youth and young adults to be in a position where they witness something, they need to say something and they're not sure they're being heard. So I appreciate everybody's time, and hopefully we'll have more of these in the future.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Miss Depa. Miss Timberlake. Kathy Timberlake.

Ary Timberlake:

Yes, hi. My name is actually Ary Timberlake. I am a Chelsea High graduate. I graduated in 2015, and I still live here in the city. First of all, thank you to the City Council and the police department for hosting this meeting, because I think it's very important for the community to have a chance to speak to these issues in a space that they know they will be heard. As far as personal interactions with the police, I am white. I have white privilege. In one or two minor interactions I have had with our Chelsea police officers, they have not caused me harm in any way, it has been very satisfactory, but as other people have noted, I can't be sure that that would be the case if I wasn't white. I've heard other people speak to the culture here in Chelsea, and I would agree that the culture in Chelsea needs to change.

Ary Timberlake:

There is a lot of racist attitude and belief. I have heard personally from friends of mine who are people of color that to them Chelsea is still considered a sundown town. Meaning that it is not safe for people of color to come here after dark, because they might get physically injured, or they might be subject to racist police interactions. I think it's important for people to hear that, I do think that our town is considered dangerous to many people. As others have noted, racist symbolism is prevalent at the high school, in the form of Confederate flags. Occasionally even things like iron crosses, I saw when I was there. I have heard racial slurs and racially motivated harassment in the hallways many times with an adult present who did not seem to notice or do anything. I have seen comments from numerous Chelsea residents on platforms like Facebook that betray a culture of racism in our town.

Ary Timberlake:

There seems to be this feeling that racism doesn't exist here, or that it's not our problem, or that protest or discussions belong in other places, other cities and that could not be further from the truth. As we have heard here tonight, racism does exist mostly, and unfortunately our police department is part of that. An officer was recently [inaudible 01:18:59] incredibly racist post on his personal page, and I find it very difficult to believe that nobody else in that department knew that this person held those sort of beliefs. So youth in Chelsea, specifically group Anti-racist Chelsea Youth want to change this culture by making people aware of this current reality of racism, but yet after the incident at the park, I know some people don't feel safe doing that.

Ary Timberlake:

There are people in our town that are afraid to go to these protests, even white people, because they're afraid that they will be unjustly impacted by the police. To assist the youth in making these kinds of changes and getting their voice out there, I would call on both the City Council and the Chelsea Police Department to make a statement that they support racial justice in our town. This does not mean stating support for Black Lives Matter or for any other particular group or ideology, but just to state that the City Council and the police department commit to having a role to play in ensuring that Chelsea combats racism in all its forms.

Ary Timberlake:

Additionally, I would hope that the Chelsea Police Department will take a deep and careful look at their officer's personal biases and will commit to making sure that they as a department are not upholding racist ideals. Another consideration, would be the movement called 8 Can't Wait, which is a program on how to, essentially, deescalate, maybe not deescalate, but how to make police departments better able to work with communities and better able to have community members feel safe. It involves eight policies that make police citizen interactions safer. This includes banning aggressive stranglehold, requiring deescalation of situation, require warning before shooting, requiring to exhaust all alternatives before shooting, having a duty to intervene in negative interactions or situations that they see. To ban shooting at moving vehicles, to require a use of force form, and to require comprehensive reporting.

Ary Timberlake:

Now, I personally don't know how many of these things the Chelsea police has already committed to doing. But I would encourage the Chelsea police department to take a look at those policies and see if there are ways that they can explicitly write into their policies to require things like deescalation, and warnings before shootings and things like that. Because we want our community members to feel safe. We want people to feel like they have a voice and they can be heard. We want people to feel free to come to our city no matter the time of day and not feel like they might be subject to racial violence or negative police interactions. So again, thank you for hosting this meeting, and that is all I have to say. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Miss Timberlake. [inaudible 01:22:26].

Speaker 18:

Thank for giving me this pitch again. So I spoke about what happened to the kids in high school, but my kids also had the chance to experience the local police in Chelsea without any problem at all. So I wanted to notify that, and this is important. Nevertheless, my son reported someone potentially in [inaudible 01:23:08], and he was very well welcomed at the office and they took ... They were very serious about his reporting. He was also assaulted one night, last year, and the police did a fantastic job and we have nothing to say in regards to the local police. We don't have all the details of what's happening behind doors, like what I've heard, but focusing on the situation the kids feel safe working at night in Chelsea. Even though us parents are afraid of, I think, someone, not a policeman being threatening to them.

Speaker 18:

We know that they know pretty much the entire company, and they feel safe talking to the police as they did before. Now, there is ... Being European, I don't know what are the requirements of being hired as a cop in Chelsea. I do know that in Europe, we have two years of training, and before we get [inaudible 01:24:43] could actually have a gun. There is a lot of the training to deescalate a situation or type of situation, it doesn't matter. Yes, there is incident happening and I understand that it's not very often that it happens in Europe. In England, they don't even carry guns. That would be nice just to be able to see that, now ... I also understand that in the U.S., each city has its own policies in regards of the police, so maybe we could implement something all together, working together, which could be something great for the future of Chelsea and that all the town around us would look up to us and say, "They are doing something fantastic." That's all I have to say. Thanks a lot.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. I appreciate your comments, and I do, as an administrator, I apologize. It varied a little bit from our process of calling one person and then coming back a second time, there was a different name on the computer. So I do apologize for that, I am trying to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to speak at least one time before we go back around. That was by no means a fault of Mr. [inaudible 01:26:15]. That was my error. So I do apologize for that. Jan.

Jan Bernath:

Hi. My name is Jan Bernath. I live not too far from the police department and I'm not ... I am very much in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. I stood uptown last Sunday, around on the corner, the Zou Zou, et cetera corner in protest of that. I was more comfortable with that because they stood on the corner. They were not interrupting.

Speaker 1:

The flow of traffic at all. In terms of my street creds, I was a Vietnam war protestor, that ages me, I'm sure. And also stood with Canopus, that stood on the corner in front of the post office for seven years, protesting the Iraq war. So I'm very much in favor of the good that can come from protest. However, I do have a problem with the fact that the protest on Thursday night shuts down, goes down M52. And I believe that who... I know there's no leader in the autonomous group. However, I think they should consider that it is against the law, I believe, to close down 52, and I would be a supporter and put my body on the line down at Pierce Park, if they were not marching down M52. Thanks for this opportunity.

Speaker 2:

Thank you, Ms. Burnett. Mack?

Mackenzie. P:

Hi, my name is Mackenzie Pfeiffer, and I am a Chelsea resident, and I've lived here for 20 years. And to speak to my experience with the police department, I've seen nothing, except for community policing by our Chelsea Police Department. Over the past 20 years, I've seen them at my house in the middle of the night, chasing bats. I've seen them catch teens also in the middle of the night, who were smashing pumpkins down my road, and I've also seen them do welfare checks on our senior citizens. And I don't know any other way to say that they are part of our community. They live here, I've taken tennis lessons with them, my children graduated with some of their children.

Mackenzie. P:

I've seen them at Timber Town, interacting with kids. I've never felt threatened by them in their uniforms. I have also taken the Atlas training at the schools, and there is no way that I would want to try to interact with any active shooter at a school. And I would defer to them at any given time. And I would hope that they would be ready to show up at any moment in full uniform for their protection and everyone else's around them. So I would expect them to be in their uniform whenever I see them. And I'd never felt threatened by that. And they've always shown total respect, even with silly requests that I've given them. And I thank them for their service. And that's all I have.

Speaker 2:

Thank you, Ms. Pfeiffer. Meredith Hartman?

Meredith. H:

Hello. So I am a resident of Lima township. I live not far from town. I've only lived in the area for a little bit less than two years, but the plan is for much longer and for better or worse, I have not had any interactions with the Chelsea Police Department, but recently I have been made aware of public [inaudible 00:03:38] that lead me to believe that officers of Chelsea Police Department are prone to biases, othering, and even racist and sexist sentiments against vulnerable people that they are charged to protect.

Meredith. H:

So because of this, I would be hesitant to trust the police, should I require their assistance. I believe that if my neighbors of color don't feel safe, I am not safe. My neighbors' safety is my safety, and higher standards are foisted on those who choose to take up the badge, many thoughtful, wise suggestions

have already been made, so I won't repeat them, by those who have demonstrated a true love for their community and their neighbors. So I implore the Chelsea Police Department to take heed, and to make urgent changes, perhaps to personnel, in the name of the public trust. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Thank you, Ms. Hartman. Jason King, please?

Jason. K:

Hey everyone. Good evening. Thank you very much for allowing us to have this platform tonight. It's great to hear everybody's thoughts, sharing their experiences. It's very powerful to have these conversations and we... Moving here, in Chelsea, and with my wife, Prya, and our three kids, we've had so many great experiences here. And I can remember one of our first experiences with the police was where we as a family, in the middle of winter, we locked ourselves out of the house and I thought, "What a great small town, that you could call the police and they would come help you break into your house to let you back in." And that was a very positive experience. And moving forward with our children, who are so passionate about life, and about social justice, and making things right, and I appreciated the police, making sure they were escorted... And you're right, it's blocking down M52, but the kids were passionate and the police were accommodating. And we appreciated that very much.

Jason. K:

After the incident happened with Maya, we became aware that there were these hateful incidents happening, where people were coming out and yelling at the kids. There was something about someone driving a truck towards the crowd and then turning away. And we are naive, and I was very naive, and probably a part of my own privilege of being a white male and always feeling safe where I am, and not being aware of what was taking place.

Jason. K:

I guess if we had... I don't know what you do with communication. I figured if I had known, and it's probably my own fault for not having better communication with my teen daughter, that the dynamics would have changed, if I would've been aware, if I would've known that there were these hateful things coming on, and once again, it's my own fault. And maybe it's not the police. Maybe it's just the community communicating better, or putting the word out there. And it's difficult to know because most of the people on here, we're good people, and we want to do what's right. And so we congregate together and communicate together, and it's very easy to become comfortable and unaware of the hatred that is out there, but I appreciate this forum to speak. I think it's a great opportunity to move forward, and make things better and stronger for Chelsea. It's a unique town. And I think we're very unique in being able to do this. And I appreciate the time. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Thank you, Mr. King. Thank you for sharing your thoughts. Has everyone had an opportunity to speak once? I do see some additional hands up and I want to acknowledge those, but it would be a second time to speak. And I just want to make sure that I first get everyone who wants to speak, and hasn't had an opportunity to do so.

Speaker 6:

I would like to speak.

Speaker 2:

Okay. Thank you. And thank you. Some hands just popped up. Can you identify yourself please? I've got three people who are waiting to speak. The first one in line is Ms. Kennedy, who has had an opportunity to speak, so I will put her at the end of the queue. Brenda Hartman is actually up next in that queue. So Ms. Hartman, you would have the floor.

Brenda. H:

Hi, I am a mom, living in Chelsea. I have two daughters. One is a recent graduate of Chelsea High School, and the other is a current high schooler. My children are both white and both have had positive experiences at Chelsea high school, and I'm grateful for their experiences. Both of my children have however witnessed and reported racist bullying behavior. It's wrong to believe that it doesn't happen here. I think as white people, we need to just stop weighing in on whether or not racism exists, it does. And we don't see it. My younger daughter has been a friend and a neighbor to the child who was assaulted. She was a witness to the event. I was the one who informed her mom that it was happening. I've attended four of the protests, and it's been both powerful and disheartening to hear how many students of color, and students who identify as queer, have felt a need to leave Chelsea school district.

Brenda. H:

I understand that there are school representatives listening tonight, and I would suggest that it is well past time that the Chelsea school district make a concerted effort to improve, like have any diversity on staff and in the administration of our district. If we are serious about improving our ability to embrace diversity in our community, we need to welcome it, by hiring a staff that demonstrates our commitment to diversity. Diversity attracts diversity. It's easy to say we're an inclusive community. It's time to demonstrate it. I've been listening tonight and I'm disheartened by the two sides language. We can move beyond either or frameworks, and embrace a both and stance. I appreciate the many good, honorable police officers, some of whom I know. You are seen and appreciated. You outnumber your racist colleagues. That fact, however, stands that there are racist police officers. I don't have to choose between black lives matters and blue lives matter.

Brenda. H:

We'd all have an easier time knowing this, if blue lives, if police officers, did a better job of calling out their racist colleagues. My husband and I are both psychologists. We've both done the scary, hard work of calling out unethical colleagues. It is hard, it is scary, and it is important that we police our own profession. Police officers need to do a better job of this. Let's not force each other in the false dichotomies. No one questions if I can be pro parents, but still call out parents who abuse their children. Similarly, I can be pro-police, while calling out police brutality. We all can, and we need to. Let's live as a community by our ideals, and do it together. We're not as diverse in our opinions as we think. Thank you for this floor, ma'am.

Speaker 2:

Thank you, Ms. Hartman. Laura Standers, you now have the floor.

Laura. F:

Hello. Just a minute. Hi, my name is Laura Flanders. I live in Dexter township. My spouse is with me too, [inaudible 00:14:29] possibly say something, but we are co-founders of the Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, in Washtenaw County. And we started that organization with a cool group of concerned people back in 2008. So we've been going for a while now, but the man that I'm going to speak of is no longer here to speak for himself. He went back to Mexico voluntarily, but he worked at a restaurant in Chelsea. So part of our work is we have a phone, where if people are, especially immigrant folks, are confronted with racism or they're confronted with harsh immigration issues, they can call our phones. And we got a phone call from this man who worked at one of the restaurants in Chelsea. And it was about in 2013.

Laura. F:

I don't have my actual notes with me, but it happened about in 2013, and he reported that he was an older man. He was a grandfather of kids in Mexico, big guy, and he reported that he was being stopped by by the Chelsea police on a regular basis, and stalked basically, like people were following him home at night, he worked in the Backhouse restaurant and it escalated to the point where, and even though he had a dry... He kept being asked for his driver's license, which is what happens to immigrants. And even though he had a valid foreign driver's license that is, that has been approved and valid, he was still eventually detained. And he was brought in to the Chelsea Police Department, and he was chained to a chair. His tattoos were taken pictures of, and he was distraught, anyway, he ended up calling us for help.

Laura. F:

And I honestly, my memory of it, it's quite a while ago, so it's not great. But what we did, is we organized people in Chelsea, there were about 10 people in Chelsea and wonderful people, caring people. And I have a soft spot in my heart for Chelsea. I live in Dexter township, but I shop and love Chelsea. And anyway, so we got about 10 folks together and we had a meeting with this man, and he reported that he was being regularly harassed by the police, that the young men that he worked with and lived with, were also being harassed. However, he was really being harassed because he eventually was detained and arrested. And so we listened to his story and then we went in.

Laura. F:

I called Chief [inaudible 00:17:48], said, "Chief [inaudible 00:17:48], I know you're here. And I want to say to you that my interactions with you were absolutely positive. I remember it. I hope you remember what I'm talking about." And my spouse was with me, he's from Mexico, but you know, very, very positive. However, there was, I don't know the history, but it sounds like there was a person, an officer that was a retired officer, that was still kind of doing duty, and was one of the ones that was picking, I don't know if it was more than one, but that was picking on this guy. And I don't know who that person was. He seemed to maybe be an important person in the history of the police department. But I just want to say that, eventually what happened is that your court in Chelsea, agreed with him that he had a valid driver's license.

Laura. F:

But it put him through hell, and he was afraid in Chelsea. And he went on, the young man that worked at that restaurant, went on to be afraid in Chelsea, and stopped, just like you said, in the evening after dark, if they were walking around or even before, if they're carrying beer back from the beer store, or from Jet's pizza back to the house, they were getting stopped. And so I don't know if Ramiro, would you want to say anything? Okay, this is Ramiro [inaudible 00:19:22].

Ramiro:

I had one experience too, that one day I got pulled over for the police, that happened in Baxter. So they gave me a warning, because one of my tail lights was out. So they said, "You can just go to any police department, so they can check the light [inaudible 00:19:49] is working now, so that you can go to court."

Ramiro:

So I went to the Chelsea Police Department, and I showed my car to the other officers. And the officer basically make fun of me like, "Wow, this car is very beat up man. What else is wrong with this car?" So what I just said, "You have to worry about the tail light, who cares whether anything else is wrong? What you need to tell me is check that my tail lights is working now." But he was basically making fun of me for being a Mexican. And I know my car was very bad beat up, but it's running, and everything else working. So I feel like it's making fun of me, the big point.

Laura. F:

[inaudible 00:20:43]. So, when another language is your first language, the way that people get treated-

Speaker 10:

Ms. Sanders, you need to speak into the microphone, we can't hear you.

Laura. F:

Oh, I'm sorry. The last thing I wanted to say is I think that, I hope you can hear what I said before. The last thing I want to say is that I think that people who do not speak, who where English is not their first language, are particularly treated badly. The minute they start to speak, there's a way in which they are not accepted, seen as foreign, and can be very subtle. But I have a feeling that may have been what happened to Ramiro at the police station, and stereotypes of his car, and who he is, all of that. So, thank you for listening everybody. I'm really impressed and happy to see this kind of forum being put forward by Chelsea City Council. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Thank you, Laura and Ramiro. All right. Before I call on someone who's had an opportunity to speak already, I'm just going to make sure that I haven't missed anyone. So if you could bear with me, I appreciate your patience. All right. We do have one more speaker. And so I'd like to go ahead and allow her before we, oops, we have two more speakers. So then I am going to call a break at this time, for 10 minutes, and then we'll come back and allow anyone who'd like to speak at that time, to do so. Thank you. We'll take a 10 minute break. So we'll reconvene at 8:04. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Hi, it's 8:04. Thank you for allowing us to take a few minutes break. We're back now to continue with the special meeting of City Council listening session. For those who may just be joining us, we're on agenda item 2A, which is personal experiences and interactions with the Chelsea Police Department. Just a reminder, before we go forward with comments from our public, if you are not muted we ask that you please mute when you're not speaking. That will allow us to better hear the people who are sharing information and comments with us. Thank you. With that, I'd like to invite Ms. Priya King at this time to take the floor.

Priya King:

Thank you for allowing me to take the floor Mayor Johnson, and I appreciate the efforts that the City Council is making to have this first very positive step towards healing our community. After the disaster at the park, naturally I felt like I could turn to our community's Police Department for assistance. Much to our dismay, this is hardly the case. When we first spoke to the police officer we were treated dismissively and without professionalism. After much public outcry, another officer of the department treated us with sincerity and professionalism. We need to have a force that is unbiased and does not tolerate racism from the community, much less their co-workers. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

I'm sorry for that, I was muted. Scott H. please.

Scott H.:

Thank you, Mayor, I appreciate you, again, you and the City Council taking the time to get input from the citizens and those in and around the Chelsea community. I don't live in Chelsea, I live in an outlying township, very close to the city. Do a fair amount of business downtown, and I guess this section of the meeting is specific to personal interactions with the police. I have personally spoken to Chief Toth on more than one occasion. He's been nothing but professional and courteous to me. He's listened to my concerns and has always addressed them. I have been pulled over by a Chelsea police officer one time for speeding and he was kind and gave me a warning. I guess I appreciate that.

Scott H.:

Around Christmas several years ago, in the evening, it was actually a little scary at first. They showed up at my door knocking on my door about 9:00 at night and I'm not sure other people's experience. But the first thing that goes through my mind is what did I do wrong? Turns out that somebody had been stealing mail, outgoing mail, from the mailboxes looking for money in Christmas cards, and apparently, I was a victim of the mailbox theft. They found my mail in the street in the nearby subdivision and they returned it to me. My personal experience with the Chelsea police has been nothing but positive.

Scott H.:

I will agree with a prior person who spoke and said that I do understand that my experience doesn't represent all experience. I can't say without a doubt that it doesn't happen. I certainly don't support racism, but I do believe that all lives matter. I've also heard people speak about, there was at least one person who spoke up about recommending that police give verbal warnings and try to deescalate, and certainly, deescalation is always a good thing. But I think it's very difficult for us to sit in our chairs not really knowing anything about law enforcement, not knowing what it's like to have a gun or a weapon

pointed at us, or somebody who's looking to kill us and have a requirement to issue a verbal warning before making a shot. That goes against the safety of the police officers.

Scott H.:

They literally potentially put their lives on the line every time they perform a traffic stop, and I think we have to keep that in mind. It's easy to armchair quarterback Monday morning and suggest that they do all these peaceful things before they do something not so peaceful. But, unfortunately, I don't think it's that easy. I think it's best, I'm not opposed to change, I'm not opposed to, certainly, not opposed to looking into alleged complaints and then getting to the bottom of them. If there's improvements that can be made, that's a good thing. But we really need to lean on those with law enforcement and/or military experience when we propose things that we think the police should do without having ever stepped foot in their shoes. Just with that, thank you for the time and I think the Chelsea police were being there when we need.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Scott. Kaley, I'm not sure I'm going to say your last name right, [Zeitouni 00:05:38]?

Kaley:

Yeah. Can you hear me all right?

Mayor Johnson:

We can hear you okay.

Kaley:

All right, thank you, Mayor Johnson. I just wanted to address the fact that I've heard some people saying that they appreciate the Chelsea Police Department because they've done things such as wellness checks for seniors or helping someone get into their house when they're locked out. But we need to stop treating cops like they're the end all, be all solution to all of our problems. If the police with their limited training should exist at all, they should be used strictly for dangerous situations where armed security needs to be involved. They're not trained to be health professionals or child protective services or locksmiths or judge, jury, and executioner. Cops don't even do their job of arresting dangerous people as seen with a frequently mentioned protest became violent because a racist woman was not arrested.

Kaley:

We can't expect them to do all these other jobs you expect. That being said, Chelsea residents and CPD alike agree that violent crime does not happen frequently at all in Chelsea. Since cops should be only used in drastic situations, why does CPD get over \$2 million of funding annually? Defund CPD and start treating cops like they are members of an overused bastardized system. Thank you for your time.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. As we go to the next speaker, I do want to encourage everyone to please use respectful language as we move forward. That is one of the promises of tonight is to make sure we have a civil discussion and comment. Please make sure your language reflects that. Teresa.

Teresa Plank:

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

Hi there. Can you hear me?

Mayor Johnson:

Yes, we can hear you.

Teresa Plank:

Okay, thank you. My name is Teresa Plank, and I do live in the city of Chelsea. Thank you for offering us this opportunity to speak tonight, and City Council and Chelsea police for being here to listen. I grew up in Chelsea and I've always felt safe, welcomed and comfortable here. I moved my family back here so my kids would experience that same level of community. However, over the past month, I have first-hand witnessed alarming and unsafe practice from business owners that I have supported financially. Community members and police enforcement putting the safety of the youth in our community in question. I was present the evening of the assault.

Teresa Plank:

I can say with confidence, if it had been a black man who assaulted a white girl, that man would have been arrested. There is no question in any of our minds. Moving forward, it's time to rebuild this trust. Our youth are starving for us to act as a community, as a school district and a police department so that not just my daughter and son who are white kids in Chelsea. But their black friends of color, LGBTQ community members and kids that just don't look and act like them feel safe. Thank you for that.

Mayor Johnson:

Sorry, I apologize. I was muted. Thank you, Ms. Plank. Appreciate your comments. We are now on to the follow-up round, and Ms. Annette Kennedy you've been very patient. Thank you.

Annette Kennedy:

Thank you. I would just like to say regarding our own personal interactions with police, we have had many for various reasons, but they have always been positive. One of the most striking examples was when I was at the Sounds & Sights Festival, which I'm sure many of you have attended on Thursday nights. My husband works about 45 minutes away, I was there with four children, one on my hip, three beside me and my husband was almost an hour late. A Chelsea police officer walked by me and saw me looking obviously distraught because I had sent several texts to my husband. He approached me and said, "Ma'am, are you okay?" I said, "Well, no, my husband..." I told him what was going on. I said, "He's never late. He would text me."

Annette Kennedy:

That police officer immediately, sorry, those are just my hands, no intended symbols there, that police officer immediately said, "Well, let me look up all of the routes. Where does he work? I'll look up and see if there were any accidents. I'll check with the hospitals." He could have gone and gotten a piggy parfait and listened to someone strum a guitar and just had a beautiful fun night at the Sounds & Sight festival. But, instead, my problem, which wasn't his, really he took it upon himself just to try to put me at ease. Thankfully, my husband did get there late, it was a late lab. But that police officer went above and beyond the call of duty and did things I didn't even ask him to do to try to help me in my situation. That was, again, with my black child on my hip, and my three white children next to me.

Annette Kennedy:

I've had several other interactions with the Chelsea Police. They have been so professional, and so willing to help and work with me. I will say I sent an email to Chief Toth recently, and he didn't get right back to me and I got after him. But we have to understand that they are overwhelmed. They've got quite a bit going on right now. He has my forgiveness for that, and I think we all need to keep in mind what a few people have been saying when we say we want to disarm police. I would suggest any of you who are of that mindset to do some real research. Every police officer right now, well, very many are targets, even in safer areas. We have had police targeted all over the USA and that's a terrible shame.

Annette Kennedy:

We've had more police killed in the last few months than we've had police killing people of color. If you look it up, that's the fact. I don't want our police disarmed. I want them safe, I want them on duty, and I want to know that if I need them, they have the ability and the confidence to help me and my family. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Ms. Kennedy. Looks like we have two additional hands up. Foster Thorburn, you may now have the floor.

Foster Thorburn:

Hello. Can you hear me?

Mayor Johnson:

We can hear you.

Foster Thorburn:

Hi, I'm Foster Thorburn, I live in Chelsea in town. I want to speak shortly on some comments that have come up. Some people have been putting forth concerns that anti-racist Chelsea youth isn't following the rules and the flow of traffic seems to be the specific concern here. I just want to say that part of the intention of this is exactly that it's inconvenient. But racism is much more inconvenient to make a very large understatement. Racism and bigoted culture thrives in Chelsea, students and citizens have been giving evidence to this fact. Many members of marginalized groups had to fight this battle with very little help. If they're forced to fight this their entire life, then people driving down Main Street can be inconvenienced for five minutes.

Foster Thorburn:

This kind of action keeps the issue in the forefront of the mind to people who would normally pay it no mind. As to legality, civil disobedience has a very long history of creating powerful change. I very much doubt that people today would focus on the traffic violations of protesters in historic civil rights movements. MLK was arrested numerous times, and he has held off as the beacon for creating social change. I would urge people to reevaluate their intuitions and apply their standards consistently. I hope for people to look at their actions in the wider context of social injustice and oppression. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. I have one final commenter, Zoe Pegler, you are welcome to speak.

Zoe Pegler:

Thank you. Can you hear me?

Mayor Johnson:

We can hear you, yes. Thank you.

Zoe Pegler:

I'm a resident of Lima Township. I do want to say thank you to the council for assembling this meeting. I really appreciated the stories that folks have told this evening. I know it's not easy sometimes to discuss these things in a public forum, and especially, over a virtual meeting like this. I appreciate everybody's patience and understanding with that. I'm looking forward to having more of these meetings so this conversation can be continued. In terms of discussing personal interactions with the Chelsea police, I grew up here, I went to a public school here my entire life. For the most part, my only interaction with police officers was when they came to either school functions to speak to certain classes.

Zoe Pegler:

I had never really had an interaction with them as a law enforcement officer until very recently, while attending protests led by anti-racist Chelsea youth following the murder of George Floyd. I attended one of these protests on June 18th, I believe, which was one week prior to the violent assault of a child in Pierce Park. At the end of that protest march that week, we engaged in an act of civil disobedience kneeling in the intersection of M-52 and old US-12 for eight minutes and 45 seconds symbolic of the amount of time Officer Chauvin knelt on George Floyd's neck. While we were assembled there, I was kneeling in the southwest corner of the intersection closest to Chelsea State Bank. There was a very large black pickup truck that was driving north on M-52 towards town that was stopped by the protesters. It was behind another a number of other vehicles also traveling north.

Zoe Pegler:

The police officer was standing in front of the first car stopped at the light preventing them from proceeding through the protesters who were kneeling there, and I appreciate that protection. I think that a number of other people have spoken to cases where police might be beneficial in a situation like this and protecting folks expressing their first amendment rights is one of those cases. I think where our presence might be appropriate in some circumstances. However, while we were kneeling there, pretty early on in the eight minute and 45 second period, this black pickup truck, which was in the far-right hand lane traveling north, pulled across three lanes of traffic. That lane, the left-hand turn lane and the oncoming lane traveling south. Drove against the flow of traffic and sped up towards us in the intersection.

Zoe Pegler:

I've been in other protests where people have driven into crowds. I immediately panicked and I am not very proud of the language I used when he started accelerating towards us, but there were two older folks kneeling in front of me. The crowd was pretty sparse in our corner of the intersection and it looked like he was going to drive into us. I jumped up off the ground and I threw my hands in the air and I stepped towards him as he was driving the wrong way down the road quickly towards us. I was shouting at him to back off and at that point, he pulled onto the sidewalk and he started driving his very large truck the wrong way down the road.

Zoe Pegler:

Partially, on the sidewalk, going around the corner attempting to turn left to proceed down old US-12 bypass Thompson's. He hit me as he pulled off of the sidewalk. He nearly hit another car that was stopped at the stoplight on old US-12 attempting to turn right to travel south on M-52. I screamed at him. I was really shaken up and then I turned around and I made eye contact with a police officer who was standing in the middle of the intersection who did nothing. I shouted at the police officer and I said, "Hey, are you going to do anything about that guy?" He said nothing. He was looking right at me. There was another officer again who had stopped traffic traveling north on 52. I looked at him, he was looking at me, they saw this happen and they did nothing. I have felt really hesitant to complain about it or to bring it up. I don't have the car's license plate number, it was a really large Ford Pickup.

Zoe Pegler:

But I did not have my wits about me at that moment to try to identify the driver. In my view, it's the police officer's job to help identify somebody that they witness driving the wrong way down the road at a group of protesters kneeling in the street. I was not approached by any officers after our eight minute and 45 second session in the street. I personally didn't want to get more involved with them than I needed to be, and so I did not approach them myself either. We proceeded to conduct the rest of the listening session with anti-racist Chelsea youth and I think there were some really valuable points of view shared there. I, again, so appreciate the leadership of those really incredible young people right now.

Zoe Pegler:

As we think about what public safety and what policing looks like and Chelsea moving forward from this, I think a really valid point that has been raised over and over again is that police officers aren't social workers. They're not psychologists. They also aren't electricians or plumbers or eldercare professionals. Maybe in some certain cases, they can connect folks who need those kinds of services to the people who provide them. But I think that our town, especially, is in a position to think about alternatives to policing. Not just doing better community policing, but thinking about alternatives to policing. How do you divert people out of the criminal justice system before they encounter it? How do you find other ways to administer services to elderly folks and low-income people and maybe just people who lock themselves out of their home without introducing somebody who has a gun, and perhaps their own implicit biases into that situation?

Zoe Pegler:

I think it's important for the city, I think it would be very helpful to conduct an audit of the activities that the police force actually does engage in. And evaluate where both money can be saved and we can avoid some of these confrontations by introducing a different kind of public safety professional to our community services. Who can handle those cases where a police officer who is not trained to handle mental health crises. They aren't trained necessarily to handle complex medical emergencies. How do we keep police for what they're meant to be used for? The very few limited cases where armed personnel might be called for. Again, I can't think of many, and how do we otherwise protect our community in situations where an armed police officer is not the answer. But rather social services and other provisions are.

Zoe Pegler:

I have really struggled with members of this community saying, "We can't defund Chelsea police. We can't divert resources away from the police officers. We can't retrain them, not to carry weapons because we need them to protect us from violent crime." A man drove an F-350 at me and the police officers did not intervene. A drunk woman assaulted a child in a public park and the police officers did not intervene. I'd call that violence, and if they're not going to intervene in cases like that, we need to find different ways to protect ourselves. That looks quite different, I think, to the way Chelsea has decided to do community policing. Again, I really appreciate having this forum to talk about these issues. I hope that council are taking the stories shared here today to heart, and I look forward to having these conversations more in depth in the future. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. We have a couple people who have raised their hand who have not had an opportunity to speak. Laura D.

Bill Roddick:

Actually, this is Bill Roddick, and I have two comments. First, to thank the City Council and Mayor and Chief Toth for holding this forum. I appreciate the fact that we have members of the school faculty, [inaudible 00:25:16] there's board members or staff members. But I'm glad that they're here to hear this. This has been a very good forum. I did want to just talk to a few things. I find it amazing, I don't know if it was stated here, but I find it amazing that we don't know how many people of color are pulled over a year in Chelsea, Michigan. If I were a board member, I'd be asking for that. If I was on city council, I'd be saying I want to know that data every month. I want to know how many people of non-color are pulled over and how many of those are cited and how many of them get a pat on the back like we heard from a man earlier today?

Bill Roddick:

I'd like to know those things because that would give us some objective data about whether or not we are being a little bit racist or not. [inaudible 00:26:14] about a month ago, we spoke on the phone. He was very, as people have said, our Chief of Police is a very, very easy to talk to person and we are very lucky to have him, I'm convinced that. I'm convinced also, though, I think it's almost impossible for a police department to police itself. I'm really worried about how we can possibly police a situation that we would, with this assault that apparently occurred or alleged assault that occurred. We've heard from witnesses here on this call, with no arrests so far. That just seems really odd to me that we could have an assault occur in our public park, and there's been no arrest.

Bill Roddick:

There was also a point made about more police officers being killed than protesters. Well, I don't know about protesters, but this year so far, the police have shot and killed about 598 people in the United States. There have been 30 police officers who have been killed. Now, we don't have data for 2020. But we do know that in 2019, 20% of the people that were shot by police officers were black or brown. Were black, actually, and only 13% of the population is black. We know that you're much more likely to be shot by a police officer if you're black than if you're white. I just think it's time for us all to take inventory of ourselves in Chelsea, Michigan and expect our police department to be transparent in the number of incidences that involve people of color. We don't have many people of color in the community. I'd be very shocked to find out that maybe we do have more people of color pulled over than people of non-color.

Bill Roddick:

But we don't know, and I'd like to know. I would appreciate the board also looking at the police and making sure that we understand all use of excessive force during arrest. We need to know how often it's used and on whom it's used. The police owe us that, we're paying their salary. There's nothing wrong with asking for that data. I would think that the council could ask for that and just expect that as part of their monthly report from the police department. That's all I have to say. Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you Bill. We do have one more person who has not had an opportunity to speak on agenda item 2A which is personal experiences and interactions with Chelsea Police Department. Bethany Roberts, that would be you. If you would like to speak, now is your opportunity.

Bethany Roberts:

Hi, my name is Bethany Roberts and I live in the Chelsea area. I have lived here on and off for about the last five years. I moved away and then moved back recently. I haven't really had a whole lot of personal experience with the police. I've met a few just around town, but haven't had any formal interaction with them. But I just wanted to comment to say that the police officers are... I feel like it's hard for us to separate the job from the human. But it is a job, and I think that we should always put people and our neighbors ahead of a career. I think that all of us that are worried for our safety, which I feel like I've always thought that Chelsea was a very safe town, but I'm also white.

Bethany Roberts:

It's just really important for us to recognize that there are people of color in our community that currently don't feel safe. We are worried about maybe not being safe if we were to change the way policing is done. But people currently don't feel safe. I think it's important to change and make it better and it's more than fair to keep our police accountable. To make sure that the budget is acceptable, that they're spending it on the right things, spending it on training, and not spending too much, or not having a huge budget. Just wanting to keep track of that and just making sure that everyone in our community feels safe. If you feel safe, great, but let's try to make sure everyone feels safe. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

All right. Thank you, Ms. Robert. Mr. Rick Brandon.

Rick Brandon:

Hi, my name is Rick Brandon. I'll mute that because, the video, because that was from my son's school. I moved here about 20 years ago by accident, and like what Teresa... I'm sorry I don't remember her last name, said she grew up here. She wanted to move back here to raise her kids here. I wanted to stay here and raise my child because of my early experiences. I feel like I was here by accident and want to make this the best community possible. There's been a lot of good comments and ends of the spectrum of this, so I guess I won't repeat them other than to say I just don't think that there can be any other conclusion here. There may be others, but there's at least one conclusion that some things need to be done around here, and especially, in the schools. Maybe with the way some resources are for the police, but there just can be no doubt that city council at least needs to do something. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

All right. Thank you, Mr. Brandon. We have two more hands up. Both speakers have talked previously. Ms. Melton, you have the floor.

Melton:

Thank you. I wanted to share a story that very few people know about. I was a shop owner and very early on in downtown Chelsea, when I first opened, I had an incident where there was a gentleman that came into my store. Unbeknownst to me, we ended up being the only two in the store. As he entered this shop, he locked the door. I was unaware of that. I was actually had my back to the door when this happened. He was about two inches from grabbing me when a customer went to pull on my door and the door was locked so she knocked on the door. It brought my attention to how close this gentleman was to me. I quickly put a chair between the two of us and the guy ended up just walking away. He unlocked the door and he left the building. I was terrified. It was the first time that I had ever been frightened in a situation like that.

Melton:

The first person who came was Police Chief Toth. He came to my shop every single day after that to see how I was doing. There were other officers who came in, and one in particular, and forgive me, it's been a while ago, I don't remember his name. He actually walked me around the store and he showed me the items that I had in my shop that I could use as a weapon if I needed to. The love, the concern for my safety, I was so overwhelmed because, one, I wasn't really that known in the community at the time. I had a new store. That has always affected me because I just, at that moment, I just felt like we had a police department that actually did care. I want to bring to everyone's attention because one thing I have not heard anyone say, I haven't heard one person admit that racism is taught.

Melton:

I've seen a lot of people pointing fingers forward, but I haven't really heard of anyone pointing that finger back at themselves. It isn't just there is a person who is white or black or purple or polka dotted. It's the fact that we have rap music that sends a very confusing message to our young people. We have violent video games, we have just gone through a COVID-19 shutdown that I'll tell you for the past three months of not being able to be a part of the community. My granddaughter lives two miles away, and I wasn't able to see her. Two months ago, we were praising the very people that are being condemned today because they would drive by a child's house and help them celebrate their birthday because they weren't able to have their friends over. I think we ask an awful lot of those who are there to protect us.

Melton:

Does racism that exist? Probably. Does sexism exist? Absolutely. But we are just so hypersensitive right now, because of what is happening on the political scale. That just to sit here and listen to this, I'm getting offended. It's because not everyone experiences racism. I lived in a community in Orlando where I was by far in the minority. I lived that way for 10 years. I never felt threatened, the people that I was with, it was just a different environment. Coming to Chelsea was really the first time that I had ever truly experienced any type of negativity. One, I wasn't born in Chelsea, I was not considered a Chelseaite. To sit here and say that everything is pointing in one direction is just shamefully false. I'm embarrassed because I have also been pulled over and given a speeding ticket and I didn't agree with it.

Melton:

But you know what the police officer said, he said, "If you don't agree with it, you can go to court and present your case." That was fair enough. I paid the fine because, quite frankly, I was going 31 miles per hour in a 25. Shame on me. To sit here and not be aware of the differences that we all have, politically, or what I do for a living or what I don't do for a living. I have white hair, someone else has purple hair. It shouldn't make a difference. But what we are seeing now, more than ever, we are seeing a cancel culture mentality that goes after people they either disagree with or who challenges a process that doesn't give them their desired results. For the person who was sitting, I don't know if you were blocking traffic. But last time I checked, that was illegal.

Melton:

Last time I checked, shutting down in 52, no matter how grand of a point that you have, it's still illegal. It's not illegal for the city. We're talking about a state highway where there are huge propane tank trucks. There are huge trucks, that you're going to stop commerce every single Thursday because you have a bee in your bonnet. I do apologize, it's very difficult to listen to this. It's just pointed in one direction, and I ask everyone here that either we have a society that is fair. That we follow the rules, we follow laws, and if you don't agree with it, then change it. Get involved in city council, offer solutions. Defunding the police means to eliminate. It feels good to just say defund but it is actually eliminating the police.

Melton:

Quite frankly, Officer Toth, I would like to thank you personally because you came to my need when I desperately needed someone to be there. Not once, not twice, for about three weeks in a row, I thank you. I thank you a few months ago, with COVID-19, being the first responders, I thank you. I think everyone who wants to come up with solutions, defunding the police is not a solution. Pointing fingers at businesses is not a solution. Businesses are struggling, we got to kick the political stuff out of the way. Take out the emotion, we are a community, stop being divisive. If there is a solution, then offer a solution. Defunding the police is not a solution. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you Ms. Bolton. Again, at this point, we're bound a second... Oh, we have a new person, a new speaker. The topic today, at this point, is intended to be agenda item 2A which is personal experience and interactions at the Chelsea Police Department. We are welcome to speak on that, Ms. Moore.

Stella Moore:

Hello, my name is Stella Moore, I am going to be a junior at Chelsea High School. Some of the people who are speaking, I agree with what the woman just said in that we should keep politics out of it. Because what we're talking about right now is not politics. When it comes to Black Lives Matter movement, when it comes to the protests that are happening on Thursday nights, it's an issue of human rights. When you talk about your experiences, where you feel that the police were there to aid you, I don't doubt that they were there to aid you. But the want that you have to have protection is a shared one. It's a want that people have across the country. When people of color are saying that they don't feel protected, we do have to look for changes, and we do have to look for solutions.

Stella Moore:

Just because you don't agree with the solution that is defunding the police doesn't mean it's not valid. I have been protesting illegally Thursday nights, and I know that. You may not think that's constructive.

But when you go to these open mics, people are sharing their opinions, people are sharing their experiences, and it is very valuable. It is what allows me to continue to go out and to have meetings with our school administration and to have talks that will lead to concrete changes in the way that CHS runs and operates. That makes people of color more accepted in our community.

Stella Moore:

I apologize if I sound angry or rushed or frantic but it's just I am a young person in our community and it is hard when I hear such ignorant rhetoric being advocated for. Because there's a blatant disregard for people of color and their experiences, even experiences that have been shared that are disregarded in favor of the few experiences you may have had with Chelsea Police. I think we need to value both. I'm sorry. I think we need to value both. Thank you so much for this platform. Yeah, thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

All right, thank you. We have one final one. This will be the last part in this agenda item. Again, we're on personal experiences with the police, Chelsea Police Department, and then we will take a break and move on to the next agenda item which is Q&A. Laura D. please?

Bill Roddick:

Again, this is Bill Roddick. I just want to point out it is not illegal for anybody to protest together in a city park, to walk down the street, and protest in Michigan. You don't need permits. You don't need to have a person that's responsible for the activities of the entire group. None of that is required in the State of Michigan. We don't need to call these protests illegal, we don't need to call the walking down the street illegal. We don't need to call this at all anything other than people trying to express a concern in our community. It's effect has been very good, we wouldn't have had this meeting if it weren't for what these young people have done. This meeting would not exist. Thank you for the work for the work that you've done.

Mayor Johnson:

All right. Thank you, Mr. Roddick. We're going to call a break now for five minutes, and when we return, we'll come onto agenda item 2B which is Q&A. Thank you. All right, thank you. I appreciate the opportunity for a few minutes break. I hope that people are back and ready to join us for this next section. I do appreciate everyone's comments and information and stories that they shared with us in the first part of our agenda. I appreciate everyone continuing on to the next portion with us, which is a Q&A portion. Again, we're going to use the same tools, we're going to try and have everyone have an opportunity to ask a question or comment before we move on to a second round.

Mayor Johnson:

Just a reminder that the section 2C of the agenda is public input regarding policing, so if you have comments about that, maybe that's the better part of the agenda to direct your comment and during that time. With that, just a quick reminder that if you are not currently muted, it's very helpful to hear, for everyone who's listening in since there are a number of people listening that everyone mutes. It's a little awkward to mute and unmute, but we will all certainly be patient and appreciate your efforts to do that. All right, Annette Kennedy, you have the floor to ask a question.

Annette Kennedy:

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

Okay. According to the Michigan legislature that I read Section 257.676B, it says that a person without authority shall not block, obstruct, impede or otherwise interfere with the normal flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic upon a public street or Highway in this state by means of a barricade, object, device or with his or her person. That's the legislature, the Michigan legislature that I read. We were just told that blocking traffic is not illegal. I believe that it is illegal without a permit. Is that correct, Chief Toth?

Mayor Johnson:

Chief, do you want to answer that question?

Chief Toth:

Yeah, so I had to unmute. That is correct. There is a state law and we actually have a local ordinance that is Section 18.156, blocking or obstructing passageways or traffic, that is a 90-day misdemeanor. That's an arrestable offense, physical custody arrest. There's several, there's state law, there's civil infraction, and then there's crime which the local ordinance is actually a crime.

Annette Kennedy:

Thank you, Chief Toth. Mr. Roddick had misquoted that or just stated a blatant, erroneous fact. He also misquoted me when I said that nine people of color were killed by police last year. I wasn't talking about all people. I said people of color. But I do have a question for Mayor Johnson. I would like to know how much is the protest costing the city of Chelsea each week on Thursdays to bring in additional police forces? How much taxpayer money is that costing, please? You have to unmute.

Speaker 15:

Mayor, you are muted, please unmute. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Yep. Thank you. We don't have those. I don't have those numbers yet. I'm sure we will have them at them. We can respond to that at the next council meeting for that.

Annette Kennedy:

Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. I do just want to ask everyone if they could ask one question or comment and then we'll circle back once everyone's had an opportunity to do that. Thank you. Ms. Melton, you are next.

Melton:

Thank you. That was a great question. I was going to ask that very question. My next question is, this is to the Mayor and maybe to the police chief as well. We're in a society where there's just tons of rumors going down and one of the questions I would like to ask is, was there ever a formal issue by you, Mayor Johnson, where you ordered a stand down with the Chelsea Police?

Mayor Johnson:

I do not know what you're talking about but I have not heard that. Perhaps you can give me some more frame of reference, but I really don't have the authority to singularly order anyone down unless we act as a council. And that issue hasn't come before. I'm sorry, that's something I've never heard before.

Melton:

Chief Toth, did you ever receive an order from someone?

Chief Toth:

No. No order.

Melton:

Allowing the traffic to block this M-52, that was done as a courtesy?

Chief Toth:

Yeah, we are trying to be reasonable regarding the right to peacefully protest, a constitutional right. But we've done research and I've actually spoken to the city attorney today to look at what our options are. One, that the group and explain that it is a crime. It's not just a civil infraction, it's a crime to do what they're doing and we try to protect everyone. Especially, when we don't have the route, we're doing the best we can. I've got to call the sheriff in, I've got to call the state police in, especially, depending on the size of the crowd. Then sooner or later, we miss someone backing out of a driveway and tragedy may happen and my job is to make sure no tragedies happen.

Chief Toth:

Since this has gone on six, tomorrow will be seven weeks, so we're doing the best we can and that's about it. But no stand down orders has been given. We're trying to be reasonable and we understand that the tensions are high. There's the tragedy happened back seven weeks ago. It is not going to agree with what happened to Mr. Floyd was horrific. It should have never happened, and we're trying to move forward and be professional.

Melton:

Thank you for clarifying that. That was really important. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Ms. Melton. Marca Everly, do you have a question?

Marca Everly:

Yes, this is a question to Chief Toth. What are your procedures about drawing your weapons and deadly force? That is a real concern of mine is tensions are running very, very high and we have a lot of young people who are doing their very best to bring light to a very important issue and you guys are walking around with deadly weapons. As much as that is, what are we doing to make sure that we do not contribute to the tragedy of police violence?

Chief Toth:

Sure. Law enforcement officers have a right to protect themselves and others, but there's a force continuum that looks at when it gets to a point of deadly force and that way out, force continuum. The officers are all highly trained, most of the officers have at least three decades of experience. We track use of force issues, and in the 14 years that I've worked here... Give me a second to find the data. We have something called a use, we have a use of force database. Anytime an officer uses force, and what that gets to is say, for example, we're going to arrest somebody, and they just tense up-

Marca Everly:

Does that mean when you've drawn your weapon or when you actually fire?

Chief Toth:

No, it has nothing to do with that. Use of force is with someone who gives resistance, okay? Resistance is as simple as someone is under arrest, you tell them to put their hands on the car and you're going to handcuff them and they tense up. We do a use of force report on that. All the use of forces and then since, see 14 years of it, those are use of force reports. But there's been zero excessive use of force complaints ever, never a complaint with use of force. There was one incident that happened where a person had walked away from our psych ward and we had to put them on the ground. There was a complaint about that, it was investigated and was unfounded. 64 use of force reports, not actually, and a use of force, it's a big spectrum. But there's been never an excessive use of force that's been, I guess, the term is justified.

Chief Toth:

It's been 64 total in 14 years old. I hope that answers your question. But there's a use of force continuum, there's something called Objective Reasonableness Standard. That's a national standard on how officers use force. What that means is, what did the officer know at the time that the force was applied, not what happened or what you found out two days later or three days later, it's at the time. Actually, it takes a lot to explain it but I can get offline, you're welcome to call me. I can afford you the information I have. But the bottom line is, with use of force, especially, deadly use of force is to protect citizens and the officers. We report every month to the federal database on use of force that deals with serious injury or death. We haven't had any, zero on that.

Marca Everly:

Thank you so much. I'm very concerned about our young people and that made me feel better.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. As Chief noted, Chief, if I just may, as Chief noted before, and we talked about this at City Council when we talked a little bit about policies, we do have policies on this and on many other items. As Chief had said before, you are always, the public is always welcome to come down and review our policies to have a better understanding of how our officers are trained and what the expectations are. Chief, did you have anything to add?

Chief Toth:

No, I guess I do. The last thing I want any young person who's peacefully protesting the fields, that the police would never harm them. That is, when I observed, I think, I don't know, probably demonstration number four. Someone said bring masks, bring water and bring medical supplies. It upset me because

most of us are fathers and mothers that are in the department or older, more seasoned officers. The last thing I want to have a young person think is that the police are out there to hurt them. That is not the truth, it's the farthest case from the truth. We're actually there to protect all of your rights, your constitutional rights, that's what law enforcement does. We protect everybody's constitutional rights. That's our duty. If someone violates your constitutional rights, there's a criminal act, potentially, and we take action. That's our bread and butter.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Chief. Bill Roddick. Do you have a question?

Bill Roddick:

Just another comment. I didn't say it was okay to obstruct the flow of traffic. I did not say that. I said it's perfectly legal to protest on the sidewalk, in a park, on the street. As long as you're not obstructing traffic, it's perfectly legal in this state. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Mr. Roddick. Jan, please.

Jan:

Thank you, Mayor Johnson, if the youth in their protest were to comply with 257.7067 6B legal code about interference of public highways. How would that change the equation Mr. Toth? How would that change the equation if they were in fact to be on the sidewalk and not in the road, how would that change the equation in terms of your vigilance?

Chief Toth:

Yeah, we would still be in the area. Keep an eye to make, to protect them. I guess when you look at the common sense, you're going to get more face time if the traffic's flowing than if we're blocking traffic. So if you're trying to get a message out and traffic's slowing, you're getting the message out more than if we've got to shut traffic down north and south.

Jan:

Well, how would that deescalate the current situation?

Chief Toth:

Well, we'll just, like the young lady said about the cop at the curb, that would prevent that from happening because they're on the sidewalks.

Jan:

All right. Yeah, I can only urge the leadership of this autonomous group to consider changing the tactic. It is not, someone, I think Foster said, well, you're considering it to be an inconvenience. It's not an inconvenience, it is obstructing traffic. That means ambulances, that means a whole lot of things. The youth are really not abiding by the law and they should. They can still make the point by peacefully protesting and not obstructing traffic. I urge them to do that. I think it will deescalate the situation a lot. I hope they'll do that. Thank you.

Chief Toth:

If I may interject too, I want to take my hat off to the group. They have been, there's been peaceful. I have not seen them do anything besides being in the roadway, they're peaceful, they're giving their message out, it just, I look at this as a safety concern because we don't have the route. We don't know where they're going and we're doing the best we can. It's just sooner or later, it's my belief that someone will get out of a, back out of a driveway and that we may have a tragedy. I just do not want that to happen.

Mayor Johnson:

All right. Thank you for that question. Ms. Renee Kemp, do you have a question?

Renee Kemp:

Yeah, I do. I was just wondering what the policy is, within the police department, if a person, if the police were to receive a call stating that a person is acting under the influence in public, if the police department, is it not within their policy to have that person perform a field sobriety test on the scene?

Chief Toth:

Are they driving a vehicle?

Renee Kemp:

No, for public intoxication.

Chief Toth:

We do not have an ordinance regarding that.

Renee Kemp:

There is no ordinance. Okay, so that was my question. Thank you for clarifying.

Mayor Johnson:

All right, thank you. Is it, I'm going to say Ms. Timberlake, because I'm not sure who the speaker is, because last time it came up as one person and somebody else spoke. I'm going to say Ms. Timberlake and I'm going to allow you to introduce yourself?

Aria Timberlake:

Yes, thank you. My name is Aria Timberlake and this is just the computer I'm using right now. My question is for the Police Chief. Are there plans at this time or do you, are you thinking about arresting any of these young protesters? This will be week seven tomorrow night, that we've been out protesting. Are there plans in place to start arresting people or is there some timeline, if it goes past this many weeks, then there will start to be arrests? Obviously, I know your preference is that we would stay on sidewalks or demonstrate in other areas. But I know if, within the department there was a timeline for when something like an arrest was going to occur?

Chief Toth:

Well, as I said, I just had a conversation today with the city attorney about this. He said that if we want to move forward, he'd support our moving forward. Now, I want to be reasonable about this also but it comes to a point where, what is the end game? Should you be going to state legislators and talk about changes in the law regarding whatever it may be or because we've done this for six weeks and so I mentioned about the cost, I can tell you that cost. It's 22 to \$2500 every Thursday of overtime. That's the cost to the city right now. That doesn't include the state police who I'm bringing in and the sheriff's office. That's the overtime it cost every Thursday. I think there was a one Friday involved. I am looking at that. I'm not sure exactly when it's going to happen.

Chief Toth:

I'd like to speak to whoever, with the group to discuss other options. I want to be fair, I'm a father myself. But it comes to a point as, law enforcement is a neutral party. I'm getting calls from citizens that want to know, "Hey, I'm trying," there was this gentleman who was stuck in the carwash. I get an inconvenience, but the person is an elderly man and he's stuck in the carwash for 35 or 40 minutes. The calls are right now increasing, at first, the first few times, probably not as big as a deal. Now we're going into week seven of this and people are voicing their concern. We're trying to keep the peace. I know you've had neighbors come out of houses and yelling and we're trying to get officers on foot to interject. The last thing we want have is another incident like that's happened on the 25th. We do not want that to happen again. We are contemplating some enforcement action.

Aria Timberlake:

All right, thank you very much for clarifying that.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you just to add on there, too. I think one of the challenges that we talked about last time at City Council was, we have to treat all protesters the same. When we permit one group to walk down, we're stuck in the position of having to treat every protest group. So if we allow one protest group to use the streets, then we're then in the left in the position of, do we allow, let's say, the neo Nazis to walk down the street? That's certainly a challenge. We don't get to pick and choose viewpoints at this city, so that's certainly a challenge for us. Just to find, what we find as constitutionally permissible and lawful as well. Kate, you have a question?

Kate:

Yeah. I'm wondering about the policies for the police department, if those could be please put online electronically, especially during a pandemic, for people to access them more easily. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Chief?

Chief Toth:

I got the question. Yeah, there's certain policies that we can put online and there's certain policies that we probably wouldn't want to put online for safety purposes. That's something I review with the attorney that represents us. Our policies, our best practices, it's a company, it's called Lexipol out of California. State and federal law are constantly being reviewed and updated. It's all best practices and it's subject matter experts that determine how these policies are written to reduce liability, exposure to

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

the city and the police department. It's something that's being reviewed. I can't say all the policies would be released but there are some that probably would be.

Kate:

Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Dian Carr, do you have a question?

Dian Carr:

Yes, thank you. My question is regarding again, the policies of the police department. I attended a city council meeting recently, where Chief Toth summarized the employees, the officers who make up the Chelsea Police Department and their length of service. Some of whom, have been with the department for many, many years. What I wondered is, if there is any way that you in terms of the eight, can't wait proposals, that the Chelsea Police Department tracks, incident reporting made by citizens against a particular officer or in a particular situation and if necessary, what the action resulting from that is?

Dian Carr:

I'm thinking of something recently mentioned in this forum with regard to an officer who posted something on Facebook. I was reading about other communities where police officers have posted some really unacceptable comments on their Facebook pages and have been discharged from the department. A specific question for the Chief would be, is there any action being taken with regard to this particular officer and his posting?

Chief Toth:

Yes, there's a current internal investigation that's underway regarding that. We track all citizens' complaints that come into the department. What happens is, if you look and you see the same name coming up over and over and over again, some of them may not be substantiated, but you could look, view with that and said, "Okay, there's some training that this person may need regarding how they're treating the public voice," and so forth. We track it and we move forward with training or again, if it's substantiated, discipline.

Mayor Johnson:

All right. Thank you, Chief. Ms. Nelson.

Nelson:

Hi, thank you. I have a question for the chief and it's a procedural question. When someone comes in to make a statement to the police about an incident, are they given any reference number or an incident number or any tracking, identification so that they know that their statement has been recorded and filed with the police?

Chief Toth:

If you were the complainant, say that you were the victim of something, you're going to get a number, a case number, and you should have a phone contact, how to get a hold of the officer. If you're a witness and then you, you should be made aware of the status. But if it's the investigating officer, that's the

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

person in charge of the case. They're putting the case together, if you're a witness and probably what will happen is, I'll tell you what will happen. Once the investigation is complete, the report gets sent to the prosecutor's office for a review.

Chief Toth:

If they authorize the warrant, then you'll be notified as far as a court date and you'll get a subpoena to appear in court to be a witness. If it doesn't get authorized, the victim would be notified that the case didn't get authorized but not necessarily the witnesses. If you're a witness, you will be notified of the fact that, "Hey, we took your statement, it's going into the case file."

Nelson:

Okay, thank you for clarifying that. Madam Mayor, you're muted again.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, I'm trying to keep background noise, my note taking quiet. I apologize for that. Bethany Roberts, do you have a question?

Bethany Roberts:

Hi, yes. I have a question for the Chief and potentially, Mayor Johnson, if you have information on this too. In looking at the budget for this year, the only training for police that you added any money to was I believe dispatch training. I was wondering if that included in implicit bias training or race bias training?

Chief Toth:

We do implicit bias. That was done originally in 2018 and council member Pacheco attended that training with all the officers and dispatchers. Then we did a follow up to that in February of 2020. We do that in person. That was an in person training. Then we have a, it's called PoliceOne Academy and so online training. We have two to three courses every month. It can be a litany of police issues, from dealing with the mentally ill, to LGBTQ, to force, to ethics and so on.

Chief Toth:

We regularly train two to three courses each month for both dispatch staff and police. There's two funds, there's something called the 302 Funds, that's the state funds that goes to law enforcement. We get about 1800 dollars a year for that training. Dispatch actually gets something called ETSC money. That's about \$4100 a year for the dispatchers. That money is put toward training. Then the city puts in somewhere between nine and \$10,000. In addition to the money we receive for both dispatch training and law enforcement or police training.

Bethany Roberts:

Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Amanda. Ms. Deaver?

Deaver:

All right. This is just expanding a little bit to Chief Toth's in regards to witness statements. My daughter had sent her statement in on June 28th. I was just curious if there's a timeframe of which would be expected communication, if there was going to be any follow up? What I mean by that is when, your case is assembled and given to the next chain of command, how would we be aware? Essentially what I'm asking is, if there's a process for that and it's already happened, and she hasn't been spoken to how can we be certain that they are investigating all of the conversation?

Chief Toth:

Yes. Did you talk to Sergeant Kinsey?

Deaver:

It was emailed as directed on the Chelsea update and on the City of Chelsea's website with the press release, and then the statement that was attached and with his email address, we sent it to the email address as instructed.

Chief Toth:

I can't say for sure because it's Sergeant Kinsey's who's doing the criminal investigation regarding the assault. I don't know if you want to give me your cell phone number, I'll give you, you can call me. I will check that out. He'll be into work tomorrow and I'll be able to look, I've got your name. If you sent the statement and emailed it to them, I'm pretty sure it's included in the packet. But I haven't spoken to him specifically about [inaudible 01:15:55] statement.

Mayor Johnson:

Chief, I think the question might be, since she submitted a written statement, would someone also follow up with her at a personal one on one?

Chief Toth:

Yeah. I don't know if we're 100% sure, because the written statement can be used. I think he had a template, if I'm not mistaken. He showed me the template because he's asking the same questions to everybody so they can't say that, "Oh, he didn't ask me this question." I imagine if there's some clarification that would need to be made and that those answers that he would call and do follow up but I will ask him tomorrow.

Deaver:

Okay. Yeah. I, obviously, I don't want anybody commenting on, ongoing investigations. I hope that there's faith in the system that if somebody was in direct contact with an officer, at the main event, that it would be a critical component to verify and people's stories changes, or their memories change. I've given a statement in the past of my lifetime and I did have a police officer come to just follow up and ascertain and make sure that the details are correct before it was gone. I was just curious if that is protocol before everything's put in the meat packet and goes off or if they just include that as-

Chief Toth:

My thoughts would be is if your daughter had additional information to add, then it'd probably worth calling Sergeant Kinsey and letting him know that and then I will, how about this? I'm going to have him track you down because I think that's better to do that so we're not missing something here.

Deaver:

Sure and that's fine. She was definitely, she didn't want people to be miss identified where there was a lot of rumor mills and things that were happening. She took a lot of time and effort to make sure she, knew who it was that spoke with them at the park because there was a lot of finger pointing and a lot of misinformation that was out there. She definitely wanted to make sure that she had a correct statement and that her voice was heard.

Chief Toth:

Okay, no problem. I will have him get a hold of you.

Deaver:

Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Joanne [Radio 01:18:26], do you have a question?

Joanne:

In the past, you've said that records were not kept on race and ethnicity of traffic stops and crimes and responses. Is that information available from past? Is there a way to find it and what does it take to have that happen going forward? It's been brought up several times that we have no way of knowing, even though the anecdotal evidence says that people are being stopped unnecessarily.

Chief Toth:

Okay, so I got some data here. It may not specifically answer you question, but I can tell you traffic stop data. From January one of 2016, December 31st 2019, we conducted 2478 traffic stops. We gave 1559 verbal warnings. 63% of the people that we stopped are getting a verbal warning. 115 people got tickets. 37% got tickets, of that 751 were white. 141 are unknown or listed as unknown. I'll tell you we need to tighten that up because we shouldn't have 141 unknowns. 24 were black, three were Asians.

Joanne:

You say those are the numbers of the tickets?

Chief Toth:

No, we wrote 919 tickets in four years.

Joanne:

Okay.

Chief Toth:

I can tell you, we're trying to correct driving behavior and not hit people with 150 \$200 tickets. Only 37% of the people that we stopped were getting citations. That's, well you talked about community policing, we're trying to change the driving behavior. It's not a money grab. It's not making resources. It's trying to get people to slow down, stop at stop signs. When schools in session adhere to the safety rules when

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

our children are driving their vehicles, when they're on their bicycles, and they're walking to school. That's the latest data I had.

Joanne:

The data is of the tickets, not of the warnings and just the stops?

Chief Toth:

Right, so the warnings, we don't have a breakdown on the warnings on what the race we're on the warnings. We do not have that because we don't issue warning tickets. We don't have a traffic stop, a capture system. When I worked at the sheriff's office, we actually had a traffic stop capture system where you had to fill a full on traffic stop and determine the race and so forth, so we don't have that.

Joanne:

I noticed in his new announcement today about some community initiatives, keeping records of stops was one of them I believe. I would like to see that happen in town.

Chief Toth:

Can I interject Mayor?

Mayor Johnson:

You may.

Chief Toth:

We're a 10 person full time department. That's a 400 person department. Okay. It's me, some supervisors and officers. I get what you're saying but you have to look at what our resources are available and the amount of traffic stops that we write. I can tell you that we've had zero in 14 years of a minority complain about a botched police practice on a traffic stop. I've never had one.

Joanne:

Yeah, that wouldn't surprise me. But thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

All right, thank you. Ms. [Parkway 01:22:23], do you have a question?

Parkway:

Yeah, I do. Chief Toth, I want to say thank you also for your patience and sitting here with us and answering questions. It's helpful to have a back and forth here so I appreciate getting to that. But you did mention earlier on in, I think one of the previous questions that somebody had answered that if it was shown that an officer had either repeated civilian complaints against his or her conduct, or other complaints within the department, that they might be referred for further training. I'm curious, first, what format that training might take, whether it's videos online or a practical training?

Parkway:

I'm also curious, I'm sorry that I have a couple parts here. But I'm also curious if there is an avenue within the force for other officers who are concerned about the conduct of their fellow officers to air those grievances with you in a way that might be conducive to addressing conduct before it gets to civilians, mistreating civilians? Lastly, is there a line at which you might say, training is not an appropriate remediation here? Like certain kinds of repeated conduct or somebody being clearly unfit for the force, is there a line you might draw to say, trainings not an option here, that this is just unacceptable for the police force?

Chief Toth:

Sure. We've had officers report other officers about conduct. Certain officers aren't employed anymore. One thing that acts, and I think I mentioned that at the council meeting, I can't remember for sure, but were a small agency. There's only a couple officers working a shift. If someone is not pulling a load, there'll be progressive discipline. If the progressive discipline doesn't appear to get someone's attention, then the next step happens, which is they no longer work here. Now, and you spoke about, okay, so you see some type of state patrol car crash.

Chief Toth:

An example would be someone, I don't know backs into something. Normally the first step would be a verbal warning, written reprimand, time off. That's the progression. Then obviously you have to get from negligence, you don't want to get to gross negligence so you got to put the training in, drivers safety, whatever, defensive driving school. There's always a piece of the disciplinary process along with training to get their behavior to change, whether it's driving, how they're treating the public, and so forth. But I think you had one more question, I think I forgot it.

Parkway:

Just in terms of I am wondering whether that training takes place online or practically, and lastly...

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

Mayor Johnson:

Whether you have a line at which training is not what is being utilized.

Chief Toth:

So how that progressive discipline works is, is okay say it's the same violation, they've gotten a written, they've gotten some time off, then they've got more time off, obviously they're not responding to [inaudible 00:00:22] and then the next procedure would to a termination.

Mayor Johnson:

Okay. And the format of the training, sorry.

Chief Toth:

So the training, obviously right now it's a lot online. But, it's a combination of both online training and in-person training. So an example would be like defensive tactics training, right? Self defense. It's very difficult to do that online. You have to have a hands on environment. So those are online, or rather in person. Firearms training is at the range. There's other things that are more educational and you talk about implicit bias, unconscious bias type training. You really need to do that in person. You can read a lot about it, but that's some self reflection because we all have bias. And the gentleman who taught the class in 2018, 2020 did a very good job with the group and we all got to know each other a lot better and it was outstanding training.

Speaker 3:

Thank you I appreciate it.

Mayor Johnson:

All right thank you. Mark Chastain?

Mayor Johnson:

(silence).

Mark:

Sorry. I took your muting instruction too seriously. I wanted to follow up on something that you, Mayor Johnson and Chief Toth touched on. To clarify what the city's doing. It's been a long time since I took first amendment law in law school and haven't done a lot of that practice in the last 20 years but my recollection is that, you mentioned this phrase viewpoint discrimination I think Mayor Johnson. That is something that the government is not allowed to do. It is one of the key areas that the government can get into trouble with if they treat different viewpoints differently, different speakers differently based on what they're saying.

Mark:

I also recall that within any city or governmental area, there are certain areas that are considered to be traditional free speech areas, they might be sidewalks or parks and other areas where the government has a lot more authority to regulate conduct in speech and time manner and place restrictions, those

kinds of things. It seems to me that the city is running a real risk here, although I understand totally Chief your desire to be reasonable as I think you said it.

Mark:

A real risk of establishing the streets of Chelsea as a de facto public forum in which it can no longer regulate conduct and speech or not as it could otherwise, if the city continues to allow people to march in the streets and block them, I mean you've cited the safety concerns but it seems to me a real risk is the precedent will be set that someone will say like, I think Mayor Johnson you said neo-Nazis or imagine the KKK or some other heinous group coming in and saying, "Well you didn't care about those concerns too much to stop that group, so why can't we march down the streets of Chelsea every week and block traffic? You've made the streets of Chelsea a public forum and you can't pick on us when you didn't pick on them."

Mark:

Is that an issue the city council is going to examine? And I'm not asking you to tell me what the advice is that you've received from council, but is that an issue that you're looking at with city attorneys and considering how you go forward and what the long term consequences of the recent activities would be for the city and the city streets?

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Chief do you want to take this or do you want me to take this?

Chief Toth:

I'll say a quick piece and then I'll turn it over to you. So I look at now, if a group wants to get in the road, they've got six weeks to get in road. Because we've provided six weeks of road. And I have a difficulty doing anything but providing safety for whatever group that was for six weeks.

Mayor Johnson:

I think you've identified, and this is something council touched on last weekend, and specifically that I raised. We do have a concern about that with first amendment. Under the constitution, we are allowed, we must treat groups equally and that's certainly a challenge for us if another group does want to come in and protest. So it is something that city council is going to have to address and examine and determine how its going to approach with that and what next steps we take to make sure that were balancing all those breaks in interests.

Mayor Johnson:

As you noted, the public park, the park is certainly a public forum. A dedicated one that's much referenced in terms of being a forum for first amendment dialog. Certainly the sidewalks are another threat however something they had to take more of a time place manner approach. Main Street is a public highway. It is not under the control of the city. A permit is required by the state of Michigan to utilize or shut down that street at any point. Old US12, part of that actually is part of, not under our jurisdiction as well. These have been challenges for the city in a variety of manners for a long time now. But that ones under the jurisdiction of Washtenaw County Road Commission. We have a jurisdiction over our local streets and that's something we also do ask for a permit to shut down those streets. One of those reasons is safety as well. So those are definitely some challenges that the city council is going to

have to address to make sure that we are not engaging in viewpoint discrimination at all. I hope that answers your question.

Mark:

Yeah I just wondering more, curious if that's something that the city council's going to take up soon because you can imagine a lot of horrible things happening if groups decide that the streets of Chelsea are now a free speech, unregulated forum and they can just do whatever they want whenever they want, no matter their size or viewpoint. Seems like you have a challenge ahead of you but thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. Miss Nelson?

Ms Nelson:

Yeah, so I have a question. I'm a process driven person, so playing off the previous question about treating everyone fairly. So I'm just curious because earlier tonight we heard two different scenarios from community members. One who was talking about how he had an interaction with the police, with a traffic violation and he was pulled over and let go, and then we had another community member who talked about being pulled over and they actually got a citation that they felt was unwarranted. So I'm just wondering are there protocols in place, or what are the standards that the police have right now? So if I were to be barreling down Washington at 35 miles an hour, what are your standards when you would say okay it's all right were going to let you go versus no we're actually going to give you a ticket today?

Chief Toth:

Well it's an officer discretion issue. So depending on the circumstances, and we've had all. So example would be you're barrelling down wherever right? And we stop you and you say, "Hey, I'm taking my child to the hospital he needs stitches." We're going to let you go. And say "Hey be careful get your child to the hospital and get help, get help to your child." And it's a small town so we know who our repeat offenders are and we enter names in the computer. So if you're someone who we've given warnings to in the past and you continue the same driving behavior you're probably going to get a citation.

Chief Toth:

But I can't speak for every officer, I can speak for myself. If you've never gotten stopped before and you have a clean driving record, there's a very good chance in this town that you're going to get a verbal warning. And just told "Slow down, stop at stop signs" And so forth. Now, there's some zero tolerance and zero tolerance is during school hours. Going to school and coming home. If you're running stop signs, you're exceeding speed limits, you're disobeying traffic laws in a school zone, while kids are going to school, you're going to get a ticket. It's very serious we can't have a tragedy happen. If that answers all your question but that's how we do it.

Ms Nelson:

Yeah, I mean I appreciate that and I've actually been a lucky recipient of your grace and understanding, but I guess looking at this bigger picture of policing in general and people feeling excluded or not counted, I guess it would be good to maybe just clarify some of these procedures so that someone, perhaps I was a person of color and I was speeding down the road. I just feel like we need to have a fair

standard that is applied and again I've been the recipient of understanding. But yeah, it makes me worried I feel like, and again this is coming from my background at work and everything but I just feel like process and procedures need to be clear for everyone so that there isn't misunderstanding or people being able to say, "I'm being excluded or treated unfairly". So that's just my comment but thank you, I appreciate your response.

King:

[inaudible 00:10:42].

Mayor Johnson:

Yup go ahead. Then I have a followup.

Chief Toth:

Here's what you can do. So, an example, if you've heard something that happened to somebody. So a person of color, whatever. And they got stopped and they weren't treated fairly, you could tell me about it and we'll look into it. So I just want to get that out to everyone that fair and impartial policing, that's what we're about. And when things come up like has happened over the last, whatever that was, 25th, we take officers' behavior very seriously. When there's internal investigation, take a criminal investigations very seriously. We get to the bottom of it.

Chief Toth:

The problem with, unfortunately is our society wants instant answers to things that there's not instant answers to. There's something called due process, which I'm sure everyone's familiar with, which is we go to some place and we get information from one person and then we get information from someone else and it's totally opposite. So we cannot arrest anybody with conflicting statements. That's why we have to run investigations. We have to interview people.

Chief Toth:

And if those individuals are juveniles, we cannot talk to them without their parents present. That's the law. And I know that if we talk to a young person without their parent present, I could not defend doing that. We can't explain that, so that's why sometimes things take longer when we're dealing with young minors. So, anyhow. Thanks for listening.

Mayor Johnson:

Thanks Chief, just to follow up on the traffic stop question, officers cannot pull somebody over without being able to articulate a lawful reason for stopping a vehicle. So I want to be clear about that. You can't just pull over somebody just because you don't like their car, or you don't know who they are, they actually have to have an articulable violation of the law to pull them over. Teresa, do you have a question?

Teresa:

I do. Before I ask my question I have a quick statement. I would just like to encourage us to consider the use of our words here tonight as we do have a lot of youth listening. We are using RC in the same contact as neo-Nazis and the KKK. And our kids are reading between the lines tonight. So I'd just encourage us to be a little thoughtful and considerate of those comparisons. So my question is, is there

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

a social media policy for Chelsea Police Department? And the police officers who post things on their personal page that is homophobic, racist, sexist, transphobic or in support of police misconduct? That's just my question, is there a policy? Thank you.

Chief Toth:

Yes. And it's being investigated. So we have codes of conduct policy, if you give me one second. Pardon, [inaudible 00:14:18] so, there's our standards of conduct, I want to read it correctly because, it's policy 10.28. Speech expression in social networking. So that's the specific policy. So I've gotten all kinds of emails. Why aren't you marching? Why aren't you taking a position? Well, we have policy to be a fair and impartial policing agency. We cannot take any political stand one way or another against or for, we can't take any social justice stand on any type of subject matter or position on that, we are a neutral agency, we have to be neutral. And that's what our policy says and we hold people accountable to that so...

Teresa:

Thank you, I was actually just referring to the Facebook posts of a specific police officer. And I do totally respect that you do have to be following policy with the protesters. So I appreciate that, I was referring to Facebook posts, so thanks [inaudible 00:15:33] and I will look it up.

Mayor Johnson:

Scott H.? Scott H. do you have a question?

Scott H.:

Sorry, forgive me, I was struggling to disable all the mute buttons. I don't really know if this question is for anyone specific, maybe Mayor it's for you or maybe it's for the Chief to address. I've heard people ask about collecting data on traffic stops and determining how many were stopped based on race. And I work with millions of pieces of data daily so I'm a big data guy. I'm supportive of data.

Scott H.:

But I guess my question is, and again I'm not opposed to collecting the data and presenting the data, but my question is what would you do with the data? So let's say you concluded that you get, I don't know, 10% of color and 90% white people that get stopped. What's the right number? Wouldn't we need to know how many people drive through Chelsea based on their race to determine if it was equally distributed? And then, I mean, would you create quotas to make sure that you're pulling over the appropriate percentage of off color and color?

Scott H.:

And let me be clear here, I'm absolutely against if people are getting pulled over specifically because they're people of color, I am dead against that, that's wrong and it needs to be addressed. But I just don't know that having that data would necessarily prove that. Would that mean that if the number of off color stops are too high, we would have to let people go and drive dangerously? Because the number of off color stops are too high? Or, vice versa, you know I'm not trying to pick any side here but, I'm just hypothesizing on what you would do with the data if you had it. Thank you.

Chief Toth:

Well I can answer this somewhat. So I'm a instructor for prevention of biased policing through Lambert Consulting 2002 I've certified as a trainer trainer, or as an instructor. So the first thing you got to do is you got to get a benchmark. You have to have, you know, a company comes in and they look at your demographics and then the amount of people that come through your town and work in town. Whether it's a jiffy, or a stamp or whatever other businesses you have and you got to get a benchmark of what those demographics are that work here at different hours and so forth.

Chief Toth:

And then from there, once you get the benchmark, then you do all the traffic stops and you'd look at that data and you'd determine, do you have an issue with, you have a say, and I think our demographics like 96 point something percent white. And it's like 1.8% African American, and then there's a combination of the difference, what makes up the difference. So then, if you have that data, and you've extrapolated it out. And say for example you said that, "Okay, 10% of the people who are getting tickets are minorities."

Chief Toth:

Then you go, "Okay, what's the reason why they are getting citations. Is it for actual violations, or are you targeting somebody based on their race?" So that's the rhyme for reason to do all that. And as said, again, I'm all for transparency and so forth, but I look at, I never had a complaint from a minority driver themselves about a stop. There was, the lady who brought the information up, I can't remember her name, there was a reason to stop that individual. There was a traffic violation. So we can't really include that, because there's an actual violation versus, you're just like the Mayor said, you're stopping people for what they look like. And it doesn't have to be person, it could be old people, it could be young people, it could be whoever, you stopped me because. So we don't want to have anything to [inaudible 00:19:53]. We're stopping people because of the traffic violations that occurred and trying to change that driving behavior. Make this a little bit safer.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, we'll take one more question before we take a break. Mr. Chastain.

Mark:

Hi, I just wanted to follow up on what Teresa Plank said and I don't think anybody here, or certainly I wasn't is comparing the youth of Chelsea who are exercising their first amendment rights and have some legitimate concerns to the KKK or the neo-Nazis. But my point I guess on that line, the question was that I'm not sure the law will look at those groups differently in terms of their first amendment rights. So when you're looking at a policy or a practice, you have to imagine the worst case scenario. I mean, that's what the law envisions and what lawyers are trained to do is if we allow this group to do this, this group that we may agree with, and like, do we have to allow the groups that we really don't like and are really are heinous, because the law requires us to treat them equally under the first amendment, that's the viewpoint discrimination.

Mark:

So, I don't want to be heard to be comparing the two groups as though they're similar. My point was, by allowing a group that we find to be, perhaps, not offensive, are we setting the precedent so that a very offensive group, and perhaps a more dangerous group, [inaudible 00:21:32] a more dangerous group, to come and march down our streets, or anybody else. Even not a dangerous group but are just somebody

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

that wants to block the streets of Chelsea every week or every night even or once a week and [inaudible 00:21:46] because they want to get their viewpoint across. And are we handicapping our city government from being able to impose time, place and manner restrictions on the streets of Chelsea if we'd allow one group to continue to do what they're doing. That was what my question is, are you looking at that issue? And it sounds like it is something that the city council will be looking at. I appreciate the acknowledgement.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. Thank you for that clarification. I know that as a lawyer, that's something I am trained to do. Certainly is to when we look at the law how we apply it equally and then, when we're comfortable for one set or group of people which we may encourage or want to support that viewpoint, are we equally comfortable with it when it's someone we don't agree with? And as a government, we can't engage in those distinctions about viewpoint and support only those we like. And not those we don't.

Mark:

Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. We'll take one more question. Since we have just one more hand up right now prior to taking a break. Ms. King?

King:

Sorry. I was trying to unmute at several places. I was just wondering, why is the consequence of making a false 911 call?

Chief Toth:

Well when you say false 911 call, so people can just dial 911 and just do 911 hang ups, 911 hang ups, 911 hang ups repeat it. That's like a false 911 call, versus someone calls 911. And they say they need help, then we show up. I mean, I guess I'm trying to understand exactly when say false 911 call. What exactly do you mean?

King:

Well, in the 911 call if you falsely accuse someone based on race and saying that they're being attacked when they really have not been, I know that this is an active investigation, but falsely accusing someone of a crime in a 911 call.

Chief Toth:

Yeah. We don't want to discuss that because that's the investigation. We don't want to talk about that until we're done. We need to make sure we keep everything fair and impartial, and we don't want to taint the investigation at all.

King:

I just wanted to make sure that aspect of the incident was being addressed as well.

Speaker 3:

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

I think probably the appropriate way to answer that is all aspects [inaudible 00:24:48] are being looked at, if there's a report made to the officers about any active complaints, that those would be investigated, that correct?

Chief Toth:

Yes. I mean so how about this, is if you want to get hold of Sergeant Kinsey and you have some other information that would be warranted, that would be important to add.

King:

Okay. I appreciate your candidness. Thank you.

Speaker 3:

All right. Ms. Pacheco, did you have a question before we take a break?

JannePacheco:

Yeah, just a clarifying question. In regard to the last Ms. King's question, perhaps Chief Toth can speak to maybe the definition of a hate crime. I think regardless of the incident, is there a parameter or a boundary you could put around a phone call into the police office that would constitute something that would be defined as a hate crime perhaps?

Chief Toth:

So what we do is we take all information. We are finders of facts. We gather all the information from the witnesses, victims, potential suspects. We present that to the prosecutor's office. We look at all types of charges. So it's the prosecutor's decision to whether they look at something of that nature. So that's just how it is we're finders of facts. We gather information and send it in. And the prosecutor looks at those type of authorizations.

Speaker 3:

Does that answer your question is Pacheco?

JannePacheco:

At this moment, thanks.

Speaker 3:

All right, thank you. And I can say, as a former prosecutor that when investigations are sent up to my office, I have the latitude to charge what I think is an offense, a crime as defined by the law. So that information will be taken into consideration and whether I believe the facts I can prove it. I have probable cause first to charge. And then second, do I have the facts that sustain to prove that case. But we will take a break at this time for five minutes, or we're going to take a five minute break. It is getting late, and I acknowledge that, but we're going to take five minutes to get something to drink or stretch or whatever you may need to do. Thank you.

Speaker 3:

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

Thank you for taking that break with us. We are going to restart the special meeting of the city council listening session. We are on agenda item 2a which is the Q&A portion of the evening. And we'll continue with questions and we'll start with Ms. [Abarelipsis 00:28:00].

Aberalipsis:

Yeah, I was just wondering when the citizens of Chelsea can expect a statement about the events of June 25th. There's just a lot of rumors and a lot of stuff going on. And, I'm just wondering when the public will actually like, know what's going on.

Mark:

I guess the short answer would be when the investigation, so when the investigations completed. So I can't speak to exactly, I mean I can't tell you. We're working on them, but when it's completed, we don't want to rush through anything. We want to make sure that we've done a thorough and accurate investigation, and we've talked to everybody that we can talk to, and we present the best case we can so...

Speaker 3:

[inaudible 00:29:04].

Aberalipsis:

I appreciate that but is there just a ballpark? Are we looking at another ongoing month? Or are we looking at like another couple days?

Speaker 3:

Chief if I can.

Mark:

Go ahead.

Speaker 3:

Thank you. Generally, what happens if the case goes up, once it's completed the investigation, it goes up to the prosecuting team in this case would be Washington County prosecuting attorney to office, and then it goes through their processes and they make a charging decision. So wouldn't be until a charge has been issued if I complaint or if the case I'm not speaking to this case in general, I'm speaking to cases generally they'll either be discharged or be denied in a letter then a denial letter would be sent to any alleged victim in the case. And if there was a charge that would be filed with the court system, and at that point the portions of the police report at least would be made public, correct Chef?

Chief Toth:

Yeah. Through a freedom of information act, if I remember, so we're dealing with juveniles, so that's not releasable. [inaudible 00:30:20].

Aberalipsis:

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

I mean, we saw Mr. Floyd's murder and there was definitely news on that before it went to prosecution, I would assume that you guys could make some sort of statement about our youth and whether or not they're safe in our community, beforehand. I'm not looking for the formal charges. I'm just looking for an actual, response on what happened, because all we know is, a kid got hurt and this isn't just traffic stop. So that is, I know you probably can't comment further, but any ballpark on what a statement is going to be made would be really great.

Chief Toth:

And see the problem is, is the prosecutor's office that's against protocol. You don't make statements until that prosecutor, the case has been reviewed and authorized, and they really don't call us all on that.

Mayor Johnson:

Josh?

Josh:

Hey can you guys hear me?

Mayor Johnson:

Yes, sir.

Josh:

Oh, awesome. Hey, I don't know if this is allowed Mayor Johnson or not, but are we able to ask the group that's been meeting on Thursday, a question?

Mayor Johnson:

This is rarely a Q&A right now for the city. I don't know if any of the group that's meeting on Thursday's present or the forum for that, but this is really an opportunity to ask questions to the city council and the police department about our processes.

Josh:

Okay. That's fine. That's understandable. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

All right. Thank you. Mr. Giom [inaudible 00:32:35].

Giom:

That's correct. Thank you. So good evening again, a question regarding social media, in this world where kids and adults sometimes exchanges world than sometimes child world or Manchurian to one another that call their names. What is the policy, and how can you have those young people or even adults going forward? If someone being attacked through social media, for example what are the tools you have in order to validate that information and what will you do? Thank you.

Chief Toth:

So if an individual was getting bullying, could be attacked, they'd report it to us. They show us the screenshots of where that was happening at. And then depending on the age of the person if it's youth, we probably have a meeting with the family and the child about this issue. And see if we come to some type of resolution first, that'd be the first step. And obviously if it's adult it's different and it depends on what's in the verbiage because there's different crimes for using a computer, is it threats? It could be domestic terrorism, there's all a litany of things that you can't do on that computer. So it would depend on exactly what it was. But if it was just, someone's talking, just saying inappropriate things. And there were juveniles, we would try to work with both families to get that to cease.

Giom:

As an example, if someone was saying, go back to your country, what will be the result of that?

Chief Toth:

Yeah freedom of speech also. Okay. So is that a crime? Isn't it a crime? What we would always do is we would investigate it and we would send it to the prosecutor for review, and they would be determining whether or not there was a crime committed.

Giom:

Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Are there any other questions right now? I'm not seeing any, but I thought I would put out a last request for questions. All right. To see none, we'll come to the final portion of the agenda, which is a community input regarding policing. And I would encourage with the late hour of everyone certainly is welcome to talk. But if you've already touched on this and one of your comments first, I'd ask that you hold your comments, at least until someone who hasn't talked on that issue and allowed them to speak first.

Mayor Johnson:

(silence).

Mayor Johnson:

All right. And then I would open up, wait, Jane Pacheco.

JanePacheco:

Yeah, I just wanted to make a suggestion given the late hour and the fact that we are less than half of what our top participant number was, perhaps we put public input regarding policing on an agenda item for a future meeting. When people are a little bit more fresh and are able to engage again.

Mayor Johnson:

We do have an opportunity for another forum as needed. I do want to give people an opportunity who spent the evening with us an opportunity to speak right now. We've had several comments on it already, multiple comments on it already this evening. So I do want to make sure I give people an opportunity that have joined through us and set through tonight an opportunity to speak at this time.

Mayor Johnson:

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

(silence).

Mayor Johnson:

Scott H. please.

Scott H.:

Mayor hopefully my unmute time was a little bit more effective this time Mayor just really quick, just want to thank you. You've done a great job moderating this forum, giving everybody a chance, keeping it peaceful. And I really, really appreciate you doing that and great job. That's all I had to say. Thank you.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. And [Anick 00:37:59] Kennedy.

Anick Kennedy:

I would like to say ditto. Thank you, mayor and Chief Toth. Thank you so much for everything that you do and your police officers. We want to thank all them and to everyone else saying this has been great talking today. Thank you all.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you. Is there anyone else who would like to comment on generally on public input, regarding policing? All right, with that I do want to thank everyone who has provided comments and thoughts on policing and shared their personal experience tonight. As many people noted, that's not always an easy conversation and I appreciate your willingness to be here tonight and to listen to one another. And with that council, are we ready to adjourn?

Sharon Albertson:

This is Sharon Albertson. Yes. If all are in agreement.

Mayor Johnson:

Thank you, Mr. [Feeney 00:39:08].

Feeny:

Do we need a motion to adjourn if we do I'll move that we adjourn.

Mayor Johnson:

I don't think we need a motion to adjourn. Just want to make sure everyone's had an opportunity. Because it is a work session. Ms. Pacheco?

JannePacheco:

I'll agree to adjourn. Okay. And Charles Wisley?

Charles Wisley:

I agree to adjourn.

This transcript was exported on Oct 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

Mayor Johnson:

All right. And Tony Iannelli.

Tony Iannelli:

[inaudible 00:39:37].

Mayor Johnson:

All right then. Thank you very much. And we appreciate everyone's spending the interview with us. Thank you so much and have a good night.

Mayor Johnson:

(silence).