

Select Board Committee on Policing Reforms
and Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline
Joint Public Hearing
Wednesday, September 30, 2020 | 7:00 PM

Please click this URL to register:

<https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/s/1604877741?pwd=ZVhDd0c2cHdUQUITS1htRkxIMEJJdz09>

Call In:

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Webinar ID: 160 487 7741

Passcode: 77294005

Watch:

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Agenda

- I. Welcoming remarks from Chair Greene and Chair Fernandez
- II. Public Comment
 - a. Public comment will be on a first come first serve basis for 3 minutes per person
 - b. People are encouraged to sign up in advance or submit their comments via email to dwilliams@brooklinema.gov by 12 p.m. on Wednesday, September 30

Public Comment List for 9/30 Joint Public Hearing

1. Susan Howards
2. Rita McNally – Chair of Domestic Violence Roundtable
3. Neil Wishinsky
4. Felina Silver Robinson
5. Tanya Gorlin
6. Farshid Varasteh
7. Emy Takinami
8. Anthony Meyer
9. Svetlana Shaknovich
10. Annabel Lane
11. David Eisenberg
12. Evan Guttell
13. Natalia Linos
14. June Binney
15. Ugo Ewulonu
16. Ryan Black
17. Donelle O’Neal Sr.
18. Alice Thompson
19. Anne Greenwald
20. Evelyn Ophir
21. Tommy Vitolo
22. Emma Nash
23. Ryan Carvalo
24. Tal Canetti
25. Sasha Kalvert
26. Raj Dhanda
27. Eddie Strumfels

Reimaging/Reforming the Brookline Police Department

Daniel Stratton <dandstra@rcn.com>

Tue 9/29/2020 7:47 AM

To: Devon Williams <dwilliams@brooklinema.gov>

Greetings –

I have watched in horror as the contagion of mob-mentality has engaged our community in response to obviously egregious policy brutality in select regions of our nation. These atrocities have, to some degree, been dealt with and further need to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The truth is that the vast majority of our police officers are dedicated public servants who's pay doesn't nearly compensate them for the selfless work they do. I have lived in this town for over 25 years and have NEVER seem nor been the victim of any nefarious activity at the hands of this dedicated, caring department.

I have trained and worked as a member of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and have found nothing but caring for and dedication to the community. This group among many other services from the Brookline Police aim to aid NOT harm our community.

It is unthinkable to me that efforts are underway to defund this crucial agency. When the unthinkable comes to town, THEY (BPD) are at the forefront to protect and serve us. I greatly resent and resist the efforts of outsiders with un-patriotic agendas to think they can invade our community with propaganda designed to undermine an agency that has the safety and security of our community at heart.

I vehemently oppose these "so-called" reforms and will ACTIVELY oppose any who promote them at the Ballot box each and every time.

I ask you to re-consider these destructive "reforms" and continue to support the Brookline Police Department and its efforts to protect us from those who would do us harm.

Should you wish, you may contact me at the telephone numbers below to discuss this further.

Thank you for your time and kind consideration.

Respectfully,
Daniel Stratton

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Daniel Stratton | CERT/MRC | Mobile 1: 617-429-6329, Home: 617-879-0428 |
[\[mailto:dandstra@rcn.com\]](mailto:dandstra@rcn.com)



BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL
115 Greenough Street
Brookline, MA 02445
617-713-5001

09/25/2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the *School Resource Officers* (SROs) at Brookline High School and Walk and Talk officers in the community. My name is Courtney Valentine and I am the Boys Varsity Basketball Coach at *Brookline High School* (BHS). I am Writing this letter in support of both the Walk and Talk officers and SROs in Brookline.

I have had the pleasure of working in tandem with the SROs assigned to BHS and the community Walk and Talk officers with situations both positive and adverse alike. Our Basketball program has benefitted immensely from this collaborative approach. I can say with no mental reservation, both units have made the community more cohesive and functional. The annual basketball tournament, support of individual student-athlete's, and consistent communication and collaboration between the officers and myself has complimented the core values of BHS. The growth mindset approaches that these officers employ are instrumental in bridging the gap between the police and students in these strenuous times. These officers are not punitive but more empathetic and understanding, utilizing a more holistic approach when dealing with issues that arise with our student athletes.

Last year during a strong run from our basketball team some players decided to make a poor decision on the bus, instead of going the punitive route the officer came and spoke to the players and families about decision making and the negative effects. More notably, a student that lives in one of the housing developments in Brookline decided he was going to miss a game. One of the officers drove this young man all the way to Walpole to ensure he fulfilled his team duties despite not being able to participate.

Thus saving this young man from being removed from the program. It is actions such as these that are not quantifiable but merit the respect of all stakeholders and sometimes go unnoticed. These are simply a few instances that have helped our program. If these officers were judged by their interactions with our student athletes there would be no question about their genuine need or validity. The Brookline Boys Basketball Program Supports our SROs and walk and Talk officers of Brookline.

Courtney Valentine

Brookline Boys Basketball Head Coach



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

09/28/2020

To Whom It May Concern,

It was brought to my attention that the Town of Brookline is making a decision on the continuation of the Walk and Talk Unit that is provided by the Brookline Police Department. My name is Lynnit Sotomayor and I was the Teen Program Manager at the Brookline Teen Center. The officers involved with the Walk and Talk Unit provided support and guidance to our youth. Oftentimes when these young individuals were making poor decisions, the officers took the time to come down to the center and have one-on-one conversations rather than be confrontational as most of the young people view law enforcement.

I have seen the impact that these individuals have made throughout my time at the BTC to know that the youth people of this town need this program more than ever. I do believe that taking this program away while deteriorate the relationships that they have created as well as taking away the opportunity for law enforcement to present themselves in a different light for these young people.

The Town of Brookline needs to continue to have this program as a resource so that these young individuals feel that they have the support of their community. Most of the young people that the Walk and Talk Unit deal with are students of color. With everything that is going and has been going on, these officers have inserted themselves as trusted adults that have shown nothing but care, love and support.

Countless times we needed support with our youth and their families, and not for one second did the Walk and Talk Unit hesitate to be of assistance. We needed our youth to get to school and we had an

officer take the time out to make sure this young man made it to school, personally picked him up and brought him as well as purchasing an alarm clock to make sure that he got up on time. If this officer was not willing and able to help this young person out, he would for sure be in a different state of mind which we all know isn't the right one.

Our youth need this support more than ever as we are seeing that the society as a whole is diminishing of unity. The Town of Brookline needs to make a stand point on continuing the unity and keep the bond that this unit has with its town's youth. I truly support the Walk and Talk Unit and the officers that operate it. The continuation is vital for this community.

Lynnit Sotomayor
Teen Development Director
Dorchester YMCA of Greater Boston

Police reform

Michael Brodsky <miccaell@yahoo.com>

Wed 9/30/2020 9:46 AM

To: Devon Williams <dwilliams@brooklinema.gov>

Dear Devon, members of Select Board and the Task Force,

My family has been living in Brookline for the last 30 years, our children graduated from the Brookline school system and we are of the highest respect of the Brookline police department. On several occasions their presence saved the lives of the elder members of our family. They were always cordial and helpful.

Brookline Police department does not need "reimagining". It is a catchy phrase, but there are people's lives behind it. Please, do not break what works so well. Brookline is one of the safest towns in the state, where we walk around any time day and night, please keep it this way. Do not defund the police or prevent them from doing their excellent work.

Sincerely,

Michael Brodsky

617- 645- 0380

Essential community programming

marcelo.binker@gmail.com <marcelo.binker@gmail.com>

Tue 9/29/2020 11:12 PM

To: Devon Williams <dwilliams@brooklinema.gov>

Cc: L Binker <laurabinker@gmail.com>

Hello,

We are writing to you to express our support for the Brookline Police Department and to ask that any action that may defund its essential community programming be avoided.

We know by firsthand experience that men and women at this Department serve and protect everyone in Brookline. Furthermore, we would also like to mention that they have the knowledge and willingness to run programs like CERT, which has been a successful net for the contention and safeguard of people regardless of their background in times of necessity for over 10 years, and the House of Worship Safety and Security Training, whose interfaith inclusivity shows their commitment to serving and bringing the community together. These kinds of programs cannot be run by people without the knowledge or the lack of structure that the Police Department possesses.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Laura & Marcelo Binker
CERT Members since 2016

Felina Silver Robinson
41 Brook Street Apt 1
Brookline MA 02445
Poetsareangels1963@gmail.com

Memorandum

To: Select Boards Committee on Policing Reform and Select Boards Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline

From: Felina Silver Robinson

Date: September 29, 2020

RE: Reimagining and Reforming Policing in Brookline

Dear Select Board Members, Task Force Members, Brookline Friends and Neighbors:

Policing and Police Reform in Brookline is serious business. We are talking about making major changes that will affect many lives and there will be no going back for some. I'm fearful of the idea that the aforementioned committee and task force members have been considering the removal of such key programs that have been instrumental in so many of our children's lives throughout the town. I'm certain that the majority of the people reading this email has had some family member that has utilized one or more of these services myself included.

Here are some of the items that are being discussed by the Select Board's Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline, the Select Board Committee on Police Reform and other groups in Brookline include:

- Taking School Resource Officers out of the Brookline Schools*
- Ending the decades-long partnership with Brookline Housing Authority to have officers who are specifically assigned to support BHA residents, known as the Walk and Talk program.*
- Eliminating a response by trained officers to calls for service for people in mental health crisis and other requests for assistance*
- Having unarmed police officers in Town to respond to calls*
- Reducing the size of the Police Department
- Ending community programs that the Police Department offers, and/or removing Police participation in community programs, such as:
 - CERT (Community Emergency Response Team)*
 - Child Seat Safety/Car Seat Inspections*
 - Self Defense for Women/RAD*
 - Summer Camp Program*

Felina Silver Robinson
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Brookline MA 02445
Poetsareangels1963@gmail.com

- House of Worship Safety and Security Training
- School events and programs*
- Defunding the Police Department, which can lead to cuts in training programs that can drive change - like fair and impartial policing, procedural justice and understanding diverse populations like LGBTQ and BIPOCs
- Abolishing the Police entirely

*Depicts Personal Meaning/Participation by Me or Family Member

I think it would be a grave mistake to take the role of the Brookline Police in the community. We are not like other communities. There may be unforeseen repercussions that there is no returning from. There may also end up being a decreased value in property value as people move away as they are unhappy because of the choices the town has made. The fear due the lack of safety. The lack of programming. The list goes on.

Change does need to happen here. Relationships do need to be fostered. Ears need to be opened. Younger people do need to have a voice and older people do need to listen. Race is a problem here. I am a person of color. I have lived here 54 years of 57 years of my life now. I am proud to say that. Disappointed that we are where we are right now, I know we can fix it. I pray that we do!

Defunding is not the answer, nor is the removal of the Brookline Police Force!

In support of the Brookline Police Department

Geoff Wilson <glwilson2008@yahoo.com>

Wed 9/30/2020 8:07 PM

To: Devon Williams <dwilliams@brooklinema.gov>

Cc: ktrock2000@yahoo.com <ktrock2000@yahoo.com>

We are writing to voice our support for the Brookline Police Department and urge you and other leaders to refrain from punitive measures to reduce funding or otherwise impair their ability to provide important services to this community. Honestly, these are the people that are most responsible for protecting and supporting Brookline's most vulnerable populations; the thought that we would strip them of resources to express our condemnation of acts committed by other people in other parts of the country is utterly unconscionable, particularly at a time like this. Please think this through very carefully -- human beings will suffer as a result of this decision.

Geoff & Keren Wilson