



Rochester Police Locust Club, Inc.

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PAUL J. ROMANO, Chairman, House Committee

November 26, 2019

President Loretta Scott & Members of City Council:

Action will often lead to change, while words alone rarely accomplishes anything.

Council has repeatedly spoken about the need to improve police/community relations. Simply implementing change to police discipline will not solve the problems that this city faces in relationships between its citizens and the police officers who serve them.

You have a responsibility to do more than just criticize police officers in this city, you must ensure that they have the ability, resources and support to be able to do their job effectively.

The department's proposed plan to centralize patrol investigations is taking a giant step backward in community policing practice. Your lack of concern and inquiry into this restructuring of police services is concerning.

Citizen complaints rise when it is perceived that the police are disengaged with the public, and when the quality of police services are questioned. The centralizing of police services distances members of the community who are in the most need of assistance, interaction and communication with the police.

Our neighborhoods who have the highest levels of poverty and are the most economically depressed areas often need the most police services which encompasses investigative follow-up. Those living in these areas are far more likely to be victims of crime. Taking police investigators physically out of police section offices and housing them in one location decreases interaction and communication in investigative follow-ups not only for the citizens they serve but also in being able to effectively communicate with the patrol officers who conduct the preliminary investigative steps in any crime reported.

This disconnect will increase the community's feeling that the police are not sympathetic to their needs and are not providing quality police service. These criticisms will be directed at the lowest level of workers who have the greatest workload and have the least say in how police services should be managed most effectively.

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This action is going to take place in days or a few weeks, it is not going to be reviewed by the courts or by public concern, because the public has no idea it is even going to take place.

I brought his matter to you awhile back and I am disappointed in the lack of concern and the lack of response that you have taken towards a planned reorganization that mimics 70's policing.

The administration of the police department is placing more emphasis on being able to deploy limited investigative resources to in progress stabbing and shootings, while that is important, the result will be less time and resources being directed to victims of property crimes and quality of life issues. Even victims of physical assault crimes will suffer from the inability to easily meet or follow-up with the investigators that are assigned to their cases.

In past discussion you have agreed that the centralizing of police services to two sections of the City did not provide adequate police service and resulted in a disconnect with the police and the neighborhoods.

Here we are again on the eve of a poorly planned and thought out action in which no public input has been sought out or considered. You are responsible for ensuring that a restructuring of the police department is of sound benefit for the citizens of this community.

The leadership of this department held two meetings on this matter with line supervisors and investigators. The consensus of those who are responsible for providing police service to our neighborhoods provided constructive criticism and concerns on the effectiveness of the planned reorganization. That feedback was not embraced nor was it used to conduct further review of the plan.

The Rochester Police Locust Club is imploring you to investigate soundness of this reorganization. We feel this change will have a direct impact on the areas of the city that not only need our services but also need to have those services provided in a manner that encourages better police/citizen interaction. This plan is not representative of the best community policing practices.

If you question our reasons for concern then ask the citizens of this city, the neighborhood associations and the experts in community policing how they feel about this step backward in police service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael D. Mazzeo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael D. Mazzeo
President