

HRC "COMMUNITY & POLICING" FORUM - INPUT SUMMARY
5/12/15, 7:30 - 9:00PM, Carbondale Civic Center

The following summarizes input from seven groups at the 5/12/15 "Community and Policing" forum. Information has been divided into three categories, Strengths, Concerns and Possibilities. Items which do not fall under the purview of the HRC (e.g. "gun control"), while valid and valuable, are not included in the summary. Items which recur are listed only once. So that detail is not lost, unedited material from facilitators is attached to this summary.

Strengths:

- Community interest in improving relationships between police and community
- Some citizen involvement in discussions regarding how to improve community policing

Concerns:

- Institutional racism
- Fear of police officers; sometimes little children learn to fear police officers from family
- Mistrust of police officers
- Inadequate input into new community policing initiatives (e.g. District 95 program)
- Inadequate presence of police officers in neighborhoods when enforcement is not needed
- Officers do not know their neighborhoods, and residents do not know officers on patrol
- Too many stops without cause
- Inadequate stop/arrest/incarceration data for analysis of disproportionate impact
- Cultural differences are not understood; cultural diversity is not valued
- Responsibility is not acknowledged when police make mistakes - no transparency
- Police are not trained to preserve or foster community
- The importance of building positive relationships is not seen as valuable by every officer
- Inadequate training of police officers in how to build positive relationships
- Inadequate officer training in reading behavior, diffusing tension, speaking in non-condescending tones, communicating with respect, understanding family dynamics
- Transient nature of Carbondale's population
- Too few youth and adults are involved in solutions
- Community members do not see themselves as stakeholders
- Transient nature of police (used as a training ground)
- Police officers have insufficient stake in community - a large percentage live outside of it
- Police not involved in this forum

Possibilities:

- Redeploy officers so that they are present in the community when not enforcing the law
- Reduce police presence in elementary and middle schools - increase police presence in community
- Improve knowledge of and support to known programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Neighborhood Associations, Map Your Neighborhood, Crime Stoppers, Ride-Alongs, "Human Book" concept, Citizen's Police Academy, McGruff the Crime Dog, Police Camp
- Consider research-based models for police presence in schools
- Research ideas for building positive officer-community relationship skills
- Research ideas for building positive police presence in the community at large
- Involve more youth and adults in determining what community & school policing initiatives are implemented
- Encourage/provide incentives for officers to live in the community they serve
- Police presence during "big events"

HRC "COMMUNITY & POLICING" FORUM - INPUT SUMMARY
5/12/15, 7:30 - 9:00PM, Carbondale Civic Center

- Go to where the youth are!
- Determine interest/value in ongoing forums that promote/improve community policing

QUESTION 1: "What does positive police-community relations look like?" Facilitator: Commissioner Falcone

First Group:

- Transcends fear for community and police
- Reduces volatile emotions
- Accepts everyone's humanity
- Encourages personal relationships (e.g. "human library", "ride-alongs", "citizen's police academy")
- Increases police presence in neighborhoods when enforcement is not needed
- Issue: Police should be part of community - issue of police living out of town; issue of police feeling they must live out of town because they don't want their families to be at risk because of their work
- Question: How can neighborhoods help promote positive relationships that make both residents and police feel safe and secure?
- Issue: Voluntary police presence in schools without parents there. Presence in schools should be adult-based, programs should be well-defined, with benefits that can be measured.

Second Group:

- Results in police knowing residents by name, not just trouble-makers
- Presence of McGruff the Crime Dog in neighborhoods
- Police handing out stickers to neighborhood children - friendly police!
- "Police Camp" @ Touch of Nature
- "Citizen's Police Academy"
- Focus on relationships - Chief Don Strom's style applauded
- Personal interactions outside of enforcement function
- Note: long-term residents have better relationships
- Note: it's not community policing OR patrols; it's how resources are allocated
- Police need more training in reading behavior, diffusing tension, speaking in non-condescending tones
- A good police department (like the military) operates from the top town. That's where community policing starts. Poor performance should be addressed, bad officers should be disciplined and moved out, mistakes & wrongdoings should be acknowledged. Publicly. Police are human too.

QUESTION 2: "What are Police barriers to positive community policing?" Facilitator: Commissioner Shariati

- Lack of trust
- Overall lack of communications
- Not Knowing how to relate to different cultures
- Not doing outreach beyond enforcement

HRC "COMMUNITY & POLICING" FORUM - INPUT SUMMARY
5/12/15, 7:30 - 9:00PM, Carbondale Civic Center

- Police making stops without cause
- Education needed in human relations for officers
- Beat police not visible
- Need for police camp(s)
- Want to know that police are addressing the interests of publics
- Need to socialize with each other more
- Ending self –segregation
- Becoming comfortable with unfamiliar people
- Many expressed that police need to get out of District #95

QUESTION 3: "What are community barriers to positive police-community relations? What steps can be taken to eliminate barriers?" Facilitator: Commissioner Hennrich

- Mistrust/fear ingrained in black experience more than in white
- Systemic racism
- Lack of trust
- Problems with testing disproportionate impact
- Reduce incarcerations
- Reduce number of prisons
- Gun control - it's too easy to get guns
- More awareness of racist attitudes
- Police perception of their duty
- Desire to see police presence when there's no problem
- Limited number of people involved in solution
- Need for trust
- Communicating with police - difference in hierarchical communications
- Communication
- Police patrolling in cars (inability to talk to them)
- Transient nature of police personnel - Carbondale is a training ground
- Memory from the '70's: Letter that said "Officer _____ has been assigned to your neighborhood"
- Racial and cultural differences between police officers and the community they serve
- Suspicion of police and their motives
- Accusations against the community at large
- Community members do not see themselves as stakeholders
- Transient nature of the community
- Students not invested in community
- Variety of cultures in community (black, Hispanic, Asian, male, female)

QUESTION 4: "What issues are youth facing? What suggestions are there for overcoming those issues?" Facilitator: Commissioner Gutierrez

Concerns

- Lack of youth training for law enforcement
- Treat youths with respect
- Understand the dynamic of the family situations (often time lack of male presence at home)

HRC "COMMUNITY & POLICING" FORUM - INPUT SUMMARY
5/12/15, 7:30 - 9:00PM, Carbondale Civic Center

- At home; telling little kids they are going to call the police if they're bad—sets up fear of law enforcement for kids at a young age

Suggestions

- Provide more programs and access to programs for youths
- Increased positive community involvement
- Go where the youths are!
- At home; teach youths not to fear or distrust all law enforcement

QUESTION 5: "How do we view the police-community relations in our community - presence/response/handling of issues?" Facilitator: Commissioner Weaver

Do you freeze up when you see cops?

- get paranoid
- check odometer

How do you view police-community relations?

- "police are here to enforce the law - not to make relationships"
- "it takes two parties to make a relationship"
- "they are doing us a favor"
- "we are doing them a favor" (giving them a job)
- "never any bad experience" - can't say it is negative
- "but I know abuse exists for others"
- "but have seen child in headlock (had to speak up) and was reprimanded"
- "there is no community relationship in the community I live in and I am interested not in my security but in the safety and care of children being abused in my community"
- "when I see a kid - it's my kid"
- "it's a heart thing"
- "you can't say it's fine if it's just fine with you - but they're killing a child next door"

Why no police here?

- What was the reaction (or reason) of the cop who hurt Freddie Gray?
- Cops trained to take person down without caring
- Police are not trained to care or preserve or foster community
- I am new here - don't feel part of community
- There is no one community

QUESTION 6: What do we want to see more of from the police-community relations in our community? Facilitator: Commissioner Brandon

- 1) Future forum's of what laws look like and how they are defined, accompanied by historical statistics and data review.
- 2) A direction of forums in the future where police and community work together to define laws and an educational approach is used in said forums on both sides.
- 3) Ride-longs with officers would like to be made available to the community and if this program currently exist to publicize opportunity more to the public.

HRC "COMMUNITY & POLICING" FORUM - INPUT SUMMARY
5/12/15, 7:30 - 9:00PM, Carbondale Civic Center

- 4) Continued police involvement with community events. For example the "Human Book" concept offered at the public library where officers talk about themselves.
- 5) Less police presence in elementary and middle school and more police presence in the community.
- 6) Police officers hired should be members of the community, as in live in the community. Comments made about how it does not seem appropriate for officers living in other towns that may have negative opinions of Carbondale to be hired and working in the community. Officers that live within the community that they protect and serve have a more vested interest in the community. Possibly offering incentives for officers to live in community.
- 7) Police involvement in the community to be mandated and a requirement for employment.
- 8) Clarified "Amnesty" of what is said to an officer that is not on duty especially while they are engaged in community events.

QUESTION 7: What can the community do to protect and improve our community without police involvement? Facilitator: Commissioner McMillan

Neighborhood Watch
Inventory and mark property
Neighborhood/Resident Associations
Map Your Neighborhood
Be "around" during big events
Make connections with student groups in your area
Support/call crime stoppers
Clean up and maintain property
Support positive activities for youth
Recognize achievement
Encourage and conduct positive and authentic interactions

Summary:

Much of the discussion tended to drift into what the police could do. When the discussion was refocused on what citizens/residents could do, most discussion centered on activities or actions that can best be described as "Be a good neighbor."

Recommendations:

Frequent communications on how being a "good neighbor" improves life for all.
More promotion of Neighborhood Watch and Map Your Neighborhood and use these to promote development of neighborhood/residents associations.