

**Police Advisory Committee Meeting  
November 4, 2020, 7pm**

Present: Annie Crane, Erica Linden, Susan Smith. Melanie MacDonald, Jackie Smith, Margay Blackman, Dan Brockway, Karen LoBracco, Bob LeSuer. Mark Cuzzupoli and Steve Mesiti. Also attending, Tony Dumas.

Attending by Zoom: Howard Ward , Orlando Benzan

Guests: Brockport High School Diversity Club members (Nick Johnson, Joseph Ames, Amiya Plaskett, Bobbi Cheves, Aniyah Cheves, and their Advisor, Kerry Gant; BHS Gay Straight Alliance students Miles Dumas and Maya Benzan (by Zoom). Also participating, recent grad and former member of Diversity Club, Cassidy McDonald. *(Notes: all Diversity Club members were born in Brockport, except one who came in elementary school. Joe is White, Nick biracial, Bobbi, Amiya, and Aniyah are Black. Maya is Latina, Miles and Cassidy are White.*

Annie Crane presided over the meeting, introducing guests to committee members then turning to the list of questions the committee had sent to the students.

**The Q and A**

*If you were being harassed or threatened, would you call the police? If not, why not? If yes, what action would you expect from the police? What action would you want?*

- All would be reluctant to call the police, though if the situation were life threatening they would do so. Cassidy mentioned participating in the college's take back the night march where there was a heavy police presence driving alongside the marchers. She noted the marchers didn't feel protected even if that was the intent of the police, and that the police needed to get out of their cars and walk with the marchers.

*What would you want to see from the police (where you feel you need some external help)*

- Defunding the police and directing the funds to other resources that help people was mentioned.

*What is your typical interaction with police? Do other groups have different types of interactions?*

- Nick noted that he hadn't had many interactions with the police but noted that his mother's interactions with the police have been different than his father's (mother is White, Father Black).

- Joe related an experience with a group of friends, one of whom was Haitian, at K and K where the police (probably the sheriff) were called because the group was suspected of committing an unspecified crime.

*In your experience, what is the role of police in schools? What should it be?*

- All believe that police do not belong in the schools. Bobbi noted, Everytime I see police, I'm scared they will harm me instead of protect me.

*Do you feel safe in school? On the neighborhood streets of Brockport? On Main Street? If no, what can we, as a community do to improve your safety?*

- They said they felt safe in school, but Bobbi noted that there were a lot of racist white kids on social media.
- Nick said he felt safe in the community but not lately because of COVID. Noted that when police were out walking they weren't wearing masks.
- Aniyah said she felt safe on the college campus, but not alone at night on the streets of Brockport

*When you or your peers are thinking of future professions or work after High School, what about policing or law enforcement is appealing? What is not?*

- As a kid cops catching bad guys was appealing, now nothing is appealing about the police.
- Now zero appeal to be police officer. Police built on slavery, the police system was never meant to benefit black people in the first place.
- Disagreement about whether you can reform an institution like policing from the inside
- Should be an educational prerequisite for being a police officer. A college degree should be a requirement to enter the police academy

*What diversity issues do you feel the Brockport community is especially in need of improvement?*

- Nick—A lot. We chose to be in the diversity club which is one of the only places you can learn about injustice.
- Bobbi—high school students should be learning about black history. We learn about slavery but that's it. Black history should be mandatory for all students.
- Joe—Emphasis on changing the community culture not just the police. (more emphasis on the bigger picture)

*Dan Brockway—what should we put in a report focused on our police*

- Stop putting police in black neighborhoods.
- Put \$ into other organizations that police are typically called for. E.g. mental health.
- Nick—make individuals go to training

*We did not cover all questions that had been sent to the students but did, at the end of the meeting turn to the matter of the thin blue line flag and its varied interpretations. Student comments on the flag and its meaning included*

- Hijacked by white supremacists. Put the flag next to all lives matter and confederate flags. Synonymous with divisiveness. To some people it's hateful.

- Does this flag really belong up on our buildings in our community? *[note: One downtown business displays the flag]*
- Doesn't matter how it was meant to be used originally; now changed because of police who have brutalized people of color across the county.
- Has been damaged by the actions of white supremacists. A statement against black lives matter.
- Blue lives is a job. Black lives are black skin, what you are born with. Thin blue line flag is there to silence us.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45pm