

Police Reform Comments Received Via Email/Social Media

General Praise:

My dealings with the Croton police has always been fair minded and responds to my calls are acted on.

We have, and have always had, a professional and caring police department. As a lifelong Crotonite, I cannot find anything that will improve our officers. They have always been helpful and showed concern anytime we have needed them.

I have been made aware of a recent initiative in the state to improve the performance of local police, particularly in negating racial bias and eliminating unnecessarily forceful or dangerous confrontation with the community. I was directed to an online survey for the public to present their opinions. Of course surveys commonly omit the possibility of presenting a coherent and significant opinion, rather obliging the subject to choose among unrepresentative responses to irrelevant questions; and this survey was no exception. My complaint is idle, however, as I have very little experience with local or any police, and none in the past two years. Accordingly, I was ineligible to fill in most of the survey. I did certify that I feel entirely safe outdoors by day or night. I also wrote a paragraph in the comments section. Then I recorded my name and address, affirmed that I am probably not a robot, and pressed the button to submit. The submission failed. It turns out that I had to delete my name and address before the submission was admitted. There are surely thousands of capable programmers in the state; it is predictable of a bureaucracy that none of them was enlisted to compose the survey. Since my commentary appeared perforce anonymously, I will inform you what I wrote. Firstly, there is instance for the initiative in that police forces in a number of cities and towns behave like nervy children, with racial biases, playing Cowboys and Indians with real guns. Not all abuses are from anger or fear: there appears to be too strong a current of the good-natured Ku Klux Klan outlook in which Negroes are indistinguishable and easily replaceable, like raccoons. My impression is that this characteristic is absent in Croton, that the Croton police should be dispensing lessons in firearm safety and community relations rather than undergoing them. I grant that I have no source of information besides reading the blotter in the Gazette. What impresses me is the reliable absence of incident in these accounts. All the events are handled calmly and mundanely, with no intimation of threats or danger to anyone, no exclamation points. This bespeaks a calm, serious, professional culture. Uninformed as I am, I invite you to correct any defective impressions, or to add any pertinent intelligence. Thank you.

I would like to attend the forum and see what this is all about. I have had a positive experience with the Police in Croton but if there are things that can be done or changed for the good of the Croton Community, I am all for it. Thanks for setting this up.

Outstanding assistance from Croton on Hudson Police Department): I'm Co-chair of the Health, Safety & Security Committee of Holy Name of Mary Church. Over the last two years, I received

outstanding professional advice and counsel from Croton on Hudson Police Department while writing a comprehensive Policy & Procedures and Training Guidelines manual for HNM immediate responders to medical, fire/hazmat and law enforcement emergencies occurring anywhere in HNM facilities. Chief Russel Harper assigned an officer with special experience and qualifications to critically assess my draft based on US Department of Homeland Security, NYPD, and Archdiocese of New York recommendations on how to prepare for, and respond to, “active shooter” emergencies in our vicinity. Officer Eric Peterman recommended specific language and directions be added to better accommodate the physical situations of HNM church and ancillary buildings and to clarify the “Run–Hide–Fight” instructions of these guidelines that will be used to train HNM immediate responders and to teach members of our staff and congregations how to act during emergencies as best we can during current COVID limitations, and more fully when possible. The time, effort and special expertise provided by the Croton on Hudson Police Department represents a significant contribution to the well-being of everyone associated with Holy Name of Mary parish that deserves gratitude and commendation. Thank you.

General Criticism:

I just participated in the online Police Reform discussion. I'm afraid I found it to be a very poor response to the governor's request for re-imagining the police department. It was basically a cheering session. Is there a willingness to consider real change?

The reason for having a reform is to identify that there is a problem, and seek out ways that they can be solved to help the community as a whole. I understand that having the reform within itself says something. But with all do respect, please stop doting each other about the amazing work you've all done to help “solve” this issue. You need to be able to establish that while we live in Croton many BIPOC have had traumatic encounters with the police and due to the climate it's heightened. Please don't speak for others and assume that because we live in Croton it's not a big deal when indeed it is. It is a huge issue in Croton because when we aren't able to establish that racism is prevalent in the community, in the school system and even our own local government we're setting ourselves up to fail. Lastly concerning the racist police badge, don't use the excuse of it being expensive when you can find cost effective ways to change it. If that's the excuse I would suggest you reach out to local indigenous people within the community and ask them instead of determining it for yourself. If a high school has to make changes to a mascot then I'm sure you all could too.

Your email states: The meeting dates are as follows: October 29th at 7pm seeking input from the black community November 5th at 7pm – seeking input from the Hispanic community November 10 at 4pm seeking input from our student community November 19th at 7pm So does that mean you want to hear from the White community, and/or life long Croton residents on November 19th? I am highly offended at the wording of your email!!!

General Questions/Comments:

What plans are being considered to shift non-emergency duties from the police to other -- perhaps new -- governmental services? We have learned in the past years that an armed officer is not the best solution to many civic problems, and research has shown that non-police response can both avoid dangerous situations and save money.

Has the police department began to review its' data on stops and/or arrests, what does it show?

Reviewing actual data is critical to me. Throughout the years I've lived in Croton (over 25), friends who grew up in Croton have warned me to be careful on the roads. They claim their friends on CPD have stated in social settings they are more likely to pull over a car if the driver is a person of color and they can tell by the car that is driven. I do not know if this is true or not but I think we can all agree to the extent that it is a dialogue in the community it is harmful to the image that CPD is there for all and harmful to CPDs ability to maintain a positive community relationship with all citizens in Croton. I would ask for you to take a careful look at the data. Is there a disproportionate number of people stopped? Are more stops occurring on the highway rather than in town?

Do we have over policing occurring? Term used to describe when people of color are targeted/punished for engaging in the same acts caucasians engage in without any or minimal repercussions? Again, What does the data show?

Is there an independent community centered review panel for concerns or complaints regarding an officers' conduct? If not, how are these situations handled?

1) Does the Croton Police Department support the Black Lives Matters movement? 2) If the CPD does support the Black Lives Matters movement, what steps would it be willing to take to show their endorsement of the movement?

We need to discuss the need for a local animal control officer.

I have no specific question. Curious what issues other residents feel are concerning. I've never had an issue with CPD, and am just an observer tonight

Training:

My name is Wilma. I am a Croton resident but could not make it tonight. My question: who facilitates the anti-bias training within the police force and if they are not persons of color, I think that's a conversation that needs to be had because it is hard to teach anti-bias training when you don't have any experience with it.

What type of training for police officers does the village have for handling people with mental problems, and especially if they have a knife or seem to have some weapon.

If an officer is observed making an off color comment internally, what is the likely outcome? Training on Deescalation and Implicit Bias is great, but without interruption in habits, when a decision has to be made in a split second, habits of mind may overcome training which in turn can effect an outcome.

Equipment:

Are we planning to equip police officers with body cameras, and if so, when will they start using them?

Why do police vehicles need to be multi-ton SUVs? When I was a kid, cops rode around in cars that made them seem less imposing and more human, more like one of us. Again, is this a shift in equipment part of a more recent intentional policing strategy or did it come about over the last 20 or so years for some other purpose or even by accident?

Community Policing & Communication:

Recently I've seen blotter reports on Croton police activity in the Croton Gazette. Will those continue? Could they also be put in an online source? More broadly, would you please describe the department's process and policy on the public reports it provides to the community? Thank you.

What community engagement activities are the police planning to encourage a dialogue with groups of Croton community members, including target groups such as parents of elementary & school age children, parents of teenagers; families with black, brown, BIPOC, or immigrant members. What plans do the Police department have for increased information sharing with the Croton community regarding trends, perspectives, or concerns regarding local & current law enforcement, training, or community safety plans? Newsletters, Data dashboards, etc.

If community policing is the goal, what percentage of our officers know members of the community at large? What is the percentage of people of color (non former law enforcement) CPD officers would say they have a relationship with in the community? May not have this information readily available but something to maybe look at. As stated at the beginning, I've been a member of Croton for over 25 years, I have a background that bends towards being supportive of the police, yet I've passed several officers in common spaces in Croton, I do not believe any have ever smiled or said hello, have a nice day. They may maintain this persona universally, but understand in my culture, these pleasantries go a long way. Please do not get me wrong these officers I've encountered are extremely professional but there is a distance or shield that appears to be around them. And finally, something to think about: As part of an officers' training, they will hear at some point: make sure you come home at the end of your shift or it's better to be judged by 12 than carried by 6...I am sure you have also all heard about "The Talk" people of color have with their children, paraphrased: in an encounter with the police make sure you come home to talk about it. While these statements are nearly identical, there is a tension in them, they collide and support an it's us against them in both situations. How can

we change this? Just some thoughts I wanted to bring to the table as you begin this conversation. Thank you and CPD for the work that you do.

I would like to address community policing in the reform process. I find it very positive to have police officers that engage and live in our community. One draw back of this is that in a small village, everyone knows everyone. It is hard to respect a police officer when he or she is seen not following the rules they are supposed to enforce. These may be small things, but Police should not be above the law. I have seen police officers driving personal cars without front plates, driving personal vehicles with very dark tinted windows, driving cars that appear to be unregistered. These are all things that civilians would get a ticket for. Police officers should realize that they are an example for the community.

I've never been trained as a cop, never studied policing and law enforcement, and generally am not that familiar with policing other than some of its roots. Zeroing in on Croton, I have two areas of questions: The cops that pass me as I'm walking or jogging in the village never initiate a wave, never smile, never even nod their head. They come off as aloof. Is this conscious separation from me, a village resident who they are sworn to serve, by design? Is it to keep some psychological and physical distance from me as a member of the public so that they can be more objective about enforcing the law and not influenced by any familiarity with me as a citizen? Is behaving this way learned as part of their training so that they will treat everyone the same?

Police in Schools:

Will the schools also teach children not to fear police? Don't run when asked to hold?

Another question I have is are you teaming up with schools to possibly teach anti-bias to students as well as the Croton schools staff and administration?

Patch Comments:

Your badge is offensive. It's disrespectful to Indigenous people and culture and places Indigenous peoples on the same level as other "symbols" used as mascots/symbols--animals or objects. These are people. This is a real culture, not a costume. Please change your badge.

Change the badge!! It's racist!!

The badge of the police officers in Croton on Hudson HAS TO BE CHANGED. It is ridiculously offensive to the Wappinger and Munsee Lenape people who lost their lands to have stereotypical caricatures used by this police force. The badge is insensitive and should be changed immediately.

I think that the mascot on the badges of croton police is very offensive. We need to change it.

Please change the police badge!! It might not be offensive to you, but it definitely is to other people!

Please change the police badge. It is extremely stereotypical and should be changed as soon as possible regardless of the cost.

The police badges are cultural appropriation and offensive. The indigenous peoples of America are not mascots or costumes, they are humans. Please change the badges immediately, regardless of the expense. The human right to feel safe in your own community far outweighs any expenses.

I do not approve of the croton police forces symbol. I believe it is offensive and problematic.

Why is the police badge a racist caricature? It reflects even more badly on the police that they don't think respecting Indigenous people is worth the small amount of money it would cost to change it.

The badge of the Croton Police Department is racist and not okay. As a member of the village it doesn't make me proud to have it as a representation of our town. To see that it hasn't been changed yet is concerning and disgusting. I value human rights over expenses

The police badges are cultural appropriation and very offensive. Please change them to better our community.

The police badge is offensive to indigenous people, and it is quite frankly, extremely unnecessary. That mascot has no place being the mascot representing croton police.