

Police Reform Task Force Forum Comments:

Senior Community

- Cleveland and Benedict have a problem with speeding
 - Wants village to put back up those signs that let people know how fast they go

Civic Organizations

- Sponsored senior luncheon, many of the force have shown, has been great community outreach
- DARE program at middle school, police cadet program via high school, really good
- Has your department been able to help out/share experiences/benefit from the experiences of others with other departments that work in poorer areas with higher BIPOC populations?
- Croton Rotary thinks the PD did a great job when helping with their parade
- Croton Caring, positive interactions, but people have questions about welfare checks
 - How do you ask the police to perform a welfare check?
 - Clearer information on what type of welfare checks police handle and don't handle
- Croton Lions thinks the PD work with the community very well
- The PD has worked really well with the Croton Lions
 - Perhaps publicize that the cadets are available to help out local organizations
 - Include other local organizations in events like the Toy Drive
 - Work together more
- Croton Caring—is there a potential for police to partner with local organizations to create a volunteer network to perform welfare checks during emergencies
- Croton Caring—Do the police get a lot of calls during emergencies (like storms) for things that individuals should handle rather than the police?
- The update emails the village sends out during storms is very helpful
- Comment—what changes are being considered to reduce the probability of a tragedy in our community, like the ones that have happened in large and small communities across the country?
- Comment—what structural changes are being considered to reduce the amount of times an armed officer responds to an emergency situation?
- Comment—does the force have an official policy to use the least violent method to implement the mission statement?
- Croton Caring—we do smaller group meals in lieu of the monthly luncheons, we could potentially include a member of the PD to strengthen relations with the senior community
- Croton Caring—Any information the PD wants to share with seniors, we can include in our flyer, newsletters
- Croton Caring—the PD community outreach has been done really well

Interfaith Community

- Temple of Israel--people are content, feel safe, not much to comment on because everything is virtual
- Our Saviour--thankful for the PD
 - The symbol of the Native head, has there been discussion about changing it?
 - Constituents think the PD are doing a good job
 - What kind of anti-racist training is the PD participating in?
 - What is the percentage of POC in the Croton PD?
- Political signs were/are being stolen
- Middle school has had a good relationship with the police, feels the PD treats children respectfully and fairly, responds to the needs of the school
 - PD is supportive of school events
- Call -- Unitarian Church Member, Black Lives Matter banners have been stolen from their property, in Croton have other houses of worship/people's private property had Black Lives Matter signs stolen from them? What does the Croton PD do about it?
- Call -- Unitarian Church Member, community members would love to see more transparency about police training (de-escalation, anti-bias)
 - There is a Croton Lay Interfaith Council with representation from all houses of worship in the nearby area, have a mailing list, would love to stay engaged with Croton
 - Dr. Josh Reverend Snyder of the Unitarian Church would love to be engaged with this work

Black Community

- Instagram Comment--Will the schools also teach children not to fear police?
- Instagram Comment--Who facilitates the anti-bias training within the PD, and if they aren't POC, I think that is 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?
- Are you teaming up with the school to teach anti-bias to students as well as the Croton school, staff and administration?
- What community engagement activities are the police planning to encourage a dialogue with Croton community members, including target groups such as parents of elementary and school age children, parents of teenagers and families with BIPOC/immigrant members?
- What plans does the Croton PD have for increased information sharing with the Croton community, regarding trends, perspectives or concerns regarding local law enforcement training or community safety plans? For example: newsletters, data dashboards, etc
- Caller -- Female Hispanic, biracial children, PD have been nothing but courteous and respectful, wanted to applaud their communication skills within the community and in their neighborhoods
- What type of training for PD officers does the village for handling people with mental disorders, especially if they have some type of weapon?
- Iris Buglioisi -- Police are polite and respectful

- Has the police begun to review its data on stops and/or arrests? What does it show?
- Friends who grew up in Croton warned her to be careful on the roads, that Croton police in social settings have stated that they are more likely to pull someone over if they are POC, and that they can tell by the car that is driven
 - These are discussions happening in Croton, and are harmful to the police's image and relationship with the community
- Is there a disproportionate number of people stopped?
- Are more people stopping on the highway rather than the town?
- Do we have over-policing occurring? (term used to describe when POC are punished for the same actions Caucasians engage in without any or minimal repercussions)
- Is there an independent community centered review panel for concerns/complaints regarding an officer's conduct? If not, how are these situations handled?
- If an officer is observed making an off-color outcome internally, what is the likely outcome?
- Implicit bias/de-escalation training is important, but sometimes habits of mind can take over when one has to make a decision in a split second
- 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 Croton PD officers would say they have a relationship with in the community?
- I've passed several officers in common spaces in Croton and none have smiled/said hello, have a nice day. It feels like there is a distance or shield surrounding them
- As part of an officer's training, make sure you come home at the end of your shift, I'm sure you've also heard of "the talk" POC have with their children, paraphrased: in an encounter with the police, make sure you come home to talk about it. These statements set up an us vs. them mentality. How can we change this?
- Earl AbamDePass--Do you record race if you stop a vehicle on Route 9?
 - No one has expressed any concerns, just wants to check
 - Are non-local treated differently from locals?
 - Believes race should be recorded
 - How difficult is it to fire a tenured police officer?
- Commenter -- What's the procedure for selecting people to join the Croton PD?
 - Is it taking someone from the Civil Service List?
 - Do you do your own recruiting?
 - What type of testing, specifically psychological testing, is that done before or after the Civil Service Test?
 - The type of tests that might uncover biases, how is that done? Is it a national standard? Or is it done via Westchester Human Services?
 - If you get a certified list, one would expect that someone who didn't do well on that psychological test, who might have some biases, would not be hired?

- Is the police chief privy to information from the psychological exams?
- How are people approved by the county for consideration for hiring?
- Very often, it seems to me that some people who are ill-equipped emotionally make it onto the force. Concerned about the efficiency of the selection process; does it wean out the people who may give the PD and community a problem
- Over and over again, you read articles about an officer who did not act appropriately, and then you come to find they have a history of bad behavior
- Is enough being done to try to identify those bad apples?
- Ian Murtagh
 - What are the implications of 50a being repealed?
 - Has there been anyone who did not pass the probation period?
 - Does the Croton PD have an Instagram or Facebook?
- Caller
 - How was the community survey distributed? Where can we take the community survey? I don't remember seeing it
 - Are the police trained to build relationships with community members (saying hi, smiling, waving, etc), especially with children?
 - Thanks the police, this is a very safe community, has POC children and have never had any issues
- Caller
 - Was the DARE officer position eliminated within the schools?
 - That is a good avenue for the children to have communication with the officers, contributes to good rapport with the children/parents
- Caller
 - Is there any kind of way for those people who are interested in answering that survey to take it?
 - Wondering about amount of POC survey responses
 - Perhaps for publicizing, you can post it on the Croton Community Page?
 - Did not know about village email list
- Alex Morales
 - Perhaps an annual, every six months. Must maintain consistent questions to analyze trends

Hispanic Community

- Commentor
 - Commercial place by the Deli with no parking, so starting at 6:30 in the morning, the traffic is crazy and loud, the law is not being followed
 - People are parking where they are not supposed to
 - Has never seen any officer patrolling, except for lately after she talked to PD a couple weeks ago
 - Would like for more officers patrolling that part of the town, cannot rest in her own house
- Commentor
 - Neighbor of first commenter, making complaint about her

- Takes up parking
- Contradicts neighbor's testament; no noise,
- If you make noise, she calls the police on you
- Hispanic people are sometimes afraid of the police, but she is very thankful of the police because they are very helpful
- One of her fears: driving without a license, afraid she would get pulled over
 - Subset of the Hispanic community that does not have appropriate documents/licenses, so because of that they live in shadows/fear
 - Was a period of time where she was getting pulled over for no reason in Croton many years ago
 - Hispanic Community believes that any government workers are going to attack them
 - Asks that we continue to work together and provide events where we can get together and the police can open up to the Hispanic Community and show them that they shouldn't fear the police
 - Needs education on the law
- Michael Plotkin, Principal of Pierre Van Cortlandt, Task Force Member
 - Has written comments from Latinx kids in the middle and high school
 - Not happy about what they see on TV, and how the police are portrayed on the media
 - Police brutality is an important issue to the kids
 - Want to ensure that the Croton PD are doing all they can to ensure that isn't happening in their neighborhood
 - Kids want to get to know the police officers in their community better
- Earl AbamDePass, Task Force Member
 - Thanks the police for their efforts in managing traffic
 - Large amount of people who come to see the dam/river are Hispanic
 - Are there Hispanic officers on the boats?
- Ian Murtagh, Task Force Member
 - Spoke with an employee at a local deli, he believes that there is not a serious issue between his community and the police department
 - Is the community aware of the Green Light law?
- Alex Morales, Task Force Member
 - There is a fear between the Hispanic community and every interaction with the police
 - Task Force wants to ensure everyone feels comfortable to interact with the police

Youth Community

- Commentor
 - The current logo is inappropriate and disrespectful to Indigenous peoples
 - Any attempts to reach out to other police forces in the area that may not be as progressive, to help them better themselves?
 - What type of innovative technologies or strategies are you using to prevent drug abuse in students and if you have considered implementing a buyback program

for students who want to stop using drugs but do not know how to either a) get rid of them b) fund their own rehabs?

- Commentor
 - How many officers will be at the school during the year? What are their names? Can they introduce themselves?
 - Not made aware of all the officers that are there
 - Some people can feel intimidated/uncomfortable
 - In the past there have been times when police would just come into the schools, and students would feel worried that something was going on
 - There is no DARE program in the high school, that would be helpful because a lot of students struggle with substance abuse in the high school
 - What does the anti-bias training look like at the academy? Do you hire someone to go through the training with all your officers?
 - Is it possible, going forward, for the school to announce that officers will be there if they are going to be there? Could they introduce themselves?
 - BIPOC people passing through (from other towns) may have encounters with officers, incidents where they feel uncomfortable
 - Should hire/have more diversity within the Croton PD
 - Officers should introduce themselves when they are new and driving around town, wave hi, smile
 - Can't solely rely on students to speak up, have to do research and find professionals to perform anti-bias trainings
- Email Comment
 - Likes community policing
 - Has seen police officers not following the law and has a hard time respecting them. Believes police officers are not above the law
 - Has seen police officers drive personal vehicles without front plates, personal vehicles with very dark tinted windows, driving cars that appear to be unregistered
- Instagram Comments
 - How is the Croton PD chief selected?
 - Why did the youth program stop?
 - What can be done about speeding/traffic on Maple Street, especially by students?
 - What can we do to educate our children about what the purpose of the police is?
- Ian Murtagh, Task Force Member
 - Are there standard times where the police would be at the school as a matter of course? Do they attend sporting events?
- Michael Mui, Task Force Member
 - Does the PD have any SROs?
 - Do youth/BPOC feel uneasy because officers are carrying weapons or because they are worried officers will treat them differently due to the color of their skin?
- Paige Jones, Task Force Member

- Police officers showing up in school unannounced make kids feel unsafe, especially if they are BIPOC
- BIPOC kids have had encounters with police outside the school
- Has BIPOC friends whose older brothers, when hanging out with white boys, the cop would only go up to the BIPOC boys and start questioning them in Croton
- BIPOC don't necessarily feel uneasy because officers are carrying weapons, but because of the color of their skin they fear they will be treated differently
- BIPOC always the first to get questioned
- All BIPOC families have to have "the talk"
 - Don't talk back to law enforcement, don't look them in the eye, don't put your hands in your pockets
- Fear because of the systemic issues in policing, especially when you see it in your neighborhood
- There is no dialogue between BIPOC and police in Croton, this would help with nervousness
- There are good cops, but there are also bad cops who give police a bad image
- A lot of stuff that occurs with BIPOC in Croton goes under the radar
- Carlton Sergeant, Task Force Member
 - There is going to be a nervousness around police due to what you see in the media, especially in a predominantly white community
 - A lot of people don't know enough about the police/police protocols
 - Being friendly with kids, letting them use the firefighter trucks, helps build up that trust when they are younger
- Carolyn Whitting, Task Force Member
 - What would make BIPOC residents feel more comfortable?
- Debra Rodriguez, Task Force Member
 - Did notice when she was in the schools last year (due to the threat) that some kids were anxious/uncomfortable around officers
 - Believes police should speak more to the administration to try and figure out a way to build a relationship with the kids
- Liz Poling-Hiraldo, Task Force Member
 - Easier for police to have relationships with younger kids
 - Police forming positive relationships with teenagers is harder
- Aliyah Simpson, Task Force Member
 - What is the walking post?

Community at Large

- Commenter - Maureen Fitzpatrick, physician, co-chairmen of the Holy Name of Mary Parish Health Safe & Security Committee
 - Compliments the Croton PD for the help she has received in writing up a new document for new policies/procedures/training guidelines for our immediate responders in situations where it would be difficult to acquire law enforcement officers

- Any new programs to assist the Holy Name of Mary to train their immediate responders in dealing with active shooter/violent intruder events?
- Commenter - Cary Andrews, lived in Croton for 30 years
 - Commends the community outreach and the reform
 - There was an uneasy/difficult relationship with the PD
 - Certain youth have been targeted/harassed/bullied
 - Hadn't brought it up in the past because fear of reprisal
 - Wants to ensure there is that young people's voices are heard in this reform process, and that they feel part of this village
 - Would like a more formal process to submit concerns without fear of reprisal
- Commenter - John Ghegan, local ambulance driver
 - Most times when we get a call, the police arrive before us
 - They give first aid, direction, comfort
- Written comment on Zoom Meeting - Stu Greenback, retiree of the Croton PD, part-time park ranger
 - Croton PD is welcoming, wonderful to work with, fair and friendly to the public
- Commenter - Joel Gingold, lived in Croton for 78 years
 - My general relations with the police have been outstanding my entire life
 - Have there been any problems between the police and minority communities in Croton?
- Q&A comments on Zoom meeting
 - Does the Croton PD support the Black Lives Matter movement? If the CPD does support the Black Lives Matter movement, what steps would it be willing to take to show their endorsement of the movement?
 - There is a need for a local animal control officer
 - Does the Croton PD have body cameras and if so when will they start using them?
 - Recently I've seen Croton PD blotter reports in the Croton gazette, will those continue? Could they also be put in an online source? More broadly, would you describe the PD's process and policy on the public reports it provides to the community?
 - I've had a positive relationship 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.
 - I've never had an issue with the CPD, curious if other residents have
 - Can you share more details about the anti-bias training officers receive, especially in regards to race and gender identity and how often it is conducted?
 - Any plans to have officers more on foot and/or on bikes?
 - When responding to a situation when someone is experiencing a mental illness episode, particularly when said episode may involve physical aggression, is there a process in place to facilitate communication between the police force and mental health professionals or perhaps the individual's case worker if they have one?
 - What is the process that occurs once one files a FOIL request?

- When officers address mental health calls, is there ever coordination with mobile crisis teams, who are trained to address mental health crises?
- Believes the police need to be proficient with arms and should know jiu-jitsu
 - Officers may need to use a chokehold
 - Would the police chief trust one of his officers to choke him out?
 - What do you think about training the police officers to be well trained enough to trust each other to use chokeholds on each other?
- Is the Task Force evaluating the disparity in funding for protective services--that PDs are well funded while emergency medical and fire services are volunteer based. Is this part of your evaluation at this point or is this scope limited to police operations?
- Commenter - Charles Bennett, lived in Croton since 1945
 - Has had a great relationship with the PD, even exemplary
 - The CPD were very professional at the Black Lives Matter Rally
 - Believes that body cameras will make policing better for everyone concerned because they can document police misconduct and protect police from false accusations
 - How are officers made aware of their obligation to protect those in their custody?
 - What sort of training/encouragement is there for police to prevent incidents in which another officer loses it?
 - Believes police are people and can sometimes get emotional in a situation where they should not
 - Believes cops need to learn how to stop abusive behavior before it occurs
- Commenter - Phyllis Morrow
 - If one of the officers had an experience, while taking the anti-bias training, that had an outcome that was different than they anticipated and how that transformed their perspective. How did they handle an experience differently than they thought they would?
 - What is the value of this training for officers?
 - Would it be valuable to include some training with a focus on meditation/listening skills/communication skills?
 - If we have future comments, how do we submit them?
 - How is the morale of our PD since last spring? Has there been more depression?
 - What have you heard from the Croton teens about how they feel about this issue?
- Aliyah Simpson & Paige Jones, Task Force Members
 - BIPOC are too afraid to come to these forums with police presence to file complaints about the police
- Caller
 - What is the community doing to recognize outstanding efforts by the police?