



# POLICE REVIEW & ADVISORY BOARD

*A department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts*

## Minutes for the Meeting of October 27, 2010

**Board Members Present:** Mertin Betts (chair) Alexandra Detjens, Susan Melucci, Martin Small

**City Staff Present:** Acting Executive Secretary Brian Corr, Deputy Superintendent Christine Elow

**Public Present:** Geoffrey Derrick, King Downing, Brigitt Keller, Bishop Felipe Teixeira

The meeting began at 6:00 PM.

Board member Small moved that the board approve of the minutes of the September 29, 2010 meetings, and Board member Melucci seconded the motion. After discussion, the minutes were approved in a unanimous vote.

Acting Executive Secretary Brian Corr reported on a meeting he attended on October 25 with the leadership team of the Cambridge Police Dept. and Prof. Jack McDevitt of Northeastern University regarding racial profiling and traffic stops. Prof. McDevitt is a nationally recognized expert, and has done extensive work with police, community groups, and the ACLU around the country. He and his staff did the analysis of the traffic stop data for the Commonwealth. Cambridge was one of the communities that reported a higher than average number of traffic stops, with the data indicating there were a disproportionate number of searches for traffic stops. Corr explained that this was brought up at the September 2010 meeting of the Board, and Deputy Supt. Elow of the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) noted that there were clerical mistakes being made by officers during their recordkeeping of traffic stops.

Corr described that in the October 25 meeting, Prof. McDevitt explained that upon investigation, police officers were regularly checking either the "inventory search stop" box or the "non-inventory search stop" box on the tracking forms, with the understanding that the latter choice indicated a stop that did not include an "inventory search stop" rather than one that included a "non-inventory" search stop. Prof. McDevitt is working with CPD on doing training on the importance of legitimacy. CPD is also working with him to review their policy on biased policing to ensure that officers understand bias and biased policing. Corr recommended that Prof. McDevitt be invited to a future meeting in order to discuss the work of the Board, what similar agencies other communities do, and what recommendations he might make to the Board.

Deputy Supt. Elow reported that she has been working with Commissioner Haas on a response to the report issued by PRAB on the arrest of Professor Henry Louis Gates in 2009, and that she looks forward to presenting that to the Board in the future. She also reported that the CPD has created an online survey to get feedback from people about their interactions with police as part of the CPD's quality of service assessment efforts.

Members of the public were given an opportunity to speak. Questions were raised regarding whether PRAB had provided input into the CPD's online survey. It was explained that that had not happened in its initial form, but that as it is revised, input from PRAB will be more than welcome. A question was raised as to whether the minutes from the September 2010 meeting included detailed discussion from the executive session held on that date, and the answer was that it was not the case. In answer to another question, it was explained that all traffic stops by the CPD are recorded and tracked. Questions were asked about the reference in the September 2010 minutes regarding releasing information about cases and what retraining or discipline has been imposed on officers. This was explained, and additional information on what the limitations are will be provided by the CPD at an upcoming meeting. In response to a question, the policy on civilians accompanying police officers during their patrols – "walk alongs" and "ride alongs" – was presented, explaining that they are primarily used for educational purposes, and are not generally available to members of the public. There were also questions about the nature of a proposed response by the Board to the report of the Cambridge Review Committee, which were addressed by members of the Board.

Board member Small briefly reported that he attended an Open Meeting Law training conducted by the City of Cambridge Solicitors Office.

Board member Melucci moved to go into executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chap. 39, s.23B(2). The motion was seconded by Board member Small and approved in a unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM after executive session.