From: Patrick Conant <patrick@prcapps.com>
Sent: 3/23/2018 9:12:00 AM
To: Esther Manheimer <esthermanheimer@avlcouncil.com>
Cc: Jaime Matthews <JMatthews@ashevillenc.gov>,Julie Mayfield <juliemayfield@avlcouncil.com>
Subject: Re: Petition for Police Accountability Through Data Transparency

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Esther,

Thank you so much for your reply. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to me with you and Julie.

While I'm not the only one doing this type of analysis, I have personally looked at public safety data on a variety of topics over the past two years - if there are specific reports or topics that you feel have caused confusion, that would be helpful for me. There is typically a pretty clear explanation why APD and an external analysis may come to different conclusions, but the reasons differ for each report.Â

In the broader context, making more information available to the public, as we are requesting in our proposal, is one of the best ways we can alleviate this type of confusion moving forward. If the public has access to the same raw data that APD uses to generate their reports, using crime stats as an example, then it becomes easier for a citizen like myself to verify and support an analysis from the department.Â

Regarding availability - I'm pretty free outside of Friday next week, so I'll wait to hear from Jamie as to when you and Julie are available.Â

Thank you,
Patrick Conant

On Fri, Mar 23, 2018 at 7:18 AM, Esther Manheimer <esthermanheimer@avlcouncil.com> wrote:

> Patrick - I would like to meet with you Â and Iâ€™m hoping Julie can join us because sheâ€™s focused a lot on the data aspect of policing. I am confused about the reports produced externally versus the reports produced by APD and how to reconcile them. So a sit down meeting would be more helpful to me then back-and-forth email.Â
>
> Jaime can help us set up a meeting.
>
> ---------- Forwarded message ---------
> From: Patrick Conant <patrick@prcapps.com>
> Date: Thu, Mar 22, 2018 at 6:39 PM
> Subject: Petition for Police Accountability Through Data Transparency
> To: Esther Manheimer <esthermanheimer@avlcouncil.com>, Gwen Wisler <gwenwisler@avlcouncil.com>, Julie Mayfield <juliemayfield@avlcouncil.com>, <keithyoung@avlcouncil.com>, <brianhaynes@avlcouncil.com>, <sheneikasmith@avlcouncil.com>, <vijaykapoor@avlcouncil.com>
>
> Members of Asheville City Council,Â

I wanted to reach out to you regarding a petition and request I am leading on behalf of Code for Asheville, the Petition for Police Accountability Through Data Transparency.Â

As of the time of this email, our petition has 521 signatures and counting, and I will be presenting our full request at the Public Safety Committee meeting this Monday. As part of our presentation, I will be requesting a recommendation from the PSC and request that I can present the proposal before full Council in April.Â

I wanted to reach out to each of you, in case you have any questions about our proposal - I would be happy to meet with you in person, talk on the phone, or discuss further via email.Â

I understand that our proposal covers a number of elements that are technical in nature, and I believe there may be some confusion as to whether state law permits the release of all the information we are requesting.Â

I want to assure you that we have researched the implications of state law, and we are intent on presenting a set of recommendations to Council that can be acted upon without requiring changes to state law.Â

For example, with Use of Force information, while the reports themselves may have restrictions under personnel law, there is factual data, such as the date, time, approximate location, type of force used, and demographic information of the subject of force and officer.Â

This information is clearly a public record, and has been released as a data feed by many cities in the US - including Fayetteville, NC. Fayetteville in particular has highlighted the way that their open data initiatives have improved relationships between the community and police department, and I feel their successful efforts could be a model for Asheville.Â

Our petition contains a condensed version of the full request, which includes additional links and details for the information we are requesting - I have linked to both below.Â

At this critical moment in Asheville's history, I think we can move forward as an Open Data City with a 21st Century Police Department by adopting these common-sense reforms to increase the transparency of our police department. In doing so, we will empower our citizens to participate in the process of tackling some of our most difficult public safety issues by providing them with information and data, and we can do so in a manner that carefully respects valid privacy, investigative, and personnel concerns.Â

Although City Council adopted an Open Data Policy in October 2015, it has remained difficult to receive access to these critical data sets, reports, and policies. I feel strongly that a clear statement of support from Council is necessary at this time, to ensure that the public is able to receive access to this information, while also providing the first "building blocks" in the long process of rebuilding community trust in our police department.Â

Full Request:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_oSBcLRusDxNkAQqchuK_Xqp65Ik47Wa6KDIt3Q-Bow/edit

Petition:
https://www.change.org/p/code-for-asheville-petition-for-police-accountability-through-data-transparency

Thank you,
Patrick Conant