



FORT WORTH TARRANT COUNTY
NAACP
CHARTERED 1934

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June 23, 2020

Mayor Price and Members of the Fort Worth City Council
200 Texas Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

Dear Mayor Price and Members of the Fort Worth City Council:

This letter in no way invokes the *Texas Public Information Act, Tex. Gov't Code, Chapter. 552.001 et. seq.* nor should this be interpreted as such by the City.

The senseless killing of George Floyd has sparked outrage in our nation and once again reminds us of the urgent need for justice, reform, and transparency in our policing systems. What happened to George Floyd is all too common here in Fort Worth and has reopened the wound that still exists from the murder of Atatiana Jefferson and many other lives that have been lost due to police violence. Over the last couple of weeks, there have been multiple protests and an outcry for racial equality and changes from the current policies within the Fort Worth Police Department ("FWPD") that protect and encourage an environment of police misconduct.

We, the below listed professionals and community leaders can no longer turn our heads and look away. We stand united in our demand for REAL CHANGE and ACTION. The time has come for the city leaders in Fort Worth to acknowledge the issues of racial and economic inequality that are destroying our community. Mayor Price, you and the city council members have taken the time to make statements over the last week on how you want to take action as well. These statements and apologies are all too familiar. We heard them in 2016 when the Jacqueline Craig incident took place. We heard them again on last year when Atatiana Jefferson was murdered. The speeches and apologies are great; however, we have yet to see any action or real change. We don't expect you to have all the answers. We do, however, expect you to take action. Our desire is to work together and to facilitate that approach by providing the City of Fort Worth with steps to take to illustrate dedicated efforts in healing our community and bringing real and significant change to the City of Fort Worth.

We have divided our requests into four areas of immediate concern and they are as follows:

1. Education

It is apparent from the FWPD website and conversations with the office of the Police Oversight Monitor ("Monitor") that there is a disconnect with the FWPD and the community on the correct way to file "official" complaints against a law enforcement officer. Tex. Govt. Code §614.022 and Tex. Local Govt. Code §143.312(g). The statutory requirements for lodging an official complaint are not met unless the complainant puts it in writing and signs under oath. However, the FWPD website and Monitor encourage complainants to utilize electronic and telephonic means to lodge

complaints. There is reason to believe that these complaints are not properly tracked, nor is there any follow-up. As a result, we are asking the city to take the following steps:

- a. Provide materials and update all websites accessible by the community on the proper and lawful methods available to file an “official complaint”;
- b. Implement a tracking system for complaints received through a telephone call to ensure that complainants have a reference number and are mailed an official complaint form through USPS mail as a follow-up;
- c. Provide an Overview and Explanation of the police/misconduct complaint process and the steps that are taken during an investigation; and
- d. Clarify the Monitor’s role in accepting and processing complaints and communicate this to the public at large through a community forum or “Meet the Police Oversight Monitor” event or publication.

2. Office of the Police Oversight Monitor

The Monitor role was created in response to the concerns raised by residents in Fort Worth regarding police misconduct and the rising number of police brutality cases. The Monitor position stemmed from a recommendation that was made by Fort Worth’s Task Force on Race and Culture. One of the key responsibilities this office was tasked with was finalizing a model to provide “Independent” review of the FWPD policies, procedures and operational implementation of same. Kim Neal was selected as Monitor in January 2020. She relocated to Fort Worth at the end of February. Reflected on the City of Fort Worth’s website is a list of key activities that the city alleges to have taken place within the first three months of the Monitor’s existence. However, the Monitor does not have a (1) website, (2) business cards, (3) adequate staff to complete the tasks this office was created to do, or (4) policies clearly establishing her role and responsibilities, even though this position has been in existence for the past six months. It is also clear that a sufficient budget has not been established in order to ensure the Monitor is in a position to accomplish what is needed to get this office operational in a viable, effective manner for the community.

More importantly, it is clear from the language in the Ordinance establishing the Monitor that Ms. Neal does not have authority to truly operate independent of the agency she has been charged with monitoring. This is concerning for the members of the community to whom she has been tasked with engaging. It is imperative that the Monitor be free to engage with the members of the community, has full access to Police data and files necessary to fulfill the office’s mission, and has the freedom to disseminate relevant information to the community in order to establish transparency and true reform within the FWPD. As a result, we demand that the city leaders provide the following:

- a. Confirm the community will be provided an opportunity to help shape the office of the Monitor since they are the ones who asked for it to be created to provide transparency, accountability and fair policing in all neighborhoods in Fort Worth by establishing an Advisory Working group;
- b. Clarify the role of the Monitor and how she will engage and work with the community on addressing concerns regarding police misconduct and reform within the Department;
- c. Confirm that the community will be provided an opportunity to help shape this role since it was created to improve community and police relations;

- d. Provide a firm timeline of when the budget will be set for the office of the Monitor. If this budget has already been established, please provide this information or the date of the city council meeting where this has been discussed;
- e. Provide a schedule of when the Monitor's department will be staffed with sufficient employees to carry out the functions this office has been tasked with; and
- f. Provide date(s) of when the Monitor's website, business cards, and literature/ brochures in support of her department and responsibilities of the respective office will be available for the public to review.

3. Accountability and Transparency

Mayor Price, you issued a statement on Friday, June 12, 2020, pledging to work alongside the community in a collective effort to provide equity and justice for communities of color. You allege that there have been six of the eight policies under the "8 Can't Wait" initiative that have already been implemented by the City of Fort Worth. However, these policies have yet to be shared with the public. So as a result, we request the following:

- a. As to all of the "Policies" and changes that have been put in place after Task Force review and since the Jefferson case (e.g., "8 Can't Wait" and use of force policies, etc.):
 - i. Provide the public with copies of policies, a draft for review or a summary of the changes that have been implemented as well as any the policies of enforcement/discipline that have been adopted in response to the changes;
 - ii. Provide the public with ALL updates and feedback that have been provided by the Independent Third-Party Expert Panel that is referenced in the June 12, 2020 statement issued by Mayor Price since its inception to the current date.
- b. Please provide clarity that "Independent Authority" has, in fact, been granted to the Monitor to ensure that accountability and transparency goals are met. In that vein, please provide the methodology for the Monitor to enforce/implement recommended changes to the current policies and complaint process. In addition, confirm that the Monitor will have "independent authority" to carry out the duties of her office as it relates to reviewing and formulating recommendations to improve/reform FYPD current police policies.

4. Civilian Oversight Board

We can no longer put off the creation of an Independent Civilian Oversight Board. City leaders need to make a commitment and put a plan in place **NOW** for the establishment of this board and begin expeditiously to laid the foundation for its formation and governing policies. Community representation is imperative for the success of this Board and critical for collaboration of an effective policy that will govern the board and meet the needs of the community. We demand an express commitment that the citizens of Fort Worth will be included in this process as we work towards the development of the Civilian Oversight Board through the implementation of an Advisory Working Group in order to solidify a bottom-up community driven plan. Community representation is imperative for the community buy-in and success of the Civilian Oversight Board. As a result, we also demand the following:

- i. Clarification on who is the appointing authority (for members) and how these members will be appointed; and
- ii. A timeline for implementing a community workgroup that will work alongside the Monitor to establish the Independent Civilian Oversight Board and its governing policy.

If the City of Fort Worth is serious about their commitment to “providing equity and justice for our communities of color” and taking action in that direction, you will have no problem adhering to our requests. We look forward to your response and expect to hear from you no later than 10 days from the date of this letter. You may send your response to office of the NAACP at the address and/or email noted above. We also request that you provide the date, time, and location of the meetings that have been scheduled to discuss the Meet and Confer Agreement with the Fort Worth Police Officers’ Association so that we may attend.

Please be advised that if the city fails to acknowledge or respond to our demands for action, we, the signatories below, will have no other choice but to encourage, support, and legally defend the protestors who continue to lawfully assemble in the streets of Fort Worth. Our united voices will be heard in this community if we are met with silence by the City.

Sincerely,

Estella Williams, President
NAACP Fort Worth Tarrant County

Angel Williams, President
L. Clifford Davis Legal Association

Maryellen Hicks
Black Women’s Lawyer Association

Nikki L. Chriesman, Organizer
Tarrant County Lawyers Against Injustice

Eric Igwe, President
Tarrant County Black Democrats

Jay Corzine, President
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Beta Tau Lambda Chapter

Keon Anderson, President
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Fort Worth Alumni Chapter

Professor Neal Newman, Advisor
Texas A&M Law School Black Law Students Association

Arlene Barnett, President
The Links Incorporated, Fort Worth

Tara Reed, President
National Pan-Hellenic Council, Tarrant County

Coletta Strickland, President
Fort Worth Tarrant County Minority Leaders & Citizens Council

Rev William T. Glynn, President
Black Ecumenical Leadership Alliance (BELA)

Jim Austin, President
Jim Austin Online

Salvador Carrillo, Deputy Director
LULAC, District 21

Jimmy Walker, President
Tarrant County Black Historical & Genealogical Society

Anita Heiskell, President
Jack & Jill of America, Inc., Fort Worth Chapter

John Barnett, Sire Archon (President)
Delta Mu Boule'

Deborah Peoples
African American Summit for Peace, Justice and Equality

Felix Alvarado, Director
LULAC District 21

Dante Williams, President
Community Frontline

Steven Hicks
FW4Change