

City Hall Room 301A • 30 Church Street • Rochester, New York 14614-1290

PAB Public Input Sessions - Summary of Notes

Overview of Community Listening Sessions

LatinX Roundtable

District: Citywide

Date & Time: 4/10/23, 1:30 PM

Virtual

Participants: 7

Plymouth-Exchange Neighborhood Association (PLEX)

District: South

• Date & Time: 4/11/23, 6:30 PM

Virtual

Participants: 23 (or 9, excluding PAB staff as part of participants)

• 19th Ward Community Association

• District: South

• Date & Time: 4/13/23, 6:30 PM

In-person, Arnett Library

Participants: 16

Neighborhood President's Meeting

District: Citywide

• Date & Time: 4/11/23, 5:30 PM

Virtual

Participants: 44

Atlantic, Culver, East Main Neighborhood Association (ACE)

District: East

Date & Time: 4/18/23, 6:30 PMIn-person, Fedder Building

• Participants: 7

Seneca Towers

• District: Northeast

Date & Time: 5/5/23, 4:30 PMIn-person, Seneca Towers

Participants: 25

Charlotte Community Association

• District: Northwest

Date & Time: 5/1/23, 7:00 PM

• In-person, Robach Community Center

Participants: 21

Notes

Suggestions/Comments/Questions from Public Input Attendees (may be paraphrased):

LatinX Roundtable

- I took the survey and felt I needed to do this because it matters. Is it really going to make a difference?
- There is a tremendous lack of trust with what the PAB needs to do and they need to work on this. They need to make core connections with those on the street, such as Northeast Safety Coalition and Father Tracy Advocacy.
- How will we be building that trust, how will be we be building partnerships within the community?
- This is very personal I supported the PAB prior to leaving Council and it is disappointing, not the vision we thought it would be. Work needs to be done around its credibility.
- After this many years, it is a difficult pill to swallow that no cases have been heard and reviewed. We need a clear, transparent way to track progress and the outcomes of complaints.
- We need very clear budgeting there was a real issue of what money was spent on and this needs to be transparent.
- They need to be collaborative with the community and the department.
- I heard the relationships on the Board are not great that needs to be worked on if this is going to be fruitful.
- There has to be oversight of the Board besides the Board they cannot oversee themselves. I am not sure what this would actually look like.
- There was a lot of back and forth because some members thought Council was trying to take control. I wish I had said more about this.
- My personal opinion would be to start from scratch with the Board and do a better job at selecting members. I felt that people were there for their own status and agenda, not for the community.
- There was a hatred toward police officers and this was apparent in the Board, there was no balance there.
- Everyone was pushing to hear cases but I felt the Board wasn't prepared to listen to cases and be completely unbiased about it. That was scary to me.
- There needs to be something to check on the Board and everyone needs to be invested

 people can't just take their hands off of it. There needs to be reporting to measure the
 difference.
- I felt that the Board just fought each other and didn't pay attention to what was happening at the agency. Accountability was the last thing experienced there. I'm not sure how we will overcome the negativity felt around this concept.
- The list of Board members and PAB staff does not include any Latinx people, I'm
 concerned about that. This shows the invisibility of the Latinx community. There is a lack
 of representation in a group of individuals who are heavily impacted by violence, and it is
 concerning that there is no voice for them. Language access is one of these things that
 goes beyond translating forms.
- The hope was that City Council would be the oversight and never that they would be independent. Moving forward, the Public Safety Chair or someone should be designated Liaison and tasked with regular updates. They need to develop some sort of structured reporting back, that must happen.

- We need to look at Board members and their qualifications beyond professional. Have
 these individuals taken hard stances on these issues in one direction or another? You
 cannot have individuals who have already taken positions on these things before seeing
 facts because you will not gain credibility. Intensive review needs to happen and that
 needs to be part of the selection process.
- They need to go to the Union President and RPD Chief and rebuild a relationship to develop a process that is fair and equitable. If they are not participants in the process, this will always look like a witch-hunt.
- The matrix was developed that hopefully involved the Union President but it's time to go back to the table. We have to bring everyone together or it will always be us against them.

Plymouth-Exchange Neighborhood Association

- More information disseminated at the grassroots level would be received and appreciated, because there's been a lot of talk about both sides – the RPD and the PAB. It seems like more conversation than action, and hearing that the PAB doesn't have the financial needs isn't good. I'm interested in hearing and reading how this information is going to be disseminated.
- Most folks believe that the PAB doesn't have any power and that they need power –
 most people seem to think that the PAB doesn't have enough push to make people
 change. Maybe it is based on policy, maybe we need to pull resources together. Young
 folks know about the PAB but they don't believe the PAB can do those things because
 they don't have the power. People seem to think that the PAB is wasted resources
 because of that.
- There seems to be a conflict of interest because the RPD is part of the City of Rochester and the Mayor appoints the Police Chief, and hiring goes through HR with the City. What is the City's position when the police overstep their authority and they have to challenge this? That is the problem I have with any Board of this nature it seems like it is just a bone thrown to the community.
- Is City Council giving the proper support and resources to the PAB?
- How are they working to fill Board and staff vacancies?
- What is Council doing to assure the RPD is compliant and cooperative?
- What is Council doing to ensure the PAB remains independent?
- In regards to sharing info, when will Council allow the PAB to hire more staff?
- Why are the union efforts requiring outside counsel and more taxpayer dollars?
- You are setting the PAB up to fail by taking away money, not filling PAB seats, staff leaving, etc. There was recently an officer charged with inappropriate sexual conduct with a minor, are we supposed to turn a blind eye? It does not seem like Council supports the PAB, it seems like Council is just placating voters. I suggest that you unfreeze the PAB budget.
- I do not want to see wasted funds in the community. It sounds like the biggest issue is
 trying to come to some type of agreement regarding the PAB's disciplinary powers. It
 seems like an organization asking for funds, but it has no power. I suggest that they sit
 down with the RPD and see what power can be relinquished from them— if that does
 not work, go to litigation.
- Another big issue is how this issue of the PAB is drowning out other life sustaining issues, such as discrimination in housing, employment, gun laws, healthcare, childcare, elderly care, etc.

- Money is not the only challenge. Waste? Those salaries of all the senior staff in the news, resigning, leaving, and ignoring staff concerns by doing nothing. That is waste.
- We need some kind of IT to put those outcome numbers out.
- We want a PAB that has real disciplinary power to enact change, but it seems like a real uphill battle. We have seen a lot of disappointment.
- We would love for the PAB to show some of the positive things that other PABs have done.
- The RPD used to give a report at every PLEX meeting on what was going on in the area. Officers were close to neighborhood folks, pre-Covid. It would be good to have reports on the PAB website.
- I suggest that the PAB come to the many Neighbors Building Neighborhoods meetings.

19th Ward Community Association

- It was a rough start; I do not know how you overcome what happened. A lot of taxpayer money was wasted on something bad; it left a bad taste in people's mouths. I have attended a few PAB community engagement meetings also. We know that we need police accountability, but I do not have any answers. I have taken multiple surveys, but I was pleasantly surprised by the work that was done. I am glad that you are doing this (holding meetings). They hired people that are smart, but it is too bad that it is mucked up. The Locust Club are really entrenched and moving mountains is tough.
- Will Council have oversight over the mental health response? Is there any way to find out if PIC unit is taking any weight off RPD?
- It just needs to be more transparent and community-oriented because the community does not really know what the PAB is doing. I do not think there is a lot of outreach to the community, especially on the work of different divisions of the PAB.
- It would be good to have the Board meet with Neighborhood Associations in meetings like this. They could also address the component of mental health responses.
- An officer crashed three cars and was still allowed to drive a car afterwards why are we allowing that as a government?
- Is there any notion of accountability in terms of how successful RPD is? If you look at overall, what RPD has done— stolen cars that are not recovered, break-ins that are not solved, poor response times, etc. do?

Neighborhood President's Meeting

- There should be a PAB, but there has been a lot of negative press. Council should come
 up with some key performance indicators for the PAB. There is not one right answer,
 there has been too much bad PR, and they got a bad shot. You start to wonder why
 there is so much bad PR.
- Very essential process, many rookie mistakes, and it is heartbreaking that they had such an awful start, and it will be hard to come back for that. Independence that PAB wanted from City Administration is part of the reason for their issues; it made it almost impossible to be successful. The training will be helpful; I recommend training for the staff as well to have basic understanding of labor law, union rights, basic HR issues, etc. Make public the part of the City budget that goes toward settling civil suits, most settlements require confidentiality. If the public understood how much money goes toward settling civil suits, it will make a difference. Please keep working on it; it is

- essential for our community. Staff made mistakes, and press piled on, it was not helpful to the community. Said in earlier articles, PAB did not have unfettered access to information from RPD. Is that still the case?
- Does the PAB do any trainings such as ride-alongs with RPD to get a sense of what they're doing?
- Do you think PAB was initially biased? Can PAB be replaced? What do you think will make this work?
- Did not even realize PAB was a bureau, would be helpful to put out that information.

Atlantic, Culver, East Main Neighborhood Association (ACE)

- This is the first time I have ever heard of it [the PAB].
- My feeling is that the PAB is looking to "get the police" while at the same time NY has this incredible bail reform going on that basically supports wrongdoing. I see constant bashing on any kind of policing, and I have never felt safe to live in the City before now. We have spent how much money, and what have we gotten back from that? The people are trying to keep peace in their neighborhoods and have gotten back nothing from the City. The police's hands are tied. The police are ineffective, and when they are effective, they are wrong.
- Suggestion: All PAB staff should go through a mini "Police Academy" to see the training they go through. I have not seen anything that has come out of the PAB. How many more millions of dollars are we going to put into this before we see them do what they are striving to do?
- How many of PAB Board/staff has gone through ride-along or police academy training? (Sunshine)
- There has to be more collaboration and communication between the PAB and RPD because it is demoralizing and cops are leaving left and right. Right now, they are set up like an adversary of the police. We had a police officer from our neighborhood, a decorated veteran, who got sick and tired of the "politics" so he moved to Webster.
- I have not had very many encounters with the police. I know we lost many cops in the last few years.
- I had to call the police two to three times during the summer because I had two mentally ill neighbors that were blasting their music loudly for hours and they would not stop, and the cops never came. In addition, there was a crazy boy in my neighborhood who went around my car with a knife, and they did not come for hours. There was a guy pounding in the backyard and wouldn't stop, and I had to call the police on him—all the little kids in the neighborhood came over and a 12-year-old Black girl in my neighborhood was concerned about me calling the police because she said that the police kill Black people.
- A few of the people I mentioned really have mental health issues. We have left the police to deal with the problem with few options. We have their mothers' numbers, so if we can call them if there is an issue or if we have to call the police. We need to have an interlacing of all of these systems to be effective. We call the police, they go to RGH or Strong, then the hospitals do not help and send them back out, and the people are not helped. It is a recurring theme that there are these melodramas playing out. On Delphi Street, they located ex-prisoners on an entire block last year. That creates problems because these people are not getting the support that they need, and we keep this wheel spinning by not working together.

• We are hoping the City and County and look at the 911-response system. When someone in our neighborhood died, we knew she had died because she could smell it. The last anybody had heard of her was a week prior. We also knew she was the victim of domestic violence, so we did not know if we would be walking into a crime scene. We called 911 for six hours, and 911 kept asking why we did not go in. We called RFD, and then finally got in contact with RPD; the seven officers in the Goodman section were tied up with a previous case [suicide].

Seneca Towers

- Get rid of the politics, the newspapers have not shown anything positive about the PAB;
 they have been showing the negative. There is a lot of inside stuff going on. This will help take the pressure off and stop police officers from telling on police officers.
- What happens with people being let out as soon as they are arrested?
- This [the PAB] will help with cutting the blue line by having an outside agency for accountability.
- Is this a new program? This is the first time I have heard about this. It would be nice if you people could come and get us involved because I am lost. It would be nice for us to understand better.
- It would be nice if an interpreter could come [to PAB outreach meetings] for the Spanish community.
- There was recently a story of a young man who kidnapped a baby. Would the PAB come into play with a situation like that? We have also had some situations with car break-ins. As far as the PAB, what could I expect of them for being accountable in that situation?
- My son was pulled over by the police, they searched him for no reason and they beat him up. Would he go to the PAB and they would investigate the police?
- Legally, how would a situation work if someone alleging police misconduct wanted to bring in a lawyer? Is it a conflict?
- Something happened to me not long ago and I went to the police. I was harmed, someone hit me, but the police did not seem to care. Is this something I could report?
- When you call the police, do they have a time limit that they are supposed to get back to you? Sometimes it takes an hour or two, or they do not even come. I heard about a girl who got her car stolen, and they took 1-2 days to show up.
- We have to understand too that they are short-staffed police, nurses, everywhere.
- Do you think the PAB is keeping people from joining the police force?
- I am concerned about politics being involved b/c the PAB is under City Council. Are there checks and balances in the PAB so that politics do not get involved?
- We used to have a different police force than we have now. When I was in high school, the police used to walk down the street and they knew us by first name. There was a certain comfort you had in calling the police and getting things done, they had their pulse on the neighborhood but they don't have that anymore. I have a brother and two nephews that suit up to go on the job every day, and you do not know if they are going to come home every day. Now they cannot walk down the street.
- The only thing we could do with this kind of meeting is to pass along the information to our community.

Charlotte Community Association

- What is the structure of the PAB?
- How much are its employees paid, and what is the Board's budget?

Positive Feedback:

Latinx Roundtable

N/A

Plymouth-Exchange Neighborhood Association

- The PAB is doing good work. They need more support from City Council. RPD is not compliant, and that needs to be addressed.
- Independent investigation of the police is important for community trust and transparency.

19th Ward Community Association

- The 19th Ward had two presentations on transparency of the PAB; they are trying to be community engaged.
- Until I saw the presentation and saw the parallel between what is portrayed and what they are actually doing is eye opening. It is a mixed blessing for me—I can be very open about it. I have family members who are RPD I do not care, I dialogue about it. The social media waters down information. I think they have wonderful information, but I do not know how else they can get it out there besides to continue offering it. We have to keep that positivity and get the correct information out there.

Neighborhood President's Meeting

I have had good interactions with members of the PAB. They unfortunately got off to a
bad start. I am not sure, how with the internal problems, they can turn around the poor
image. It will take a lot of work to get the information out to the public. It is unfortunate
since what I have seen of the disciple rubric seemed reasonable and well thought out.

Atlantic, Culver, East Main Neighborhood Association (ACE)

N/A

Seneca Towers

- It is good that police are being held accountable.
- I suggest more communication from the PAB and ensure that the press gets both sides
 of the story

Charlotte Community Association

N/A

Feedback on Survey:

Latinx Roundtable

N/A

Plymouth-Exchange Neighborhood Association

N/A

19th Ward Community Association

Survey is easy to take, user-friendly

Neighborhood President's Meeting

• The survey questions were wonderful and the survey was easy to complete.

Atlantic, Culver, East Main Neighborhood Association (ACE)

N/A

Seneca Towers

N/A

Charlotte Community Association

N/A

Questions for PAB:

LatinX Roundtable

- I sat in on the conference in regards to what a police accountability board is and what it looks like in different parts of the country. What is the format for the PAB, what is it built on? Do we have direct oversight over the RPD or are there still things in the union contract that preclude that. How does someone contact the PAB?
- What are the values the PAB use to guide social change? How do we build trust in community and law enforcement? How do we build legitimacy with stakeholders, the community, law enforcement, and the media?
- The PAB presented to this group and had precise concerns. How are we going to close those loops of communication with the public and community? Specifically police using ICE as a means of translation.
- What is the status of the Board? A lot of the chaos was happening at the Board level, so where is the Board today?
- What is the Board makeup? It is critical to have credible individuals running this organization.
- How does the PAB disseminate information?

Plymouth-Exchange Neighborhood Association

- How much power and influence does this Board have on the actions of the Police Department?
- Is there a data driven platform to see incidents with the RPD and how the PAB is handling these cases?
- I am looking for examples of the PAB and what they do. Is there more information about the purpose of the Board? They need to make sure that there is a simple flyer with examples of how PABs have helped folks in other cities or locally.
- Has the PAB looked at requiring individual officers to have liability insurance to cover their actions? It could change people's behaviors.
- What disciplinary action is the PAB able to hand out? Is the PAB allowed to look at internal affairs files?
- How is the search for a permanent Executive Director going? Isn't this one only interim?
- Is the PAB getting any money from the County or State?
- Is there support on disciplinary power from the County or State? Where is the pressure to get this stuff done?
- Have the PAB reports been published? I suggest that the PAB should publish news reports on individual cases, with all due respect to anonymity.
- This is my first time hearing about reports. How will the community access those reports?
- Can the PAB Director address approaching work at the PAB versus the work she completed at the Civilian Review Board? They seem to have vastly different responsibilities.
- Was the budget the same each of the years, the PAB was operating? What was the
 budget in the beginning? Was there a smaller budget in the beginning? The goal is to
 stretch every penny to help the community; we do not want the PAB to be known as a
 "poverty pimp."
- What has the PAB done? We do not want to see heavy salary-based versus outcomebased spending.
- So when community outreach things were mentioned, this Chief had nothing to say but now she wants to "correct" something being said. Why not answer the questions asked about what the community education looks like?
- How many cases have been closed after a FULL investigation?
- Did the PAB's recent projects require additional funds? That sounds like staff salaries. What were the expenses?
- Therefore, no real investigations have been actually looked into, witnesses spoken to, officers interviewed, and then closed? Those closings sound administrative vs. and actual investigations.
- Have you released any reports on completed investigations?
- I would like PAB representatives to come back and give a progress report. Does the PAB have any kind of newsletter?
- Have any PAB reports been publicized?

19th Ward Community Association

• I would be interested in plans to overcome the data-sharing issues with the PAB and RPD because it has been a long time. Is this a FOIA issue?

Neighborhood President's Meeting

N/A

Atlantic, Culver, East Main Neighborhood Association (ACE)

• Is the PAB able to override the government? [Referring to cash bail, 2020 protests] The police cannot do anything anymore.

Seneca Towers

- How many cases have been brought to the PAB? Have any been solved?
- I heard the PAB does not really have tools to keep people accountable. Can you speak to that?
- Who is watching over the PAB?
- How many staff does the PAB have?
- Do people apply to the PAB or elected?
- Are the PAB meetings accessible online?

Charlotte Community Association

N/A