



December 13, 2022

Mayor David Pruhs and
Fairbanks City Council Members
800 Cushman Street
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Fairbanks Diversity Council
800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

RE: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) “Seven Points for a Safer Fairbanks”

Dear Mayor Matherly and Fairbanks City Council members,

The Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC) heard public testimony on May 10, 2022 from National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) of Greater Fairbanks. At that time, Montean Jackson and Helenmarie Matesi presented the FDC with information about their “Seven Points for a Safer Fairbanks.”

Our body is responsible for providing a citizens' forum, serving as a diversity advisory board to the City Council, and addressing the community's concerns in the areas of employment, public accommodations, police policies, transportation, housing, public awareness and sensitivity, and other such subjects as they affect diverse populations within our community.

The FDC is not an expert in law enforcement administration, best-practices in policing, or the justice system. However, we as a group can and do applaud the efforts of the NAACP of Greater Fairbanks for their efforts in researching and reviewing our local police practices. While we as a body do not support or reject outright the proposals outlined in the “Seven Points for a Safer Fairbanks,” we do believe that any advocacy that results in better public safety standards is good. Police oversight by non-police and advocacy for best-practices in policing by citizens is a good thing.

In many communities in the United States, residents participate to some degree in overseeing their local law enforcement agencies. One idea suggested in the NAACP of Greater Fairbanks “Seven Points for a Safer Fairbanks” was for the establishment of a “Civilian Review Board.” The FDC believes this proposal deserves special attention by the City Council. Although we know that there already exists a “Fact Finding Commission,” we also learned it is seldom if ever used and that there are currently no members. The FDC recommends that the Fairbanks City Council create a committee to further investigate the opportunities that might come from enhancing the above commission and / or reorganizing it into a “Civilian Review Board”. The committee City Council creates ought to have City Council representation, Diversity Council representation, law enforcement, and some other non-officials who represent our citizenry, including the NAACP of Greater Fairbanks. Use of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs publication, “*Citizen Review of Police: Approaches and Implementation*” by Peter Finn could be helpful in determining if a “Civilian Review Board” is the right fit for our community; reaching out to other resources found within the “National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement” could be valuable too.

Finally, the FDC wishes to commend both the NAACP of Greater Fairbanks and the Fairbanks Police Department. At our FDC meeting May 10, 2022, we witnessed both groups discuss civilly with us a very complex issue. It is further commendable that both groups have had multiple face-to-face meetings and conversations where the FPD acted as a willing and listening partner. We greatly appreciate the stance of the NAACP of Greater Fairbanks who wrote on these matters that they are “eager to work with the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks Police Department to address these recommendations. We acknowledge the work that the Fairbanks Police Department has done so far, and look forward to engaging City and FPD decision makers in quarterly meetings to improve interactions between law enforcement professionals and the public to ensure a safer, more equitable community for all.”

Fairbanks Diversity Council

Seven Points for a Safer Fairbanks



1 Expand **Bias, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training** for the Fairbanks Police Department and City of Fairbanks.

2 Accelerate efforts toward solving cases involving missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, LGBTQ+, 2 spirit and BIPOC individuals, as well as **cold cases**.

3 Create a **Police Civilian Review Board (CRB)**.

A Civilian Review Board would:

- Review FPD policies and procedures and report findings to City Council and to the public,
- Hear police complaint cases filed by the public and suggest actions to remedy complaints, and
- Promote trust and accountability between FPD and the community.

5 Develop a training protocol to support the **Crisis Now team**.

6 Develop a **Community Policing Program**.

7 Work with the public to create a clear policy regarding access to **Body Worn Camera (BWC) recordings**.

4 Enact the following safeguards:

- **Ban chokeholds.**
- Adopt and employ a **Use of Force Continuum.**
- **Require an oral warning** before discharging a weapon to kill or injure.
- **Ban shooting at and from moving vehicles.**
- Require that all reasonable alternatives be exhausted before shooting.
- **Require comprehensive reporting for use of force.**

These recommendations align with national NAACP and 8 Can't Wait Program promoted as public safety standards. Much of the Fairbanks policy is very close to meeting these standards. See Background Information for details.

The Fairbanks Branch of the NAACP is eager to work with the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks Police Department to address these recommendations. We acknowledge the work that the Fairbanks Police Department has done so far, and look forward to engaging City and FPD decision makers in quarterly meetings to improve interactions between law enforcement professionals and the public to ensure a safer, more equitable community for all.