



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013



October 5, 2020

The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 402
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: Community comments re: ANC 6A's June 14, 2020 letter expressing support for Mayor's budget proposal for Metropolitan Police Department ("MPD") and opposition to efforts to defund MPD

Dear Chairman Mendelson and members of the D.C. Council:

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on September 10, 2020, our Commission voted 8-0-0 (with 5 Commissioners required for a quorum) to forward community comments regarding the above referenced letter.

Following the June 11, 2020 meeting of ANC 6A our Commission sent a letter to the Council requesting sufficient funding for MPD "to ensure that MPD continues to train its officers in areas of progressive policing, implicit bias, de-escalation and other safe police tactics, and in policing in racially diverse communities" and expressing support for "efforts to improve mental health, housing, and violence interruption and prevention services to help ensure better outcomes for those in crisis and to help reduce the burden on the police department to respond to the needs of those individuals experiencing health and housing crises."

The item had not been previously posted, which did not allow for sufficient time to solicit input from the community. ANC 6A commits to more thorough and timely communication with its constituents going forward.

ANC 6A has received the attached letters from members of the community in reference to the Commission's letter. If the Council wishes to receive further input regarding these comments, we respectfully request that the Council contact the signatories of the letters directly.

Should you wish to discuss this letter with the Commission, please feel free to reach out to me at AmberANC6A@gmail.com.

On Behalf of the Commission,

Amber Gove
Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A

cc: Members of the D.C. Council, Mayor Muriel Bowser, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice Kevin Donahue, Chief of Police Peter Newsham

¹ ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on the anc6a-announce@yahoogroups.com, anc6a@yahoogroups.com, and newhilleast@groups.io, at www.anc6a.org, and through print advertisements in the Hill Rag

From: Kris G <>
Date: July 29, 2020 at 1:18:06 PM EDT
Subject: Constituent Letter to ANC 6A

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
P.O. Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013

Dear Chairperson Gove and ANC 6A Commissioners,

We, the undersigned ANC 6A constituents, write to express our outrage that seven ANC 6A commissioners voted to approve a [factually inaccurate and racist letter](#) dated June 14, 2020 in support of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and in opposition to widespread [support](#) to defund MPD. The Commission's letter was misleading and does not represent the views of ANC 6A residents. Your express efforts to silence residents, listed below, demonstrates that you are not interested in those views or accountability to your constituents.

- On June 11, 2020, ANC 6A voted to approve this letter without proper notice in the [ANC 6A agenda](#).
- On June 14, 2020, ANC 6A sent this letter without a comment period to ensure constituent input on the subject.
- On July 9, 2020, ANC 6A actively silenced residents in the monthly ANC 6A meeting by [not allowing for public comment](#), a clear abdication of section 1-309.11(b)(3) of the [DC Official Code](#).

As signatories to this constituent letter, we denounce MPD, and we denounce MPD's longstanding policies of stop-and-frisk/jump outs; criminalization and harassment of Black youth in schools and in the community; criminalization of Go-Go; surveillance of Black activists and Black and brown Muslims; cooperation with ICE; exploitation and sexual violence against sex workers and women; and the protection of officers who have murdered members of our community.

The Commission's Letter is Inaccurate and Racist

The Commission's letter demonstrates a severe lack of understanding of how the MPD affects the lives of those you represent. Your letter states that MPD "play[s] an important role in public safety," and its full funding is necessary in order to "allow for continued safe, peaceful First Amendment protests in the District in order to help prevent another response like the one that federal officials produced around Lafayette Park." The facts tell a very different story.

The MPD did not keep DC residents safe during the protests around Lafayette Park. On the contrary, the [ACLU of DC has obtained video evidence](#) of MPD officers firing tear gas at protestors. This tear gassing, as well as the MPD's [kettling](#) and [mass arrests](#) of protestors at 15th and Swann Street NW, and [additional](#) instances in which MPD used [chemical weapons](#) against protestors, constitute human rights violations. These protestors are DC residents, and they are your neighbors. The MPD's recent actions escalated tension and, in many cases, constituted violence. They did not make DC more safe.

Acts of violence by the MPD are not new, and it is not just police "half a country away" that routinely murder Black and brown people. Jamaal Byrd, D'Quan Young, Marquese Alston,

percent in 2010, and this trend appears to have continued in the years since. There are [well documented correlations](#) between gentrifying neighborhoods and wealthier, whiter residents calling the police on Black residents over “quality of life” complaints in public spaces. As investments to this neighborhood cater primarily to newer, wealthier, and whiter residents that continue to pour into H Street and other historically Black spaces in Ward 6, we would do well to remember the history of state-sponsored redlining and strategic neglect and divestment that have had devastating, multigenerational financial consequences for Black residents that [persist to this day](#).

The Commission Failed to Seek Public Input on This Important Issue

The Commission did not include debate on this topic and a potential letter in its published agenda for the June 2020 meeting. The Commission invited MPD to speak but closed the opportunity for public comment before sending this damaging letter. For a full accounting of your actions in this matter, see the timeline enclosed as *Appendix: Timeline*.

The Commission Actively Silenced Public Comment During Its July Meeting

Many of us attempted to share these views with you at the ANC meeting following publication of the Commissioners’ letter in support of the MPD, but we were silenced by the people who were elected to represent us. Despite a legal obligation to allow residents to comment during ANC meetings, the Commissioners refused to take attendees off mute for the duration of the meeting and cut the meeting short prior to the “community comment” period. Per the Office of the ANC Executive Director, your actions to silence community input during the July meeting represented an “abandonment of statutory requirements.”

Constituents Demand Action from ANC 6A

We are angry and disappointed that our ANC has chosen to ignore the effects that the MPD has on the lives of DC residents -- particularly Black residents. We demand the following steps to begin rebuilding trust with the community.

1. We demand that the Commission reserve significant time on next month’s meeting agenda to address these issues, and that such meeting include substantial time for community input. Alternatively, we demand a separate town hall, properly noticed and allowing for significant community input, for the ANC 6A on these issues.
2. We demand that ANC 6A correct the record by writing another letter to Chairman Mendelson and the D.C. Council, and to Mayor Bowser. This second letter should clearly acknowledge the devastating impact the MPD has on many DC residents, including ANC 6A residents, and state that the Commission’s initial letter was sent without the Commission soliciting input from its constituents, per DC statute.

Put simply, the Commission should rescind its prior letter and clarify that it was not representative of ANC 6A residents.

Sincerely,

Laura E. Furr
ANC 6A04

Kris Garrity
ANC 6A01

Sam DeLuca
ANC 6A07

Stephanie DeLuca
ANC 6A07

Madeline Gitomer
ANC 6A06

Evan Preston
ANC 6A08

Enclosure:
Appendix: Timeline

CC:
Chairman Mendelson
Councilmember Charles Allen
Hill Rag

Appendix to Constituent Letter to ANC 6A

Timeline: ANC 6A Sends Letter of Full Support for MPD and Silences its Constituents

On June 14, the ANC 6A sent a letter to the DC City Council to express its support for maintaining and increasing the MPD budget and its unanimous opposition to calls to defund MPD. This action was taken without providing notice that this issue would be discussed at the June ANC 6A meeting. When community residents showed up at the July meeting to express their opposition to this letter and to have their voices heard, they were silenced, and the community comment period was stripped from the agenda. Below is a detailed timeline of the events that occurred.

June 11: The ANC 6A holds its monthly meeting.

- Though the meeting was “properly noticed,” on the ANC 6A website, the [agenda](#) made no mention of a letter of support for the MPD.
- ANC 6A invited MPD 1st Captain Michael Pulliam to speak, despite not being listed on the agenda. The commissioners [responded](#) to Captain Pulliam’s presentation by lauding the MPD.
- Commissioners discussed whether they could release such a letter without public input and moved forward without seeking further clarification on the issue or taking the more community-centered approach.

June 14: The ANC 6A sends [letter of support for MPD](#) to Chairman Mendelson & Members of DC Council.

- The letter states that the “[c]ommission voted 7-0-0 (with 5 Commissioners required for a quorum) to express our support for the Mayor’s proposal to provide a modest budget increase for the Metropolitan Police Department (“MPD”) and to express our unanimous
-

opposition to recent calls to defund MPD.” It does not mention the failure to obtain public comment.

July 6: ANC 6A residents have their first opportunity to learn of the letter via the media. •

On July 6, the HillRag, a local publication, posted an [article](#) stating that ANC 6A supports full MPD funding.

July 9: The ANC 6A holds its July meeting and silences all resident attendees, blocking participation for the entirety of the meeting.

- The [agenda](#) for the meeting lasted from 7pm to 9pm. The last agenda item, from 8:55 to 9pm, was a five-minute period for residents to speak.
- Throughout the meeting, all residents were placed on “forced mute.” This meant that they were not able to speak or be heard.
- As time passed, multiple residents requested, via a chat box, the opportunity to speak and assurances that they would be given their time at the end of the meeting. These requests were visible only to Commissioners, not members of the public, because of the chat box set up.
- The meeting ran long, and most agenda items were extended. However, the Commissioners made the decision to cut the Community Comment period from the agenda altogether.
- Ignoring repeated requests to allow residents to speak, Commissioner Gove allowed the other commissioners to address the letter at the end of the meeting.
- Two commissioners [did raise concerns](#), saying that they had heard from constituents that there should have been more time for residents to weigh in on the decision to send this letter to the City Council.

July 10: Office of the ANC Executive Director calls the actions of ANC6A during their July meeting "problematic" and "an abandonment of statutory requirements." • A concerned ANC 6A resident spoke with OANC Executive Director via phone.

July 21: Serve Your City notifies ANC 6A of its intent to reject a grant from the Commission and receives no reply.

From: Ana Meehan < **Date:** September 3, 2020 at

8:07:59 AM EDT

To: [philANC6A](#), [amberanc6a](#)

Subject: statement of support

Thanks to you both (and your fellow commissioners) for persevering on behalf of our community during these difficult times.

First, I would like to offer my support for your letter regarding MPD. I am constantly irritated by the notices to the contrary taped to brand new street light poles (defamation of public property). "Defunding" the police is the last thing this city needs, especially now. When I think of the risks in this neighborhood when I moved here 30 years ago!

Second, any chance you would be willing to use your public platform to promote the 2020 Census? I am currently working as an enumerator for the Census and learned just yesterday on a conference call that for every questionnaire we are able to complete, it potentially secures \$80k in Federal dollars, a powerful figure indeed.

From: Brian Robertson <>
Date: September 7, 2020 at 7:21:05 PM EDT
To: [dcanc6a01](#), Phil Toomajian <>
Cc: Ann Robertson <r>
Subject: **Flyer on ANC letter to city council on MPD**

Marie-Claire and Phil,

A flyer is being distributed door to door by a group purporting to represent ANC6A "residents" voicing opposition to ANC6A's recent letter to the DC Council in support of the MPD (attached). I have no idea who these people are, but I seriously doubt that they reside in ANC6A. Regardless of that, they are putting extreme pressure on neighbors to protest your purportedly "racist" letter At the ANC meeting on September 10th and sign their petition, and are taking notes about those who either voice skepticism or indifference to their effort.

I want to make it clear that my wife and I, long time DC residents are fully supportive of the ANC's original letter in support of MPD, And that this supposedly local protest does not represent us or any of our neighbors. I am very concerned based on what I have observed of this group that there will be an effort to mob the ANC meeting on Thursday with an AstroTurf "neighborhood opposition" to ANC6A's letter, a false opposition that does not reflect the actual opinion of residents. Is there any way to insure that people participating in Thursday's meeting are actual ANC residents and not outsiders stirring the pot and trying to railroad the ANC into an imprudent withdrawal of the letter.

Please stand firm, and rest assured that we and most of our neighbors are 100 percent behind you. We have raised our three children here. We have been happy to see the area develop in a positive direction for all the time we have been here, with improvement in the schools, young families moving in, and development of business. We have loved living in a walkable area with access to public transportation and we have enjoyed being engaged in neighborhood issues to improve the community.

For the first time, we are now having to consider leaving the city, and a lot families we know are having the same conversation. Even before the Covid crisis, homeless encampments in the NoMa area (which our children frequent) had been noticeably on the increase as ineffective city policies to address substance abuse and mental health have allowed them to grow in the name of a misplaced "compassion," and harassment of pedestrians and neighborhood residents had risen notably.

Now, in the wake of the shutdown of schools and businesses and the recent protests, our neighborhood is experiencing some very worrisome trends. Numerous times in recent weeks, we have experienced aggressive harassment for money, and just out of pure hostility, when going about our normal chores and visits to stores. In the middle of the day, we now regularly see uninvited visitors on our car pad looking in my car for things to break in and steal. The number of seemingly homeless and obviously mentally disturbed people roaming our block has increased dramatically, to the point that we can no longer allow our boys, 8 and 10, to walk their dog or play basketball in the alley any more. Car break ins and vandalism are up sharply. From what I've seen of the stats, not only is property crime up, but muggings and homicide as well. While the city has closed the schools and threatened residents with heavy fines for failure to wear masks or social distance while outdoors, many local establishments including the Exhale Bar across Florida Avenue from our house have become a social gathering place for raucous partying most nights of the week, with public drinking, large crowds, and no apparent enforcement of mask wearing or social distancing. Perhaps the rules

do not apply because most of the patrons are clearly not city residents judging from the overwhelming number of Maryland license plates. Complaints about this new activity have produced no apparent response, which is not surprising considering other issues 911 must be dealing with these days.

Reducing funding to the police, who are often not even visibly present on our streets any more due to being short handed, in the midst of the recent unrest, is completely nuts. This is not a political issue in any way related to concerns about systemic problems of police brutality or racism, it is an issue of whether we are going to reverse the progress our city has made and allow a mass exodus of businesses and taxpayers (particularly families with children) because of an eminently preventable decline in the quality of life in our city. I see no indication of leadership on, or even acknowledgment of, these issues from anyone on the city council right now.

Our individual decisions about moving for our family's welfare aside, this lack of resolve and leadership risks not only a reversal of the progress we have made as a community, but the destruction of the city's tax base, which is obviously necessary to address ongoing issues of social inequity.

Many thanks for your work, and thank you for taking the time to read this,

Brian and Ann Robertson
10th Street, NE

From: **Marc Friend** <>

Date: Thu, Sep 10, 2020 at 8:23 PM

Subject: My Statement Tonight on ANC6A

My name is Marc Friend and I live in 6A07. I am here today because I believe that a city budget is a moral document and we need strong investment in funding programs like violence interrupters, housing, school counselors, support for students, and mental health care instead of a budget increase for the police. I think it makes no sense to be increasing the police budget when we are fighting for basic oversight of the department. Think about what we can do by reinvesting even a portion of that budget.

One example of a better use of that funding that I am passionate about is public housing repair. We need a dedicated funding line for public housing maintenance of \$60 million for this year and the next ten years, and a robust oversight of DCHA to make sure that the money is well spent. The mayor's 3.3% budget increase for MPD was \$578 million, that could have paid for this account ten times over!

Housing justice is racial justice AND a vital component of public health. Instead of more police, we want new roofs, new elevators, lead abatement, and renovated apartments for our low-income, almost exclusively African American neighbors.

I also want to talk about increasing ANC engagement. I know that as an ANC commissioner, you often get frustrated by the lack of interest in ANC meeting. As someone who often attends ANC meetings, I can tell you that I appreciate how important the work of ANCs are as a forum for neighborhood conversations and the fact that there are such varied beliefs on this issue should show exactly why sending this letter was dangerous. Neighbors disagree and ANCs are designed to take that into consideration, but by sending the letter it made it seem like the whole community agreed with it and based on the comments, it is clear it is not. I support the letter the community members sent opposed to the letter sent at the June meeting.

I encourage the DC council to both ensure MPD is fulfilling Councilmember Allen's emergency legislation and work towards moving funding away from the police to other essential services.

From: **elizabeth nelson** <>

Date: Thu, Sep 10, 2020 at 9:53 PM

Subject: Input regarding funding for MPDC

To: Amber Gove <amberanc6a>, Marie-Claire Brown <dcanc6a01>

Commissioner Gove,

I am writing so that my views may be submitted to DC Council with those of other ANC 6A residents.

I whole-heartedly support ANC 6A's letter with respect to funding for MPDC. It very effectively presented the case that it is necessary to have a well-funded, well-trained police department while arguing for funding for other community supports that will reduce the necessity for police to deal with situations for which they are not ideally suited.

It was a completely reasonable and thoughtful letter and I hope the DC Councilmembers will give it the serious consideration it deserves.

I do not believe that a majority of District residents want the police to be defunded. And I do not agree that a reduction in funding is going to improve police response or make us safer - quite the opposite. Although I do agree, as stated in the ANC's letter, that increased funding for other services must be part of the solution.

Thank you for accepting my comments.

Best regards,
Elizabeth Nelson

CC: Commissioners Toomajian and Brown

From: Kris G <>

Date: September 10, 2020 at 9:50:49 PM EDT

To: "Gove, Amber (SMD 6A04)" <6A04>, "Brown, Marie-Claire (SMD 6A01)" <6A01>

Subject: Kris Garrity Testimony from 9/10 ANC 6A Meeting

Kris Garrity
ANC 6A SMD-1

MPD does not keep our community safe.

You know since the Aug 24 COC meeting, police have continued to show their true faces. They've used banned chemical weapons that cause extreme respiratory distress--during a global respiratory pandemic--against uprisers for racial justice. They've murdered 18-yo Deon Kay.

They've murdered Deon Kay.

Deon's mentor, Omar Jackson, [reflects](#) on Deon:

"He was a kid," Jackson says. "They're portraying him as a man, but he was a kid. He was into tennis shoes and video games."

Jackson says Kay took on the responsibility of walking his younger brother to school and would regularly watch over his nieces and nephews.

"He had a younger brother who really looked up to him. He's really hurting right now," Jackson says.

For Deon's 18th birthday just a few weeks ago, Jackson drove Deon and his girlfriend to the National Harbor. Deon played basketball and football at Silver Oak Academy.

MPD does not keep our community safe.

I state again our community demands that ANC 6A send a letter to the DC Council to set the record straight regarding the views of ALL of ANC 6A residents. Not just those who advocate accommodationism and reform. This also includes the Oct 15th DC Council hearing.

Demand an investigation into Deon Kay's murder!

Demand the defunding of MPD!

From: Niq Clark <>

To: [roni](#)

Cc: [philanc6a](#); [6A04](#)

Sent: Thu, Sep 10, 2020 8:47 pm

Subject: Written statement I would like included in the record for tonight's meeting

My name is Niq Clark and I live in SMD 6A02

I accept the commission's criticism inasmuch as it applies to the vitriol of my statement last month, and I wish to earnestly apologize, particularly to commissioner Toomajian. As neighbors we owe each other better.

I want to take a moment as an aside to stress the difference between individual racism and the possibility of acting in a way that has a racist impact even by people who have no racist or hateful thoughts or intentions. That's why we can't reform the racist actions of an MPD that has killed over two dozen Black people in the past five years by attempting to remove a few bad apples or invest in more training.

Just a week ago, MPD murdered Deon Kay. We are all complicit. We all owe each other better. The ANC commissioners are my neighbors, and getting to know and work together with your neighbors is the first and most important step in the set of alternatives to over-policing I have been reaching out to my neighbors with. We owe each other better than the hostility, suspicion, and indifference that sustains policing as the go-to solution to our neighborhood concerns.

We owe each other better than taking for granted that the way we've known is the only way available. I owe all of my neighbors better. Those of my neighbors in a position to speak on behalf of the entire neighborhood owe their neighbors better than a letter to DC Council that does not reflect the neighborhood's interest, and I thank them for acknowledging it tonight. Those of my neighbors with the privilege to serve on the commission owed those of my neighbors without that privilege better than kicking away any opportunity to comment on that letter for months on end, and I thank them for acknowledging it tonight.

We owed our neighbor Deon Kay better, and the action my neighbors on the commission look toward taking tonight can only be too late for him.

We owe each other better than MPD. There are alternatives. They require us to know, care for and work together with our neighbors. As angry as I am, as heartbroken, frustrated and disenfranchised as the commission has made me feel, there is no solution to the problem of MPD without loving, listening and endeavoring to understand our neighbors.



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Box 75115
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June 14, 2020

The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 402
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: Support for Mayor's budget proposal for Metropolitan Police Department ("MPD") and opposition to efforts to defund MPD

Dear Chairman Mendelson and members of the D.C. Council:

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on June 11, 2020, our Commission voted 7-0-0 (with 5 Commissioners required for a quorum) to express our support for the Mayor's proposal to provide a modest budget increase for the Metropolitan Police Department ("MPD") and to express our unanimous opposition to recent calls to defund MPD. We believe a fully-staffed MPD and a well-trained department are essential tenets of a safe and just community.

The Commission's unanimous support for maintaining existing funding for MPD is based both on the need for MPD to play an important role in public safety and also on our concern that an insufficiently funded police department would be counterproductive to the goal of improving community relations with MPD. Defunding MPD would make it less likely the Department could hire and retain the best, brightest, and most ethical officers or that the Department would be able to provide expensive, but necessary training in nonviolent response, implicit bias, and other trainings necessary to help ensure that MPD is as progressive and antiracist as possible and that they are able to work to do their part to help ensure that black lives matter here in D.C. Our opposition is also based on our concern that MPD needs to have sufficient resources to allow for continued safe, peaceful First Amendment protests in the District in order to help prevent another response like the one that federal officials produced around Lafayette Park.

MPD provides key services to our community's diverse residents and our Commission appreciates the strong, customer service oriented leadership to the officers who serve in the First District and Fifth District. Adequate staffing allows MPD to provide additional resources to our community during the Summer Crime Initiative, which serves the Rosedale community in ANC6A and which has been critical in helping reduce violence and homicides along Benning Road, NE. Our Commission requests that MPD retain funding to continue to provide equivalent personnel to both the First and Fifth Districts and to the Summer Crime Initiative next year. We believe that sufficient funding for MPD is critical to ensure that MPD continues to train its officers in areas of progressive policing, implicit bias, de-escalation and other safe police tactics, and in policing in racially diverse communities.

The Commission also supports efforts to improve mental health, housing, and violence interruption and prevention services to help ensure better outcomes for those in crisis and to help reduce the burden on the police department to respond to the needs of those individuals experiencing health and housing crises. Our MPD and FEMS responders are all too often the only agencies willing to respond to the around the clock crises and needs that arise in D.C. Our Commission is grateful for

the men and women at MPD who respond to these calls and encourages other agencies to step up to do their part to help serve those in crisis and to help prevent those crises as well.

Please be advised that Commissioners Marie-Claire Brown, Mike Soderman, Phil Toomajian, and I are authorized to act on behalf of ANC6A for the purposes of this matter. Thank you for considering our views as you finalize the budget for the forthcoming fiscal year and for your commitment to public safety and to racial equality and progress.

On Behalf of the Commission,



Amber Gove
Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A

cc: Members of the D.C. Council, Mayor Muriel Bowser, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice Kevin Donahue, Chief of Police Peter Newsham

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