

## Lee, Katherine

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**From:** Racism and Criminal Justice Reform Group - RCJR  
<racialandcriminaljustice@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 2, 2021 2:50 PM  
**To:** Lee, Katherine  
**Subject:** Re: Strengthen community engagement in Director of Police Accountability search

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Re-sending.

On Wed, Sep 1, 2021 at 1:31 PM Racism and Criminal Justice Reform Group - RCJR

<racialandcriminaljustice@gmail.com> wrote:

Re: Strengthen community engagement in Director of Police Accountability search

To: Hon. Mayor Jesse Arreguin, Council Member Kate Harrison, PAB members:

(Ms. Lee, please forward to the PAB membership.)

We the undersigned Network of organizations thank both Mayor Arreguin and Council Member Harrison for your long-term and consistent support for Measure II and its effective implementation. In this letter, we request your support for several changes to the proposed search process for the permanent Director of Police Accountability (DPA). We also make requests to the PAB and its DPA search subcommittee.

Members of the organizations listed below initiated a series of biweekly meetings with David White over the last several months. We explained why deep community engagement must be an integral part of the recruitment of a permanent DPA.

We are gratified that city management included several of our members, Marc Staton, Catherine Huchting, and Ms. Richie Smith, in reviewing and advising on candidates for the DPA search firm. Similarly, we appreciate the Stakeholder/Community Engagement section of the Scope of Work negotiated with the selected firm. The section describes a plan for "up to two (2) community/stakeholder meetings; and deploying at least one online survey to seek feedback from the community and/or staff." The Scope statement couples this community engagement with "meeting the Mayor, City Council and the Police Accountability Board."

In our final meeting with David on August 26, he agreed to introduce us to Ms. Brett Byers of the search firm, and to Ms. LaTanya Bellow, who will lead the search process. He recommended we work with the PAB's subcommittee on the DPA search to ensure the fullest community participation possible.

As community proponents of the strengthened civilian oversight system, we are happy with the leading role for the PAB in marshaling community engagement with the recruiting process for its Director. Our conversations with the PAB and its subcommittee will stress the need for it to promote robust community participation. We urge the following to the PAB:

1. The upcoming Byers Group outreach to gather input on what kind of Director Berkeley desires should include formal meetings with interested community groups to supplement the one or two mass public meetings.

Civil rights and other organizations who have long campaigned for justice for their communities deserve a respectful hearing. The mass meetings can go broad, while smaller forums can go deep, centering the voices of experience and leadership, particularly from communities of color. Community groups have discussed the question of what they want to see in a Director since early this year; the search firm needs to hear from them directly. The organizations authoring this letter offer to invite participants and facilitate meetings.

2. Early in our meetings with city management, when we met to review the proposed job description for the Director, we were told that it would be basically boilerplate, and that the more important document would be the electronic recruiting brochure yet to be developed by the search firm.

Soon after the Byers contract is signed, the firm will meet with the PAB subcommittee to solicit ideas for the content and tone of the brochure, as well as the community survey. This is appropriate as the Board will have the closest working relationships with the Director. Again, the input of advocates and the larger community is crucial as well. We will propose names of community people to serve as public members of this PAB subcommittee, and will also ask the Board, in cooperation with Byers and City staff, to encourage broader community discussion of the brochure at its meeting, possibly asking the PAB Outreach Subcommittee to help.

3. Also with regard to community meetings, both targeted and public, the City needs to provide adequate language access/interpretation for all community members interested in participating. At the very minimum, having a Spanish interpreter would be necessary.

The three remaining requests are directed to Council and through it to city management..

4. Advocates also should participate in review of applications for the DPA position, and in the decision about which candidates will be interviewed. If necessary, identifying information could be removed from applications to protect the confidentiality of applicants at the early stage of the process.

5. Advocates and community members need to participate in candidate interview panels. Communities of color and especially young people have to be prioritized. This part of the process was promised by David White, but has not been put into writing.

6. The general community needs the opportunity to meet the final candidates prior to Council decision. Our organizations are concerned that the identity and background of final candidates recommended by the city manager would be kept confidential until after the Council makes its appointment in closed session. This is a democratic process that needs to be carried out with maximum transparency and public participation.

We respect the final decision-making authority given to Council in Measure II. At the same time, without the degree of public participation recommended here, the legitimacy of the new police accountability structure will be at risk.

We ask for your express support for the PAB and Byers/staff to implement points 1, 2, and 3 above. On points 4, 5, and 6, we ask for a discussion with you to determine how these can be implemented.

Sincerely yours,

Racism and Criminal Justice Reform (RCJR)  
Berkeley Community Safety Coalition (BCSC)  
Berkeley NAACP  
Latinxs Unidos de Berkeley  
Friends of Adeline  
Berkeley Citizens Action (BCA)  
Berkeley East Bay Gray Panthers  
McGee-Spaulding Neighbors in Action  
Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club