

**Commission on Racial Equity and Justice**  
**Listening Session: City of Hutchinson**  
*Datjaeda Moore and Dashinika Poindexter*  
*Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 7:00pm*

Held virtually via Zoom

**Illustrations of Protests in Hutchinson**

**Participants**

Datjaeda Moore, Dashinika Poindexter, City of Hutchinson community members

**Commissioners Attending**

- Dr. Shannon Portillo
- David Jordan
- Ernestor de la Rosa
- Mark Dupree

**Run of Show**

- 7:00-7:10** Quick introductions & Background/Opening statement
- 7:15-7:30** Revisiting the Protest on 1 St. and the Protest on Main St.
- 7:30-7:45** Community Response
- 7:45-8:00** Reimagining Protest Together/Solutions

**Topics Discussed**

The discussion centered around two protests that occurred in Hutchinson earlier this year. The group talked about the dynamics of the protest, organization, community reception, interactions with the local PD leading up to, during, and following the protests.

- The Chief of Police was in attendance; he was very involved with the organizing and making sure it was a safe event; he spoke at the rally and said things people wanted to hear.
- His actions following the protest were disappointing, as he didn't follow up.
- The second protest wasn't as planned with the police department, and the reception of the community was hesitant.
- Police preparation for the second protest (not in support of it) had a chilling effect on things. The two events were very different in terms of community support. The second protests received much more negative community feedback.

- One participant discussed how prevalent white supremacist online posting was prior to and during the protest (people threatening to bring their guns and find a spot to stake out). Compared what happened in Kenosha to what *could have* happened in Hutch.
- One participant claimed that the police used the perceived radicalization of the protest to stoke community fear. It became, “how do we keep our white people safe?”
- ***Emancipation Day in Hutchinson.*** They put up the Pan-African flag every year. Someone called and threatened to burn down the flags. Law enforcement was informed, but they defended it as ‘freedom of speech’. But when POC plan a protest, the implication is a threat to the community.
- ***What changes should be made to policing?*** We need to talk about how white supremacy is ingrained in our society (include LE). Educate on the history of law enforcement and white supremacy.
- Datjaeda: The authority of police to manage protests should be challenged. “We need to stop giving police funds for new gear, when we could be spending it on social services, not letting them buy more toys for restraint tactics.”
- Datjaeda: Accountability. FOP. Why aren’t human relations officers instituted as liaisons to the community? There is a cloak of protection for the police because of the FOP. It’s impossible to get anyone fired for egregious acts. If those protections are there, whether they have done anything or not, is uncomfortable.
- Written into the permits for each event is protection for the police.
- There is a citizen’s community group that gets together with the police once a month to discuss topics, but they don’t have the power to make any change or adjudicate anything. “PD isn’t protecting people equally.”
- **DACA recipient:** her father was pulled over and beaten. She was pulled over for “speeding” and accused of being an illegal immigrant.
- Police are the gatekeepers to protests. What next level efforts can be done to educate/remind of them their constitutional rights to protest? Shift them from being the gatekeepers of protesting and their rights.
- ~4/70 officers on the PD are POC.
- Pope: there are no high-ranking officers of color, and there is no push for diversity hiring/promoting.
- “You don’t have to be a resident to be an officer.”
- Representation should be more proportionate to the population.
- The PD initiatives to diversity have been simply because of Darrell Pope’s involvement and work on citizen’s community group.
- How can we reward officers for holding others accountable? ***Whistleblower protections?***
- Why do social workers need 4 years of training while police officers don’t?
- From participant: A lot of the force is very green. There’s a lot of corruption.
- Over half of the PD in Hutch have been serving for less than 3 years.