

Feb. 8, 2021

Greetings:

As South Pasadena recruits a new Police Chief, Care First South Pasadena requests that the City conduct a robust public engagement program to determine the community's preferences when it comes to the values, experience, philosophy, interpersonal skills, attitudes, and other qualities of the candidates. This should include two widely-publicized community forums, plus focus groups with representatives of a variety of interests. Forums should be scheduled with enough lead time for a thorough publicity and outreach effort and should be held on Zoom, live streamed on social media, and archived for later viewing. The forums should be structured to provide for real community discussion and interaction, as well as the opportunity for written comment.

It is particularly important that the City's various racial and ethnic groups have a strong voice regarding the qualities the City should seek in a new Chief. It is equally important that youth have a voice, particularly students. Renters must be included, as well as property owners. We further suggest South Pasadena's unhoused residents should have a voice in the process. The City also must reach out to include a variety of organizations in the community engagement program.

Finally, a citizen panel fully representative of the community should have the opportunity to interview final candidates in a public forum and make recommendations on the best candidate.

All of this is needed to avoid repetition of the major misfit that occurred when the last permanent Chief was hired in the absence of any significant public input.

Thanks,
Bill Kelly
Care First South Pasadena