



City of Peekskill to Establish Police Reform Task Force

Peekskill, N.Y. (August 17, 2020) – In response to Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order 203, the City of Peekskill is forming a Police Reform Task Force. Chaired by Peekskill Mayor Andre Rainey, the Task Force will lead a community engagement process resulting in police reform recommendations.

An Organizing Committee has been formed to recruit Task Force members. The committee includes Mayor Rainey, Valerie Eaton (President, NAACP-Peekskill), Susie Erdey (Chair, Human Relations Commission), Judge Reginald J. Johnson (Peekskill City Court), Councilman Ramon Fernandez (Liaison to Police Department), Police Chief Don Halmy and City Manager Andy Stewart. Mayo Bartlett, Co-Chair of the County Police Reform Task Force and noted advocate for racial justice in policing, is advising the process.

Once formed, the Task Force will schedule public meetings, solicit presentations by diverse local groups, policy experts and interested individuals, and submit a plan with police reform recommendations to the community for comment and to the City Council for review and adoption. The plan must incorporate best practices addressing systemic racial bias in policing, community outreach, crime prevention through environmental design, diversion programs and related strategies. The plan must reflect the specific needs and priorities of the city's residents and neighborhoods and result in improved community partnership.

Those interested in serving on the Task Force, giving a presentation or contributing in another manner are asked to submit a letter stating their background and interests to the Organizing Committee at policetaskforce10566@gmail.com by Tuesday, August 25 at 5:00pm. Candidates should review information about the Governor's emergency order found at <https://on.ny.gov/2Yajy9J>. Further solicitations for public participation will take place once the Task Force has established a calendar of public meetings. All relevant meeting and project information will be posted on the City of Peekskill's website, www.cityofpeekskill.com.

Task Force members will be expected to have, or develop, familiarity with the Peekskill Police Department's operations, facilities and policies, lead research into reform options, participate actively in Task Force meetings, and act as liaison to other stakeholder groups and interests in the community. Stakeholders include members and leadership of local police force, members of the community, interested non-profit and faith-based community groups, advocates for racial justice, district attorney's office, local public defender and local elected officials, experts in mental health, drug abuse, youth development and other community concerns.

"The City of Peekskill welcomes Governor Cuomo's recent Executive Order 203 mandating critical review of police operations through community consultation," said Mayor Andre Rainey. "I believe this process will bring greater public safety and trust, building on our Police Department's longstanding commitment to diversity and fairness."

Governor Cuomo's executive order, which follows the aftermath of the George Floyd killing, requires each police agency's reform plan to address policies, procedures, practices and deployment, as well as issues of racial disparities wherever they exist. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of force. The reform plan must incorporate community comments, involve diverse stakeholders, and be adopted by the City Council by April 1, 2021 to be eligible for future state funding for police.

The City of Peekskill is located at 840 Main Street in Peekskill, N.Y. and can be reached at 914-737-3400. For the latest news and updates, visit the City of Peekskill online at www.cityofpeekskill.com and on Facebook ([@PeekskillGov](https://www.facebook.com/PeekskillGov)).

The City of Peekskill is a thriving, historic community located on the banks of the Hudson River. Just under one hour north of New York City, Peekskill is culturally and economically vibrant with abundant natural resources due to its location on the river and at the gateway to the Hudson Highlands. The waterfront, with over three miles of continuous parkland, is a regional destination with a variety of active and passive recreation, as well as breathtaking views of the Hudson River. While Peekskill's waterfront parks, walking trails and dog park remain open during the coronavirus pandemic, guidelines for social distancing are enforced. The downtown area features an array of dining establishments. Home to a growing arts community, Peekskill is also a hub for new-generation technology and multimedia. For more information, visit www.cityofpeekskill.com.

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