

TO: Lexington Select Board, Lexington Town Manager  
FROM: Lexington Residents Reimagining Public Safety  
DATE: November 2023  
RE: Study Committee for Police Advisory Board

This is a request to have the Select Board consider the creation of a study committee to establish a Town committee to advise the Police Department. The overarching goal of an advisory committee is to increase and maintain trust between the PD and Town residents. Broadly speaking, we envision that such a committee would analyze policing data to better understand policing operations, would review police policies and procedures and make recommendations, and would serve as an interface between the community and the PD to provide feedback from the community to the PD, as well as publicize the work of the PD to the community.

Advisory committees, often referred to as community advisory boards (CAB), are considered a best practice by the International Association of Police Chiefs. Other towns and cities in Massachusetts have such a committee, notably our neighbor Arlington. In addition, the report on community feedback on policing that Select Board members Lucente and Pato published in October 2021 notes that several respondents “discussed the need for more transparency within the PD, particularly around data collection, dissemination, and responses to incidents,” and “recommended the creation of some form of an independent public oversight board to improve transparency and accountability.” An advisory committee meets these needs. Finally, we think the creation of an advisory committee is in keeping with our structure of Town governance where several Town departments have associated committees that they work with.

Attached are the following documents:

- Slide deck to present to the Select Board
- Study committee sample charter
- Summary of Arlington Process to Create a CAB
- Summary of Lexington traffic stop data analysis
- Pertinent excerpts from NACOLE’s definition of meaningful civilian oversight
- Selected literature on community advisory boards

Regards,  
Lexington Residents Reimagining Public Safety  
Sarah Higginbotham  
Dan Joyner  
Valerie Overton  
Alexis Porras  
Tom Shiple



# Community Advisory Board (CAB) for the Lexington Police Department

a proposal for a Town study committee

Lexington Residents Reimagining Public Safety  
December 2023



Who are we?

# Lexington Residents Reimagining Public Safety (LRRPS)

- Founded in June 2021 after well-attended forum on reimagining public safety, and participation in 2020 Human Rights Committee subgroup on policing
- Current members:
  - Sarah Higginbotham
  - Dan Joyner
  - Valerie Overton
  - Alexis Porras
  - Tom Shiple






# What is a Community Advisory Board?

# Community Advisory Board

- Advisory board to Lexington Police Department (LPD)
- Structured way for community and LPD to improve communication and build stronger relationships
- Members reflect diversity of Lexington (demographics, professions, lived experiences, perspectives)

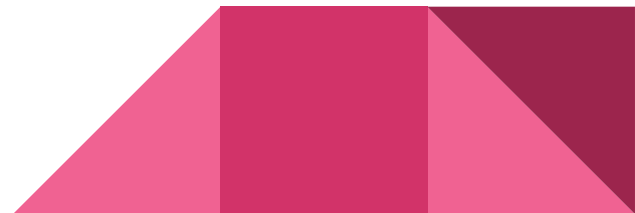


# Community Advisory Board

- LPD leadership can ask CAB for advice, perspectives, and input
  - CAB members can conduct research, review policies, generate ideas, and offer recommendations
  - Through mutual transparency, can help improve trust in community-LPD relations
- 


# Community Advisory Board

- Would **not**:
  - Have investigatory power
  - Review internal affairs
  - Set policy



# International Assoc. of Chiefs of Police endorses CABs


IACP considers police advisory committees “**model programs**” for promoting positive & productive police-community collaboration. Recommendations from [IACP’s task force report](#) include:

- “Create formal community advisory committees that reflect the demographics of the community or neighborhood being served.”
- 



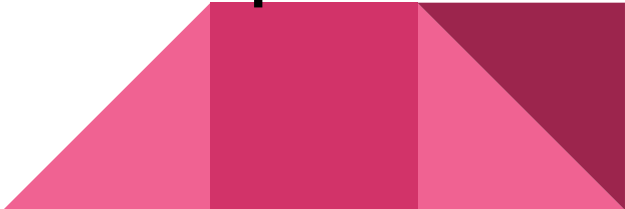
Why a CAB in Lexington?

# AK report recommends more transparency and community engagement

- **“Greater transparency will increase public trust in the Department, and help to decrease the disconnect between public perception and Department action.” (p.17)**
  - **“We recommend that the Department broaden the channels of engagement so its policies and goals are informed by more perspectives.” (p. 24)**
- 


# Interest in CAB revealed in SB report

In October 2021, Doug Lucente and Joe Pato shared results of interviews with Lexington residents:

- Several respondents **“discussed the need for more transparency with the PD, particularly around data collection, dissemination, and responses to incidents.”**
  - Several respondents **“recommended the creation of some form of an independent public oversight board to improve transparency and accountability.”**
- 


# Case Study: Traffic Stop Data Analysis

LRRPS analyzed 2019-2022 traffic stop data provided by LPD, totalling nearly 8,000 stops


- Rate of traffic stops of Lexington residents by gender and race
  - Rate of written warnings (and other outcomes) by gender and race
  - Found **statistically significant differences** that raise questions for further study
- 

# Advisory Committees Common in Town Government

A dozen Town committees already exist to advise various Town departments and divisions, for example the Board of Health


- *“Appointed by the Town Manager, the 5 member Lexington Board of Health acts as an advisory and oversight Board to the Lexington Public Health Division.”*
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# CABs in neighboring communities


- **Arlington**
    - Nov 2020 - Study committee approved by TM
    - Aug 2021 - Interim report of study comm
    - Apr 2022 - Final report of study comm to TM
    - Apr 2022 - TM approves advisory committee
  - Other CABs in **Brookline, Cambridge, Lowell, Framingham, Somerville**
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# CAB and Related Efforts

# Relation to Police Manual Policy Comm

- PMPC (last active in 2015) advised only on policy and procedures
    - This would be one element of CAB
  - Even though LPD now accredited, need still present
    - *“Lexington adopts model policies made available by the Municipal Police Institute, a division of the MA Chiefs of Police Association. **We then edit the policies to meet Lexington’s expectations.**”*
    - Example: adoption of body cams
- 


# Relation to Collaborative Reform Group

- The CRG is a working group of CoD and LHRC, focused on mental health and neurodiversity as it relates to public safety
  - CRG & CAB are both needed and should collaborate:
    - data analysis
    - facilitation of community conversations with LPD
    - research into public safety best practices
- 



Request to the Select Board:  
Create a CAB Study Committee

# CAB Study Committee Proposal

- Learn how CABs function in other communities
  - Explore materials from academia, IACP, NACOLE (*National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement*)
  - Compile findings in a report
- 


# CAB Study Committee Proposal

- Membership
  - 9 voting members nominated by various Town committees, and appointed by the Select Board
  - Non-voting members: Chief Equity Officer and LPD rep
  - Reflect racial/ethnic and other forms of diversity
- Present recommendations to Select Board



# Appendix

# LRRPS Topics of Research and Advocacy

- Police station design
  - Implementation of 2021 Anderson Kreiger report: “Review of Lexington Police Department Policies and Practices”
  - LPD collection and sharing of data
  - Public safety practices and culture
- 

## Sample Charter for:

# POLICE COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD STUDY COMMITTEE

**Members:** nine voting members and two non-voting members

**Appointed by:** Select Board

**Length of Term:** One and a half years or until completion and filing report with the Select Board.

**Meeting Times:** As determined by the committee. A minimum of three meetings to solicit public comment and input to be held at times geared to maximize community participation.

**Committee composition:** The committee will have nine voting members and two non-voting members represented by the Chief Equity Officer and a designee of the Lexington Police Department. The Select Board will appoint three members directly as well as one person nominated by each of the following:

1. Lexington Human Rights Committee;
2. Commission on Disability;
3. Youth Commission;
4. Council on Aging;
5. Housing Partnership Board; and
6. Vision for Lexington Committee

Nominations from groups need not be members of those groups. The members should reflect racial/ethnic and other forms of diversity.

**Committee Mission/Charge:**

The study committee shall consider the creation of a standing board to advise the Lexington Police Department. The range of activities for the board that the committee may consider include, but are not limited to, a) the review of LPD policies and procedures and recommending changes to such policies and procedures, b) the analysis of anonymized police data, and c) the creation of a mechanism to receive complaints and commendations for LPD police officers and the Department as a whole. The committee should not consider activities for the board that include a) investigatory powers, b) setting of policy and procedures, nor c) reviewing of internal affairs.

The committee shall issue a report to the Select Board with a recommendation to a) not create an advisory board, or b) create an advisory board, with a suggested charter.

In developing a recommendation, the committee should study established advisory boards in Massachusetts and elsewhere in the United States, and consult the literature on advisory boards from police advocacy organizations, academia, and non-profit criminal justice organizations.

**Prior to serving as a member of this Committee, appointees are required to:**

1. Acknowledge receipt of the Summary of the Conflict of Interest Statute. Further, to continue to serve on the Committee the member must acknowledge annually receipt of the Summary of the Conflict of Interest Statute. Said summary will be provided by and acknowledged to the Town Clerk.
2. Provide evidence to the Town Clerk that the appointee has completed the on-line training requirement required by the Conflict of Interest statute. Further, to continue to serve on the Committee, the member must acknowledge every two years completion of the on-line training requirement.

## Summary of Arlington Process to Create a CAB

In 2022, the Town Meeting of Arlington approved the establishment of the Civil Police Advisory Commission (ACPAC). This decision was the result of a study conducted by a committee formed during a special town meeting in 2020. The committee identified a need for an intermediary body to facilitate communication and feedback between the Arlington Police Department and the town's residents, despite the department's existing professionalism and proactive measures. The ACPAC comprises representatives nominated from various town entities, including the Human Rights Commission, the LGBTQIA+ Commission, the Disability Commission, the Board of Youth Services, the Diversity Task Group, the Council on Aging, and a tenants association. The year-long study that led to the formation of the commission revealed several key issues, including but not limited to:

- A certain level of reluctance and confusion was observed among some residents regarding the process of filing police complaints or commendations, particularly when anonymity was desired.
- Despite a generally positive disposition towards the police, residents expressed a need for improvement in the area of "trust".
- Existing mechanisms for providing constructive feedback to the police department were deemed unsatisfactory. Some residents cited a sense of intimidation, albeit not overt or threatening, as a deterrent to voicing their concerns.

The commission, as established, addresses these issues by serving as an advisor to the general public, the police department, and the town government on matters of policing, offering a civilian perspective. This is achieved by establishing a transparent process for community members to submit commendations and complaints about the police department. The commission takes on the responsibility of educating the community about this process, providing oversight, and striving for continuous improvement. It supports the police department with data analysis and offers feedback on the department's quality and effectiveness in its interactions with the public. The commission conducts regular reviews of policies and procedures, benchmarking them against the latest research studies. Ultimately, it serves as a robust community partner and a hub for promoting ideas and practical feedback, fulfilling a need identified by the town of Arlington.

The model adopted by Arlington serves as a valuable example for Lexington in several respects. Both towns have police departments that are accredited by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC) and are members of the North Eastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council. The Lexington Police Department, like its Arlington counterpart, is proactive. For example, in response to public discourse on policing, both departments have aligned their practices with the "8 Can't Wait" initiative, a nationally recognized grassroots campaign advocating for a civilian-centered approach to improve policing. Regular community outreach programs are a common feature of both departments. However, despite these proactive measures, Arlington found it beneficial to establish a community-based advisory commission to address potential communication gaps between residents and the police department. This suggests that Lexington could also benefit from such a commission.

Materials from Arlington, in chronological order:

1. Study Committee warrant article, November 2020
  - a. <https://arlington.novusagenda.com/Agendapublic/CoverSheet.aspx?ItemID=10227&MeetingID=1192>

2. Charter of Study Committee
  - a. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ngjYj\\_soEtltu7q\\_ttV8rGpgEM2x4Jn/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ngjYj_soEtltu7q_ttV8rGpgEM2x4Jn/view?usp=sharing)
3. Interim report of Study Committee, August 2021
  - a. <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/58004/637697234216270000>
4. Final report of Study Committee, April 2022
  - a. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/15dvDSNU00RGqVgy-cRDj57KV8F1NrvUH/view?usp=sharing>
  - b. Contains letters of endorsement from APD Chief Julie Flaherty and from DEI Director Jill Harvey
5. Town Meeting warrant article, April 2022
  - a. <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/town-governance/laws-and-regulations/town-bylaws/title-ii-committees-and-commissions/-fsiteid-1?loadingmode=PreviewContent#A16>
  - b. Select Board Report
    - i. <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=60697&t=637855437171776575>
  - c. LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission Endorsement
    - i. <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=60847&t=637864186417306083>
  - d. Diversity Task Group Endorsement
    - i. <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=60845&t=637864186411055907>

## Lexington Residents Reimagining Public Safety, November 2023

### Summary of Traffic Stop Data Analysis

We analyzed traffic stop data provided by the Lexington Police Department that cover the years 2019-2022 and totals nearly 8,000 stops. In particular, we looked at the rate of traffic stops of Lexington residents broken down by gender and race. We also studied the rate of written warnings over all traffic stops, again broken down by gender and race. In these instances we identified statistically significant differences, but the data alone don't indicate the reasons for these differences.

We feel these data merit deeper analysis and thoughtful discussion by a Town-appointed committee containing representatives of the community and the LPD. Beyond analyzing and discussing this data set, such a committee could be tasked with analyzing data on other elements of policing, with the goal of improving and maintaining trust between the community and the LPD.

The USA Today Network recently published a series of articles on traffic stop data in Massachusetts. The following article and video provide a good overview of the series.

- <https://www.capecodtimes.com/story/news/state/2023/11/20/massachusetts-police-racial-profiling-study-flawed/71506041007>
- <https://www.capecodtimes.com/videos/news/2023/11/20/whitewashed-cape-cod-times-worcester-telegram-gazette-usa-today-investigation-racial-profiling-mass/71651783007>

*From the*  
National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE)

## **What is meaningful civilian oversight?**

### **A FIRST STEP**

Oversight is an important first step toward police accountability and transparency in our communities.

### **PROACTIVE**

- Can include independent analysis of police data related to Use of Force, Stop-and-Frisk, or other procedures; review of policies; proposals to address systemic issues; and more.

### **INDEPENDENT**

- Must be independent authorities, not subsidiaries of the police departments they oversee.
- Must be independent from political processes.
- Must have independence of voice. Oversight should not keep secrets for law enforcement.

### **INDIVIDUALIZED**

- For each locality based on specific needs of the community.
- This requires broad (not prescriptive) enabling legislation for each municipality to establish a structure that meets their unique needs.

### **COMMUNITY-DRIVEN**

- Oversight should be conducted—in part or in whole—by the people most impacted by policing in their communities.

### **TRANSPARENT**

- All meetings and reports should be public and all operations should be transparent.

Source:

[https://www.nacole.org/community\\_oversight\\_paves\\_the\\_road\\_to\\_police\\_accountability](https://www.nacole.org/community_oversight_paves_the_road_to_police_accountability)

## Community Advisory Board (CAB) Literature

[Overview of Community Advisory Boards](#), Policing Project, NYU; January 2021

[Community Advisory Boards: What Works and What Doesn't](#), Policing Project, NYU; January 2020

[Promoting Community Involvement in Law Enforcement: Community Advisory Boards](#), IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police); May 2019

[Practices In Modern Policing: Community Participation and Leadership](#), IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police); 2018

[Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement: A Review of the Strengths and Weaknesses of Various Models](#) NACOLE (National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement); September 2016

[Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement: Assessing the Evidence](#) NACOLE (National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement); September 2016

[Guidebook for the Implementation for New or Revitalized Police Oversight](#) NACOLE (National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement); 2016

[Citizen Advisory Boards in Contemporary Practice: A Practical Approach in Policing](#), IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police), from Police Chief Magazine (<https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/>); October 2015

The President's Task Force On 21st Century Policing, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Final Report of The President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing; 2015

<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/final-report-presidents-task-force-21st-century-policing>

[https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce\\_finalreport.pdf](https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf)

<https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p341-pub.pdf>

<https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-w0805-pub.pdf>