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Community Policing Recommendations Presented to County Council *Citizen's Advisory Council Issues Report After Studying Ways to Improve Policing*

Ellicott City, MD (November 9, 2015) – Members from the Howard County Police Chief's Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC) Committee on Community Policing presented their findings and recommendations on community and police relations, during the Howard County Council's monthly work session. Council members and the group discussed the new report, which included input from stakeholders throughout the Howard County Community and will assist with the Howard County Police Department's (HCPD) Strategic Plan.

Last March, the Council requested that CAC establish a Committee on Community Policing through County Resolution No.16-2015, and would focus on opportunities to strengthen relationships between police, community leaders, and the broader community to improve public safety and mutual respect. The Council also charged the CAC with four specific topics to research:

- Review relationships between the police and the community;
- Evaluate the operation, impact and effectiveness of the county's seven Neighborhood Community Policing Offices (NCPOs);
- Evaluate emerging technologies in law enforcement, such as body cameras, to determine if they may have application in Howard County; and
- Investigate enhanced training opportunities for police to address growing and changing County demographics.

The County has embraced community policing by adding resources to allow for more school resource officers and bicycle patrols, posting police in neighborhoods, providing housing incentives for eligible officers to live in the community, and engaging police officers as volunteers in numerous community and charitable events.

"The Citizen's Advisory Committee provided the Council with an enlightening report today that I hope serves as a living document as we move forward in the following months and years," said Councilman Calvin Ball, who introduced Resolution No.16-2015. "Howard County residents should be proud of its police department, but as the report states there are opportunities for improvement."

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The majority of participants surveyed were pleased with their relationship with the Howard County Police Department. Although, the report noted that less than 50% of participants had any kind of interaction with the NCPO in their community. The analysis went on to say, "it is apparent that the NCROs (Neighborhood Community Resource Officers) are not known by the majority of their communities and need to be more visible if they desire to be effective and make an impact on community as a whole."

The HCPD Police Chief and members of the Committee discussed many topics that included transparency, improving the HCPD website, training, and engaging youth in the community. Another major highlight in the report involved technology. The Committee recommended that the Howard County Police Department undertake a pilot program for the use of body worn cameras. The goal would be to, "evaluate instituting the technology in the department on a permanent basis." The stakeholders shared the same view as almost 80% of respondents were in favor of body cameras, given recent police events across the country.

The Howard County Police Department has a Citizens Advisory Council that meets monthly with the Chief of Police and his staff. They are a volunteer organization with over 25 active members, ranging from student representatives aged 17 to members at 97 years young. The CAC membership geographically represents numerous areas of Howard County and provides diversity through various ethnicities and religious beliefs.

For more information on Resolution No.16-2015 or to view the CAC report and its recommendations, please visit <http://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Community-Policing>.

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