

I postponed this agenda item from our September 1 meeting for the following reasons:

The issue is not yet ripe for decision because the City Council, as well as the community, needs more of an opportunity to explore the intent and consequences of the ordinance in an open, respectful process. Current apprehensions about police-community relations nationwide have made it difficult to analyze this ordinance in the thoughtful, inclusive manner characteristic of this Council at its best.

I am hoping that, between now and Oct. 20th, or perhaps thereafter, we can generate genuine dialogue that produces creative compromises all sides can accept gracefully, even if not unreservedly.

This may be a situation into which the Culture of Peace Commission and other representative community groups can inject some helpful propositions, suggestions, interventions, etc.

I have no set ideas on how best to proceed but am inclined to start by hosting a small workgroup made up of informed citizens who have submitted comments on all sides of this issue and asking them to recommend a process involving a diversity of opinions and aimed at sending to Council a concise written recommendation on the ordinance, perhaps with dissenting opinions.

I am certainly open to other approaches Council members may propose to me or our interim City Administrator between now and our next meeting.

Whatever next steps are taken, I hope they will include commitments to (1) gather objective data on the consequences of whatever course of action is ultimately selected; and (2) try to avoid inaccurate or politically charged characterizations which tend to push people into their respective corners instead of drawing them out onto neutral deliberative common ground.

Mayor John Stromberg