

Public Safety Community Engagement Liaison Support Letter

We the undersigned were disappointed that the board of representatives deferred approval on the position of Public Safety Community Engagement Liaison.

The importance of the role of the Public Safety Community Engagement Liaison cannot be overstated. This is a role that emerged in conversation with the administration as it surveyed communities around the city. We shared our frustrations about the city's response to our public safety concerns. The administration listened and rightly acknowledged that the voices of the community are important in the conversation on public safety, policing and non-police centric interventions.

It is undeniable that communities of color bear a disproportionate burden of trauma and therefore need presence and connection to the administration. This role as a "liaison" rightly serves as that connecting point. We should not have to point this out, but it bears saying that this role's work is for the entire city and all citizens will benefit from its work.

The idea that the position is redundant is insulting. We represent communities that experience the challenges of communication with the administration and public safety. Please come to our churches, mosques, synagogues and community organizations and tell our residents that their experiences are irrelevant and that their needs are already being met.

Stamford is an incredibly diverse community with over 70 different languages represented. Cities around the country like ours are embracing roles like these. These roles serve as preventative measures and protect the cities pocketbook in the long term by increasing trust, by engaging communities upstream and by weaving the net between city services, the administration and communities.

While we appreciate the role of the board of representatives as checks and balances holding the city administration accountable to its budget and spending, we note the irony that this bar of accountability is so often leveraged when the city attempts to positively respond to direct requests from community voices.

We are united in the importance of this role and in our communities rights to be co-producers of public safety. We reject the paternalism of those who would tell us what they think we are entitled to have. We strongly urge the board to take action and approve this position immediately.

Respectfully Submitted,

Concerned Clergy Coalition of Stamford
Temple Sinai
100 Black Men of Stamford, Inc.
Indivisible Stamford
Alice Knapp