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Leave Mount Pleasant in the Third Police District

Resolved, that ANCID advises the Metropolitan Police Department to keep Mount Pleasant in the Third Police District, and not transfer PSA 301 to the Fourth District.

Why:

Crime in Mount Pleasant is closely associated with crime in nearby Columbia Heights, because 16th Street is a readily crossable division between the two neighborhoods. In recent examples, the perpetrator of a robbery on Newton Street in Mount Pleasant was arrested a few days later on 14th Street in Columbia Heights; and a burglary ring plaguing the north side of Mount Pleasant was broken with an arrest in a dwelling on 14th Street at Spring Road. Close coordination between police operations on either side of 16th Street is essential for effective police work.

The proposed shifting of Mount Pleasant into the Fourth District will hamper such coordination, as police forces on the east and west sides of 16th Street will work out of separate headquarters, under different commanders, and, perhaps most importantly, will be employing different radio frequencies. Communications of information about incidents in one neighborhood to another will be forced to follow a roundabout path, up and down the police hierarchy, rather than directly between police forces on the street.

The explanation given by the MPD for this transfer of Mount Pleasant into 4D is invalid. The stated purpose of the realignment is to equalize workloads for the seven police districts. But PSA 301 is not a major contributor to either reported crime incidents or calls for service, amounting to only 0.85% of the District totals. With PSA 301 retained in 3D, the Third District crime total will amount to 15.1% of the total, not much above the equality level of 14.3%. The calls-for-service total will be only 13.7%, below the 14.3% ideal.

Furthermore, the transfer of a portion of PSA 208 into 3D, also mentioned as an argument for moving PSA 301 out of 3D, is not justified by any workload-equality argument. First, if 3D has an excessive burden, it is plainly illogical to shift any portion of 2D into 3D, that being contrary to the stated objective of the transfer. The Second District is well known for its very low crime rates, and the area that is now PSA 208 was in fact shifted out of 3D specifically to achieve a better workload balance. It's explicitly contrary to the goal of equalizing police workloads to shift PSA 208 back into 3D. Furthermore, since the proposed realigned boundaries will leave 2D with, still, the lowest crime rate, and lowest calls for service, in the entire District, it is truly nonsensical to shift any part of 2D into 3D.

The MPD argues further that this transfer of a part of 2D into 3D is compelled by a transfer of a portion of 1D into 2D. But that transfer, adding only an estimated 0.74% to reported crimes, and 0.25% to calls for service, leaves 2D with still the lowest rates in the District, well below the 14.3% equal-distribution goal. The transfer of this bit of 1D into 2D clearly does not justify the transfer of any portion of 2D into 3D.

Hence, the arguments made for transferring Mount Pleasant, PSA 301, into the Fourth Police District, are not justified by the equal-workload argument. The transfer of a part of 1D into 2D leaves that district with, still, the lowest totals in the city. There is no need to transfer any part of 2D into 3D, a move which is directly contrary to the goal of equalized workloads. And whether that part of PSA 208 is transferred into 3D or not, leaving PSA 301 in 3D results in crime and calls-for-service levels which are not far from the stated objective of equal sharing. Even if that portion of PSA 208 is added to 3D, leaving Mount Pleasant in 3D would result in a crime count lower than in 6D and 7D, and a calls-for-service count lower than in 1D, 4D, 5D, 6D, and 7D. As was very clear in the MPD meeting with the Mount Pleasant public in June, the people of Mount Pleasant virtually unanimously prefer remaining in 3D. The quantitative arguments given for transferring Mount Pleasant to 4D do not in fact support that transfer. Mount Pleasant, PSA 301, should remain in 3D.

Passed by 5 to 1 vote at the legally noticed, public meeting of ANCID on December 6, 2011, with a quorum present. Voting "yes": Commissioners Romero-Castillo, Edwards, McKay, Wilson Phelan, Scott. Voting "no": Commissioner Terrell.