

Seattle Community Police Commission

SENT VIA EMAIL

December 7, 2021

Mayor Jenny Durkan

City of Seattle

Jenny.Durkan@Seattle.gov

Interim Chief Adrian Diaz

Seattle Police Department

Adrian.Diaz@Seattle.gov

Chief Harold Scoggins

Seattle Fire Department

Harold.Scoggins@Seattle.gov

Re: Actions of Seattle Police Department officers at the East Precinct during Summer 2020

Dear Mayor Durkan, Chief Scoggins, and Interim Chief Diaz,

We, the Seattle Community Police Commission, write to officially request information about the Seattle Police Department's treatment of the residents of the Sunset Electric apartment building. The Seattle Community Police Commission (CPC) recently met with residents and management of that building—which is immediately adjacent to SPD's East Precinct—who described their experiences during the Black Lives Matter protests that occurred in June of 2020. The residents described frustrating, confusing, and frightening interactions with SPD officers that ultimately convinced residents that the Department had little concern for their well-being. Residents stated that they were told that SPD was not aware that their building contained apartments, even though the building shares an alley with SPD's East Precinct. Residents also described being unable to obtain answers from SPD officers about the crowd management tactics and weapons used by SPD and how to pass through the barricade that limited access to their homes. Further, residents and management reported that SPD officers repeatedly entered the building despite being denied permission—often without wearing masks. Further, SPD appears to have abandoned the precinct because of fears that the entire block would burn down—without warning the people living on that block.

We have also learned that residents' post-protest attempts to obtain answers from SPD leadership—particularly information about the chemicals they were exposed to—have been unsuccessful. We have therefore provided a list of questions on their behalf.

Seattle Community Police Commission

The CPC hopes that SPD, the City of Seattle, and the Seattle Fire Department will be able to provide answers to the following questions clearly and without delay, as required by Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 3.29.330 – Section D.

Crowd Management Tactics

1. What chemicals were protestors and Capitol Hill residents exposed to during the week immediately preceding SPD's abandonment of the East Precinct?
 - a. Specifically, what chemicals are in the CS gas and blast balls that SPD deployed?
 - b. What health effects, or side-effects, can those chemicals cause?
 - c. Why did SPD fail to answer Sunset Electric residents' questions about these chemicals — despite informing residents on September 20, 2020, that SPD possessed this information?
2. Should Sunset Electric, and other nearby buildings, have been decontaminated after exposure to the chemicals?

Procedures for ensuring safety of neighborhood residents

3. Was SPD actually unaware, as some officers claimed, that Sunset Electric – which is immediately next door to the East Precinct – was a residential building?
 - a. Was the City unaware?
 - b. When did SPD become aware that Sunset Electric is a residential building?
4. If anyone from SPD or the City did know that the building was occupied, did they ever develop a plan to mitigate the effects of their crowd control tactics on building residents?
 - a. Was anyone tasked with executing that plan?
 - b. Why didn't they?
5. Why didn't anyone from the Fire Department, SPD, or any other City department, notify Sunset Electric residents that Chief Scoggins believed that there was a serious possibility that the entire block would burn if the East Precinct was set on fire?
 - a. Was there ever any discussion of a plan for evacuating those residents?
 - b. Why weren't they evacuated when the precinct was abandoned?

SPD officer interactions with community members

6. Why did officers consistently refuse to wear masks when entering the building and interacting with residents?
7. What is the status of current OPA/SPD investigations into resident complaints about officers refusing to wear masks and retaliating against residents (by, for example, unnecessarily using their sirens when entering and leaving the precinct)?
 - a. Were those officers disciplined?

We look forward to receiving your responses to the questions posed within this letter. Please send responses to the CPC by no later than January 7, 2022.

Sincerely,

Seattle Community Police Commission

The Seattle Community Police Commission

Brandy M. Gust

Douglas E Wagoner



Rev. Harold Walden