

Building Trust

Begin with support for the independent auditor

On June 3 a press conference was held at the Eugene City Hall, hosted by a diverse group of Eugene citizens, in response to a series of statements, actions, newspaper commentaries, and cartoons by the Eugene Police Employees Association (EPEA) in opposition to the fledgling police auditor program and external Civilian Review Board.

Our press conference had three goals:

1. Publicly ask both mayoral candidates and the police chief whether or not they support the police auditor and the Civilian Review Board.

2. Call on all voters/citizens to contact their local elected officials to express support for the police auditor and the Civilian Review Board.

3. Urge all in our community to improve the dialogue surrounding this community debate with civilized, respectful discourse.

Our press conference included comments from included Carol Berg-Caldwell, Guadalupe Quinn, Peter Sorenson, Dave Fidanque, Carly Barnicle and myself. Since then we have heard or read the public responses of Mayor Piercy, former Mayor Torrey and Police Chief Lehner.

Mayor Piercy has strongly reiterated her longtime support for the police auditor, Christine Beamud, and the Civilian Review Board. Former Mayor Torrey has stated his support for the auditor and review board with the caveat that they be under the city manager instead of the City Council. Chief Lehner wrote a public statement that seems to give general support to the auditor and the review board. We appreciate his detailed review of the work that went into the creation of the auditor position and review board.

We understand that the police auditor/review board are in their fledgling stages. It is our hope that unlike the experiences in some other communities, it will be a program that will be transparent and not co-opted by any special interests. We all have much to gain in the arenas of mutual trust and community well-being if the police auditor and the external police review board are allowed to do their careful, professional work investigating allegations of police misconduct. Sometimes the complaints will prove groundless and sometimes the officers involved will have erred. Either way the community will have been served. Trust among all, including the community and the police, is essential for the rule of law to work.

To conclude, we extended an invitation to the leadership of the EPEA to attend our press conference and we appreciate that they did contact us to let us know their entire day, June 3, was taken up in labor negotiations. However, Capt. Steve Swenson came to observe. We look forward to opportunities for open-hearted, respectful communication and dialog with EPEA leaders. We also encourage everyone to contact his or her city officials on this topic. Democracy only works with public participation.

We thank everyone who attended our press conference. We truly are in this together. We raise our families here, shop, work, play and worship here. People of good will and integrity can work together to address community/police relations, and the result will be healing.

Charles Dalton of Eugene is the former president of the local chapter of the NAACP and a longtime advocate for human and civil rights. His is a program manager and customer services manager at EWEB.



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ATTEND AN OPEN HOUSE THIS WEEK:

- **Petersen Barn Community Center**
6:30-8:30 p.m., Tuesday July 8th
- **Veneta Community Center**
6:30-8:30 p.m., Tuesday July 8th
- **Boys & Girls Clubs, 1545 W. 22nd Ave.**
7:00-9:00 p.m., Thursday July 10th
- **Downtown Library, Bascom/Tykeson Rooms**
6:30-8:30 p.m., Thursday July 10th

or visit www.orconsensus.pdx.edu

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The West Eugene Collaborative has received assistance from the Oregon Consensus Program.

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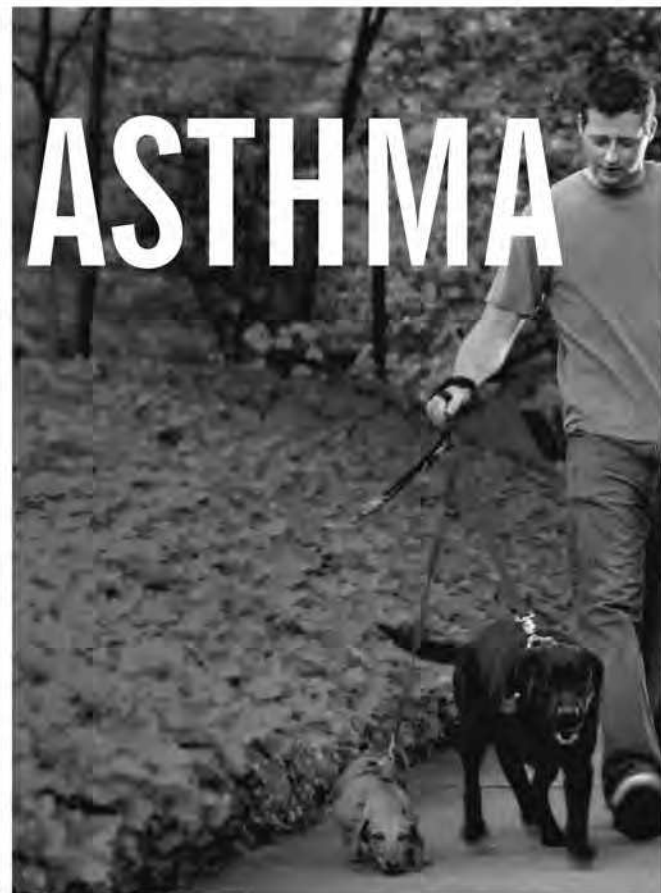
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