



Photo Source: mazzonicenter.org

A Review of the PPD Response to a Protest Involving the Mazzone Center and the Philadelphia LGBTQ Community

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Introduction:

Over time, the City of Brotherly Love has become nationally known as a historical landmark with strong LGBT activists and gay and lesbian protests dating back as early as the 1950's.¹ With the first documented, public protest for LGBT civil rights occurring in April 1965,² Philadelphia has a long-standing past of the LGBT community successfully uniting and fighting for equal rights and protections. As a result of years of effective activism, the City has even been ranked sixth among the *Top 10 LGBT-Friendly Cities* in the United States in 2015 from a study conducted by NerdWallet, with nearly 4% of the Philadelphia population identifying as LGBT.³ Although there have been monumental strides within the evolved Philadelphia LGBTQ community in such a short period of time gaining certain rights and protections, the immense amount of hurt, pain, and distrust this community continues to fight through must also be acknowledged.

While it is important to recognize that no group or community is in total agreement regarding issues or speak with one voice, it has become evident through recent interviews and events that the LGBTQ community in Philadelphia has lost faith in both law enforcement and certain organizations within the City whose sole purpose is to serve this community. The historical distrust between the community and the Philadelphia Police includes distressing incidents dating back to 1954 when a certain police district headed by Frank Rizzo,⁴ a controversial officer and former mayor of Philadelphia, began to prioritize raids of queer bars to arrest “female impersonators.”⁵ The raids were traumatic for the LGBTQ community because as people were arrested, they were subjected to sexual and physical assault at the hands of the police. The tactic of raiding queer bars in Philadelphia continued well into the 1970's.⁶ When Frank Rizzo later became Commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD), local bar owners were instructed by Rizzo to not serve “drag queens” or they would lose their liquor licenses.⁷ As these discriminatory practices continued, activists and LGBTQ community members fought back with staged sit-ins and ongoing demonstrations. Turmoil between the PPD and the LGBTQ community continued into the early 90's when ACT UP⁸ activists were attacked by police officers as they protested government neglect of HIV/AIDS,⁹ and into the early 2000's when a Black trans woman was offered a courtesy ride by a police officer at 13th and Walnut Streets and

¹ Dan Royles, Civil Rights LGBT (Rutgers University, 2016), <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/civil-rights-lgbt/>

² Royles, Civil Rights LGBT

³ Megan Jooste, America's Top LGBT-Friendly Cities: Philadelphia Ranks 6th (Curbed Philadelphia, 2015), <https://philly.curbed.com/2015/6/10/9951514/philadelphia-lgbt-gayborhood-map-nerd-wallet>

⁴ More information about former police commissioner and mayor of Philadelphia Frank Rizzo available at https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/kwxp3m/remembering-frank-rizzo-the-most-notorious-cop-in-philadelphia-history-1022

⁵ The Philadelphia Partisan, Timeline of Recent Queer Radical Struggle in Philly (June 2017), <https://philadelphiaipartisan.com/2017/06/30/timeline-of-recent-queer-radical-struggle-in-philly/>

⁶ Royles, Civil Rights LGBT

⁷ Royles, Civil Rights LGBT

⁸ More information about ACT UP Philadelphia, a group of individuals committed to ending the AIDS crisis through direct action available at <http://www.actupphilly.org/>

⁹ Royles, Civil Rights LGBT

was later found dead at 16th and Walnut Streets.¹⁰ With the murder still unsolved in 2018, members of the LGBTQ community believed this specific investigation was mishandled or included a cover-up, especially because the last person to see the woman before she was killed was a Philadelphia Police Officer.¹¹

While the events described above illustrate that the lack of trust in law enforcement has festered over time, there have recently been publicized struggles between the community, the police, and Mazzoni Center; an organization which for the past 38 years has been focused on serving LGBTQ Philadelphians by providing comprehensive health and wellness services.

Over the past year and a half, Mazzoni Center has been dealing with the fallout of high-profile scandals involving their former medical director, former CEO, and former board president resigning due to alleged sexual misconduct and cover-ups. More recently, in the last five months, the LGBTQ community has been vocal about their distaste in the decision of Mazzoni Center to hire a cisgendered, Latinx woman from Florida whom community members say does not have enough experience with the LGBTQ population or with Philadelphia to run an organization dedicated to serving them. The most recent mayhem at Mazzoni however, has been around the aftermath of the abrupt firing of the center's first-ever Director of diversity, equity, and inclusion. While these occurrences have become intertwined and heavily covered by the media, the scope of this report specifically focuses on a protest incident that occurred at a Mazzoni sponsored conference on August 4, 2018.

Overview:

In August 2018, Mazzoni Center hosted the largest trans wellness conference in the nation at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. With about 11,000 people in attendance, the mission of the *Philadelphia Trans Wellness Conference* is to educate and empower trans individuals on issues of health and well-being; educate and inform allies and health service providers; and facilitate networking, community building, and systemic change.¹² On August 4, 2018, the last day of the conference, a protest ensued outside of the convention center, and the outcome was reports of Mazzoni staff members being pepper sprayed and hit in the face by protestors, along with the Philadelphia Police Department ultimately having to intervene. With Mazzoni leadership being concerned about the lack of response from the PPD, the Police Advisory Commission (PAC) was tasked with examining the protest incident and the police response through reviewing all sources of information, conducting interviews, and ultimately issuing findings and recommendations with the hope of assisting both the Philadelphia LGBTQ community and the Police Department regarding future events or protest incidents that may occur. The overall themes of the recommendations from the PAC to the PPD focus on messaging, outreach, training, and education because the PAC strongly believes that the PPD can implement smaller changes that will have a lasting, positive impact on a myriad of issues.

¹⁰ Royles, Civil Rights LGBT

¹¹ Royles, Civil Rights LGBT

¹² More information about Mazzoni Center Trans Wellness Conference available, <https://www.mazzonicenter.org/trans-wellness/about-the-conference>

Sources of Information:

1. Civil Affairs Officers body-worn camera footage
2. PA Convention Center camera footage
3. Interviews conducted with Mazzoni staff and leadership
4. Civil Affairs Officer statements

Summary of Protest Events:

To conduct a thorough analysis of all relevant information, the PAC reviewed all video footage from the PA Convention Center and the body cameras of the PPD Civil Affairs Officers who arrived to the scene of the protest. The following is a summary of all pertinent footage, which was approximately 65 minutes long and analyzed by PAC staff from various angles.

At approximately 5:00pm on August 4, 2018, a well-known Philadelphia hate preacher and five other members of his church organization stood outside the main entrance of the convention center where Mazzoni Center was hosting the final day of their *Philadelphia Trans Wellness Conference*. Holding various signs with phrases such as, “Homos go to hell,” and “Stop the War on Anuses,” the group yelled at conference goers expressing their hate and disdain of their LGBTQ identity and lifestyle.

Shortly after the protestors gathered, Mazzoni staff members working and attending the conference learned of the protestors’ presence outside and attempted to put together their own counter protest using instruments, music, and having an impromptu ‘dance party’ to drown out the hateful protestor group. While Mazzoni staff utilized their banners and conference back drops to create a barrier between themselves and the six protestors, a large crowd began to form and participate in the counter protest. Although majority of the crowd, which ultimately consisted of approximately fifty people, were focused on drowning out the protestors instead of engaging them, a small fraction of Mazzoni staff and conference attendees engaged the protestors, eventually escalating the situation.

At 5:15pm, video footage showed a uniformed PPD Officer who was stationed inside the convention center with several other uniformed officers, go outside to the main entrance, observe the area becoming more crowded, and call his superior to receive direction about whether or not to request assistance or what to do about the escalating protest.

As the crowd continued to grow, both Mazzoni staff and the protestors began to scream at each other, and reports of physical assault were later given to the police. The six protestors then attempted to leave the area by crossing the street to get away from the crowd. At that point, a Mazzoni staff member explicitly rallied a large group of people and began aggressively charging and chasing the protestors down the street. The group continued to follow the protestors across the street and surrounded them once again with banners and back drops. One specific staff member of Mazzoni was seen on the convention center video footage engaging the protestors in a hostile manner. At that point, the camera angle turned away from the protest and there was no video feed, but the one staff person of Mazzoni who engaged the protestors reported being hit in

the face, while two other Mazzoni staff members reported being pepper sprayed by an unknown person.

Due to the banners and backdrops blocking a certain angle of the camera, and the camera angle being turned away from the protest for approximately 14 minutes, the PAC was not able to verify who exactly pepper sprayed Mazzoni staff members or whether the Mazzoni staff member who escalated the situation was hit in the face. The staff person of Mazzoni who reported being hit in the face informed the PAC that they had their own camera footage of the incident leading up to when they were physically assaulted. While initially, the individual stated they were willing to provide their footage to the PAC for review, they ultimately did respond to the emails sent by PAC representatives, but did not provide the footage after numerous requests.

Although the PAC was not able to verify the exact act of anyone pepper spraying others, two Mazzoni staff members were seen on video reactively wiping their eyes and arms in distress during the protest incident. Footage also showed one protestor in the crowd holding a sign with a pepper spray can taped to it. Additionally, the two Mazzoni staff who reported being pepper sprayed ended up needing basic medical treatment at the emergency medical treatment (EMT) station within the convention center and were told by medics that they were being treated for a reaction to pepper spray.

After the situation began to further escalate, Mazzoni leadership approached PPD Civil Affairs Officers who were seen walking towards the convention center area at 5:41pm and informed them that two of their staff members were pepper sprayed. At that point, the crowd of people surrounding the protestors increased. The Civil Affairs Officers intervened into the crowd of people, telling Mazzoni staff members and conference attendees to return inside the convention center, while simultaneously telling the protestors to take their signs down and leave the area. Officers also asked if anyone in the crowd was pepper sprayed or needed assistance, and everyone stated they were fine, unsure of any pepper spray incident at that time. After the Civil Affairs Lieutenant verified safety concerns, she instructed PPD Bike Patrol Officers¹³ to create a line using their bicycles to separate the crowd from the protestors, and push people away from the center of the crowd. When the crowd was separated, the hate preacher and his fellow group members were escorted away from the convention center to their cars.

Timeline of Convention Center Footage:

5:06pm:

- Hate preacher is seen with five other people (three adults and two children) with picket signs outside of the convention center.
- Five Mazzoni staff from the conference approach the protest leader and more staff members begin walking over to the protestors. At this point, Mazzoni staff are in close proximity to the protestors.
- Two Mazzoni staff members are seen confronting the hate preacher.

¹³ More information about various types of PPD patrol and the use of Bicycle Patrol available, <https://www.phillypolice.com/assets/programs-and-services/Gun-Violence.pdf>

5:12pm:

- Approximately twenty-five people from Mazzoni Center and conference begin to form a crowd near the protestors with approximately two feet of space between them.
- Mazzoni staff members bring banners and back drops from the conference to serve as a barrier between Mazzoni conference goers, staff, and the protestors.
- Mazzoni crowd forms into a semi-circle.

5:13pm:

- A Mazzoni staff person is giving out props to drown out protestors and Mazzoni staff begin to surround protestors at the main entrance of the convention center.

5:14pm:

- A male security guard from Engage Security exits the convention center and watches the crowd from the near the main entrance.

5:15pm:

- One uniformed PPD Officer comes outside of the convention center and makes a phone call to his superior to gain insight about the possible escalation of the protest and counter protest. Officer stands on the corner of the street monitoring the situation.

5:16pm:

- One female security guard employed by the convention center approaches the uniformed officer, and another male security guard employed by the convention center joins the conversation.

5:17pm:

- Approximately 50 people are outside of the main entrance at the convention center attempting to drown out the protestors with music, instruments, clapping, and yelling, and use the tactic of having a 'dance party.'

5:20pm:

- One Mazzoni staff person is going around the created barriers to record and engage the protestors.
- The video footage is not able to show what happens at this point, but the PAC has strong reason to believe the altercation got physical based on the totality of information received.

5:22pm:

- The protestors leave the barriers and begin walking away from the crowd.
- One conference goer begins following the protestors and chases them with a banner.
- One Mazzoni staff person rallies a large crowd and begins following the protestors.
- Five people aggressively charge the protestors as the large crowd continues to follow the protestors.

5:23pm:

- People are holding and pulling other people back from attempting to attack the protestors.

5:25pm:

- Mazzoni staff person puts someone else on their shoulders while holding a trans flag in the air.
- Mazzoni staff utilize banners to form a barrier around the protestors again.

5:26pm-5:29pm:

- No video feed is seen at the relevant angle.

5:29pm:

- Mazzoni staff member wipes her face and arms in distress after being sprayed with an unknown substance by an unknown person.

5:30pm-5:41pm:

- No video feed seen at the relevant angle.

5:41pm:

- Civil Affairs Officers arrive to the convention center area.

5:42pm:

- Civil Affairs Lieutenant is telling the protestors to put their signs down and leave.
- Civil Affairs Officers are telling Mazzoni staff to move back and go back inside the convention center.

5:43pm:

- Bike Patrol Officers form a line with bicycles to separate the crowd from the protestors and then remove the protestors to safety.

Timeline of PPD Body Cam Footage:

5:41pm:

- Civil Affairs Officers walk up to the protest scene and Mazzoni leadership informs officers that two Mazzoni staff members were pepper sprayed.

5:42pm:

- Officers intervene, and Civil Affairs Officers ask the crowd if everyone is ok and if anyone got pepper sprayed. Everyone answered they were fine and were unaware of anyone being pepper sprayed at the time.
- Civil Affairs Lieutenant tells the protestors to take the signs down.
- Civil Affairs Officers tell Mazzoni staff to go inside and stay away from the protestors.

5:43pm:

- Bike Patrol Officers form a line to separate the crowd and the protestors, pushing people away from the center of the area.

5:45pm:

- Civil Affairs and Bike Patrol Officers escort the protestors to their cars due to reasons of safety concerns.

Police Response:

The Philadelphia Police Department's Directive 8.3, *Demonstrations and Labor Disputes* is the departmental policy associated with how to police demonstrations and labor disputes. The directive describes the role of the Civil Affairs Bureau, which is responsible for policing all demonstrations, protest marches, labor-management disputes, and picketing.¹⁴ While this is an excerpt, the full policy can be accessed from the PPD website. According to Directive 8.3, the police function is to:

1. Preserve peace and order

¹⁴ Read the full Philadelphia Police Directive 8.3 Demonstrations and Labor Disputes available at <https://www.phillypolice.com/assets/directives/D8.3-DemonstrationsAndLaborDisputes.pdf>

2. Prevent destruction of life and property
3. Protect the constitutional rights of all involved parties.

As verified by the sources of information reviewed by the PAC, the Philadelphia Police Department intervened at 5:41pm, which is approximately 41 minutes after the protestors showed up to the convention center. Interviews conducted verified several uniformed officers being stationed inside the convention center while the Civil Affairs Bureau was stationed outside but not specifically located at the convention center.

The protestors are a well-known hate group led by a hate preacher in the City. According to the Philadelphia Police Department's Civil Affairs Bureau, this group of protestors typically contacts Civil Affairs Officers via text message to inform them of where they intend to protest that day. The PAC was informed by Civil Affairs Officers that on this occasion, the protestors gave them an alternate location and officers were not aware the protestors were going to be at the convention center on August 4. Therefore, Civil Affairs Officers were not specifically stationed at the convention center while the protest and counter protest were taking place. Additionally, the PAC was informed that the uniformed officers stationed inside the convention center were instructed by their superiors to remain inside since this specific group of protestors have utilized officers as personal body guards in the past, and having uniformed officers around this protest group has previously escalated situations on numerous occasions.

When Civil Affairs intervened, they instructed Bike Patrol Officers to separate and disperse the crowd to ensure the safety of everyone, ultimately preventing a riot situation. As previously stated, Civil Affairs and Bike Patrol Officers escorted the protestors to their cars. While this is not a normal occurrence, the PPD informed PAC staff that they feared for the safety of the protestors if the event were to continue any longer.

Interviews:

The Police Advisory Commission conducted several, in-depth interviews or informal discussions with all people involved or with those who witnessed the protest incident that took place at the conference. All interviews were voluntary and confidential, and the PAC was able to conduct interviews with five Mazzoni staff members over a two-week period.

After being contacted by Mazzoni and the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs, the PAC met with Mazzoni leadership about the protest situation. Mazzoni leadership developed their own list of staff members the PAC would interview. All interviews were initially scheduled through Mazzoni leadership and took place at Mazzoni Center. Originally, Mazzoni leadership requested to sit in on the confidential interviews conducted by PAC staff members, but the PAC informed them that this practice was not allowed due to privacy considerations. After the first few interviews with Mazzoni staff members, the aforementioned tension between Mazzoni staff and leadership escalated. Staff members began reporting feeling unsafe because of some skepticism with the agency leadership, and Mazzoni leadership then attempted to intervene and delay the scheduling of the remaining interviews. When the PAC attempted requested the contact

information of the individuals who were waiting to be interviewed, the PAC was referred to Mazzoni Department of Human Resources who also attempted to delay the remaining interviews further by not providing the contact information of the interviewees to the PAC nor reaching out to the interviewees about scheduling. The PAC ultimately resorted to alternative methods of identifying and contacting the remaining individuals for interviews and scheduled with them directly.

Overall, the interviews revealed a common theme of Mazzoni staff feeling as though they were not protected by law enforcement or by Mazzoni leadership during or after the protest incident. Staff reported feeling traumatized, unsupported, and unsafe both after returning to work and while engaging with the Police Department to file reports after the incident. They also reported low morale and ongoing tension within the organization. While some staff members reported utilizing the agency's workman's compensation benefits and taking a few days off after the occurrence, they discussed feeling like they were not able to take the time off they really needed, and that leadership did not follow up on their well-being nor offer any type of additional support.

Furthermore, interviews depicted a theme of feeling neglected by law enforcement. Two of the five Mazzoni staff members discussed how they asked uniformed officers inside the convention center several times and early on during the protest to intervene and take control of the situation but had no success of getting assistance from officers. Both interviewees reported being told by the uniformed officers inside the convention center more than once to "Go find Civil Affairs outside," because they were not allowed to leave the convention center. Staff expressed overall frustration with PPD and described feeling like officers "sat by" while Mazzoni staff were being hurt and harassed by a hateful group.

It was also evident that Mazzoni staff members did not understand why the protestors who came to their conference could not legally be deemed a violent or hate group within the State of Pennsylvania. All interviewees expressed anger when speaking about the notion of how society and police can consider groups such as Black Lives Matter to be categorized as a hate group, but not consider the hateful protestors like the ones they encountered, a hate group. They described wanting to see the protestors charged with a hate crime for assaulting them as well as wanting officers to be punished or terminated for their lack of service during the incident.

Three interviewees who also attempted to follow up with PPD after the incident to file police reports about being pepper sprayed and hit in the face conveyed having a poor experience with officers. They described going into one of the police districts and ultimately leaving without filing their reports because of officers not being culturally or LGBTQ competent. Due to their experience at the police district, the interviewees contacted the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs, and detectives were later brought to Mazzoni Center on another day to assist Mazzoni staff with getting their police reports filed. Even with the Director of LGBTQ Affairs facilitating the interaction with police, interviewees described being misgendered several times by the detectives even after correcting them, and had an overall feeling that the detectives lacked empathy and did not take their reports seriously.

Several Mazzoni interviewees also discussed feeling ill-prepared to handle protests that might occur at their events. Everyone interviewed discussed concerns about the organization not having

any written or internal policies regarding safety protocols or procedures to handle circumstances like the protest that occurred. Majority of the people interviewed reported watching Mazzoni leadership at the conference protest stand by in shock and confusion, not knowing what to do or how to handle the situation as it was happening. While it was evident that Mazzoni staff interviewed clearly felt traumatized and harmed by the protestors, they expressed additional trauma and harm from their employer as well as from the Philadelphia Police Department.

Analysis and Recommendations:

Based on a thorough review of all information sources, the PAC recognizes that most of the Mazzoni staff members did the best they could to deal with the sudden incident by utilizing their own resources to drown out the protestors at the conference. However, there was one Mazzoni staff member who in fact escalated the incident and put their colleagues in danger by not only engaging the hate preacher, but continuing to be aggressive towards him. When the situation could have been stopped or de-escalated, this staff member instead chose to rally and lead a crowd of people to further incite chaos. The crowd chased the protestors down and across the street to further engage with them antagonistically even after they attempted to leave the area. While the majority of Mazzoni staff have every right to express feeling hurt, dismissed, and invalidated by law enforcement, it is imperative to point out that the situation escalated due to the actions of a Mazzoni staff member in a leadership position.

Further, while the PAC understands the history of sensitivity and distrust between the LGBTQ community and the police, information revealed that PPD Civil Affairs Officers performed their duties within policy and to the best of their ability with the information they had at the time. However, the PAC also recognizes there could have been improved communication and assistance between Mazzoni staff and PPD uniformed officers, as well as between PPD uniformed officers and the Civil Affairs Bureau. A uniformed officer assessed the protest, saw that it was escalating, and notified his superior, who then notified Civil Affairs. Although Civil Affairs was not notified of the protest at the start, they effectively carried out their functions of preserving peace and order, preventing destruction of life and property, and protecting the constitutional rights of all involved parties mandated by PPD Directive 8.3. Upon arrival, Civil Affairs Officers assessed the situation, ensured all people were safe, told both parties to disperse from the convention center, separated the crowd, and ultimately cleared the area.

As far as future communicative tactics, PPD can improve upon how they go about problem solving when being approached by people in a protest environment. For example, Mazzoni staff members continually asked uniformed officers inside the convention center for assistance. Those officers continued to direct them to contact Civil Affairs. Since Civil Affairs could not be located, Mazzoni staff continued to go back to the uniformed officers and ask for their assistance. Instead of the uniformed officers repeatedly instructing the people who approached them to go outside and find Civil Affairs Officers, they should have further assessed the situation and assisted Mazzoni staff members themselves with finding or notifying Civil Affairs of what was happening in real time. Ultimately, even if PPD uniformed officers were in fact instructed to remain inside the convention center during the protest situation, and are not part of the Civil

Affairs Bureau, they are still employees of the Police Department and have a duty to assist those in need and problem solve as necessary.

Although a uniformed officer was seen calling his superior for assistance during the protest incident, this effort does not seem to have been communicated to Mazzoni staff or to the crowd. When people are asking the police for assistance, it is imperative to communicate clearly, offer solutions, and provide updates as much as the situation allows. If the officer had provided some updates and communicated about his efforts effectively, that communication might have prevented much of the feelings of abandonment and lack of service from the Police Department that Mazzoni staff described in interviews.

As a result of Mazzoni interviewees experiencing poor interactions with detectives during the initial stages of the investigation process, the PAC attempted to facilitate the follow up interactions between Mazzoni staff and PPD Detectives. Although the investigation is still active, the lead detective on the case reported to the PAC that people involved in the incident or those who reported being harmed during the protest have been unwilling to meet with him for interviews. The detective also reported that he had an initial interview scheduled with the hate preacher from the protest, but ultimately had to cancel the interview. To date, the interview is still in the process of being rescheduled by the detective.

Most recently, the PAC reached out to interviewees who have not yet interviewed with detectives but have received no response. Prior conversations with interviewees disclosed concerns about meeting with the lead detective and their preference to interview with a female detective regarding the case due to their trauma around men in general. When the PAC reached out to the lead detective about this, he responded that interviewees can bring whomever they want to the interviews, but that he is the lead detective on the case and ultimately conducts all interviews.

From a civilian perspective, the PAC understands that detectives have specific duties when conducting investigations, but it is also important to recognize that complainants should be accommodated as much as the situation allows. Interviewees have expressed trauma and discomfort with detectives based on their prior experiences, and PPD should be able to at the least have a female officer or detective in the room during the investigative interview to make the complainant feel more comfortable. Officers and detectives may not intend to be dismissive of people's individual needs, but a failure to accommodate requests like this does a disservice to residents and the Department. It should be the priority of the PPD to ensure that complainants feel safe enough to follow through with their complaint in order to assist detectives with the completion of investigations.

While reviewing this incident, PAC staff members had the opportunity to attend the monthly *LGBT Police Liaison Committee* meeting located in the 6th Police District, as well as meet with PPD officers who consistently work closely with the LGBTQ community. Attendees at the committee meeting included various PPD representatives, the PPD LGBT liaison, members of the LGBTQ community, and representatives from local LGBTQ organizations. The committee meeting seeks to address the needs of Philadelphia's LGBTQ community, discuss crime statistics and solutions related to issues within the 6th District, and discuss ongoing concerns and overall

action steps to bridge the gap and improve the relationship between the LGBTQ community and the police. While the meeting was well attended and included a variety of organizations, the PAC noted that there were no staff members or leadership in attendance from Mazzoni Center. Conversations with various PPD and community members also verified that there has never been any representation from Mazzoni Center at the monthly committee meetings. Further, committee members described a lack of structure or strategic goals within the committee. Although the committee meets monthly, the consensus among attendees was that there is limited direction and limited outcomes as a result of the committee meetings.

Though there is shared responsibility in relationship and coalition building, the Police Department should consider consistent and proactive efforts to engage community organizations. This is especially true for organizations which serve a population that is historically marginalized or oppressed. It would be especially beneficial for the Police Department to engage organizations such as Mazzoni Center to explore and encourage them to engage with the police on a regular basis as opposed to only engaging around crisis situations. As the PPD is aware, interactions with PPD outside of crises can begin to help Mazzoni Center address evolving issues with the police while also improving the relationship. A good example of relationship building between the PPD and the LGBTQ community is the relationship with the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs. Both the Police Department and the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs have put forth great effort to work collaboratively to build a more positive relationship between PPD and the LGBTQ community on a larger level. They are able to communicate about many of issues and have developed a sense of trust and professional respect. The PPD would benefit from a similar outreach approach focused on Mazzoni Center and other LGBTQ community groups. This effort to form positive relationships with this community will likely improve communication and the LGBTQ community's belief in the legitimacy of the Police Department. This will also help improve the preparation for and response to high profile events and incidents.

As Mazzoni Center continues to work through the aftermath of the unfortunate events that occurred at the conference, it is vital for their leadership to have strong relationships and reliable contacts in the Police Department. They should not only be aware of resources such as the *LGBT Police Liaison Committee* in order assist vulnerable populations with their concerns, but should also provide their staff members with the opportunity to be part of the solution-focused, strategic planning that is a goal of the committee. However, Mazzoni center is seemingly absent from this committee and this is another example that speaks to the lack of communication between Mazzoni leadership and the Police Department. Although this report seeks to make recommendations to the Philadelphia Police Department, efforts to build relationships must be shared by all interested parties. Mazzoni Center is a leader in the LGBTQ community and therefore should not only be sought after by the Police Department but should also make efforts to engage the Police Department.

Though the Civil Affairs Bureau intervened at the conference protest and performed their duties within policy, it is still significant to identify and address the necessary actions which can ultimately contribute to improving the relationship between the LGBTQ community and the Police Department in Philadelphia. The following is a list of recommendations for the Philadelphia Police Department from the Police Advisory Commission regarding Mazzoni Center and the conference protest occurrence.

Recommendation 1: The PAC recommends the PPD use the *LGBT Police Liaison Committee* to partner with the Mayor’s Office of LGBTQ Affairs to deliver LGBTQ in-service competency training to officers at least once yearly for one hour.

- Currently, the Mayor’s Office of LGBTQ Affairs delivers LGBTQ competency training to new PPD recruits, but there is no additional training after the newly recruited officers leave the Police Academy.

Recommendation 1.1: The PPD should use members and non-members of the *LGBT Police Liaison Committee* to develop specific goals to create structure within the committee.

- The LGBT Police Liaison Committee does not have structured, written, specific goals that can be referred to when planning committee meetings and agendas. Developing goals and strategically working to achieve them would increase the effectiveness of the committee.

Recommendation 2: The PAC recommends the PPD works to ensure the *LGBT Police Liaison Committee* and the assigned LGBT Police Liaison are known to the public and local organizations like Mazzoni Center to directly contact for questions or request assistance to plan appropriately for police support during community events.

- The PPD website does not mention any information about the LGBT Police Liaison or the existing *LGBT Police Liaison committee*. The PAC recommends the PPD post contact information and general information on the website under *PPD Programs and Services*, as well as utilize PPD social media outlets more to increase visibility to the public.
- The PPD should encourage organizations to reach out and plan with them for safety and security reasons, as well as ensure that organizations know and understand the role of the Civil Affairs Bureau through the City of Philadelphia website or the Police Department website.

Recommendation 3: The PAC recommends the PPD work with the LGBTQ community and organizations like Mazzoni in education or training opportunities to instruct staff on what police expect from organizations and what organizations can expect from police when involved in events and protests using the *LGBT Police Liaison Committee*.

Recommendation 3.1: The PPD should focus the education or training opportunities on topics such as the appropriate time and threshold for the PPD to intervene in protest events, appropriate PPD and Civil Affairs duties, and understanding protestor and First Amendment rights.

Recommendation 3.2: The PAC recommends the PPD create a public bulletin which includes the definitions and detailed information around hate crimes and bias incidents from Directive 8.4: *Reporting and Investigating Bias Incidents* as well as the rights and responsibilities of citizens and the Police Department during protests and demonstrations to make the information more easily accessible to the public.

Recommendation 3.3: The PPD should collaborate with the PAC and other City agencies in the development of a public bulletin, online brochure, or relevant FAQ.

Recommendation 4: The PAC recommends the PPD better inform the public of how to get the assistance of the Civil Affairs Bureau during a protest incident and how civilians follow up with police after a protest incident.

Recommendation 4.1: The PAC recommends the PPD use methods of messaging such as the Police Department website and social media outlets which can disseminate information quickly to the general public.

Best Practices:

While the research and analysis conducted by the PAC was based on the follow up of a sudden occurrence, policy and practice changes are often implemented as a result of successful practices that have been tried and tested in other comparable parts of the country. When it comes to improving the relationship between the police and the LGBTQ community, comparable jurisdictions have already implemented much of what the Police Advisory Commission has recommended.

Other jurisdictions have taken advantage of messaging strategies that have been deemed successful for outreach and education when it comes to the LGBTQ community and other underserved populations. For example, police departments across the country utilize their website to openly display information about hate crimes and bias incidents as well as have created online brochures with detailed information about their LGBTQ task forces. This information encourages the community to not only reach out to learn more, but to also contact the police departments regarding questions, or to be part of the task force.

Additionally, the PPD should use their coordinated police response that was implemented at the City's *Outfest* event as an effective best practice to utilize for future demonstrations and protests. As one of the largest festivals in the world, *Outfest* attracts around 40,000 people from various states, and focuses on the LGBTQ community celebrating "coming out." The PAC staff was able to analyze the police response to the protests that occurred at the festival on October 7, 2018. As a result of the PPD being heavily involved in the prior planning around *Outfest*, the coordinated response from PPD was ultimately efficient and effective. Protestors were moved to a certain street corner at the festival, so they would not intervene with the main stage events or vendors. PPD stationed three Bike Patrol Officers at each of the four corners where the protestors were demonstrating, while placing supervisors and officers of varying ranks in the middle of the street's intersections. Although PPD maintained a strong presence at the intersection where protestors were posted, they did so without overwhelming the event. Ultimately, the police were non-confrontational, protestors were able to exercise their First Amendment rights, and the PPD was in place to strategically intervene if necessary. These police tactics that were implemented at *Outfest* are prime examples of why communication and coordination between community organizations and the Police Department around public safety planning are essential for everyone.

In 2018, much of the LGBTQ population in Philadelphia are millennials. Therefore, they rely on online resources and social media to obtain general and important information. PPD adding specific information and materials or brochures to their website would allow the public to not only have increased access to information that is significant to their existence, but this also offers people a chance to be part of community-oriented solutions.

Conclusion

The evaluation of the Mazzoni protest incident involving the police included a variety of relevant sources of information. As previously mentioned, Philadelphia has made strides to improve inclusivity and awareness across the City, and this improvement can be observed in various agencies and offices, including the Police Department. Despite these strides, there are still issues related to communication and education between the Police Department and the LGBTQ community that need improvement. The PPD must not only acknowledge and implement effective strategies to communicate with the public, but they must also be thoughtful and considerate when policing and understanding marginalized communities such as Philadelphia's LGBTQ community. Officers of the PPD not only have a duty to protect people, but they also have a duty to utilize their critical thought processes and problem-solving abilities to assist others.

The City has an abundance of resources to support the facilitation of education and open communication with the community, and it is the onus of the Police Department to use these resources to bridge the existing gaps. Any effort to improve this relationship may be met with resistance because of the noted complicated history which includes oppression on the part of the Police Department. It is imperative for the Police Department to be prepared for any resistance and to perhaps engage Mazzoni Center and other organizations as a partner. It is also equally important to understand that positive engagement in the present does not negate the past. Therefore, a successful effort to improve this relationship may need to include officers gaining a deeper understanding of what historical police action caused LGBTQ persons to be fearful or distrustful of the police in 2018. Community policing is essentially about public safety through forming sustainable relationships and building trust between the community and the police, which cannot be done without effective, trauma-informed outreach and communication efforts. Should the PPD be interested in such an effort, the Police Advisory Commission welcomes the opportunity to work with the Police Department and other entities in both government and non-government such as Mazzoni Center to effectively outreach and help create positive police interactions.



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Police Department

HEADQUARTERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Richard J. Ross, Jr.
Commissioner

December 24, 2018

Hans Menos
Executive Director
Police Advisory Commission
1515 Arch Street, 11th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Re: A Review of the PPD Response to a Protest Involving Mazzoni Center and the Philadelphia LGBTQ Community

Dear Director Menos:

Your above-mentioned report has been received and reviewed. Your process does not afford the Department the opportunity to review the facts and circumstances, as communicated in this report, in advance. This opportunity would have allowed our agencies to discuss the circumstances surrounding the event and identified key members of the Department that were involved in the event that would have been made available to be interviewed.


We would have liked to make you aware of a few things that might be helpful in the future. For example, the Department has a Deputy Commissioner dedicated as the liaison with both the LGBTQ Community and the Philadelphia Office of LGBT Affairs. This Deputy Commissioner, along with his contact information, is identified on the City website for the Office of LGBT Affairs, but this fact was never mentioned or was he interviewed as part of this report. I am certain that our liaison could have been helpful with your review.

This aside, the Department does believe those recommendations regarding improved communications between the PPD and the public have merit. First, we agree that using social media platforms is an effective tool to disseminate information regarding any protest activity in a targeted manner to both protestors and the public. As such, the Department will explore methods to include such messaging as a standard operating procedure in the future. Next, we agree the public should have easier access to the Civil Affairs Unit so that individuals or groups can coordinate with the unit for any protest or demonstration. The Department will explore adding a link to our current webpage with a description of the Unit, along with all contact information for the Commanding Officer. Finally, the Department has no objections to creating and publishing a bulletin or other type of document based upon our current policy regarding Hate Crimes and Biased Incidents. My office will prepare a preliminary draft and submit to PAC for its review and comments in the near future.

In closing, while I fully respect the independence of the PAC, I believe it is in the best interest of the citizens for us to come together, prior to issuance of any report, to ensure that we are all on

the same page as it relates to the underlying facts and circumstances of any event. This does not compromise the independence of the PAC or its reports in any way, but will allow us to focus the recommendations made in your reports. As such, we can continually work together to improve the Department and our relationship with the people we have sworn to serve.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Ross, Jr.
Commissioner