Call to Order

The Public Safety Committee will meet to discuss traffic enforcement and PO 2020 #178

1. The City Manager look into transferring primary traffic enforcement responsibilities from the Cambridge Police Department to unarmed, trained enforcement personnel in the Traffic & Parking Department, Department of Public Works, Health & Human Services, or another suitable department.
WHEREAS: Routine traffic stops disproportionately impact Black and Brown drivers, who are pulled over and searched more often than white drivers, leading to potentially stressful interactions with the police; and

WHEREAS: This racist outcome is not the result of biases by individual officers, although those may play a role, but rather is primarily the result of systemic biases, including over-policing in Black neighborhoods, and training of police officers to be hypervigilant and to expect violent resistance, despite such incidents being very rare; and

WHEREAS: The presence of an armed police officer during a routine traffic stop raises the tension of the encounter unnecessarily and can itself lead to conflict, causing harmful stress to both parties and damaging the relationship between police and the community; and

WHEREAS: Routine traffic enforcement can be conducted by unarmed employees of the city, which would reduce the possibility of violence during such encounters; and

WHEREAS: The police would still be responsible for apprehending known criminals, dangerous or erratic drivers, and other related situations that clearly go beyond routine traffic enforcement; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager look into transferring primary traffic enforcement responsibilities from the Cambridge Police Department to unarmed, trained enforcement personnel in the Traffic & Parking Department, Department of Public Works, Health & Human Services, or another suitable department; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council on this matter as soon as possible.
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