



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# Human Relations Commission

**TO: HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS** **DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2021**

**FROM: OFFICE OF THE MAYOR** **WARD: ALL**

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION ON THE DEATH OF LEROY STEPHENSON**

## **ISSUE:**

To discuss with City Manager's Office and City Attorney's Office the publicly-available facts surrounding the death of Leroy Stephenson and the scope for which the Human Relations Commission can be involved in the matter.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Human Relations Commission:

1. Discuss with staff representatives the scope in which the Human Relations Commission can make recommendations on the topic of officer-involved deaths, a responsibility historically held by the Community Police Review Commission (CPRC).

## **BACKGROUND:**

On November 20, 2020, the Human Relations Commission (HRC) received a letter from Ms. Amy Conger expressing concerns about the death of Leroy Stephenson following an event with the California Highway Patrol that resulted in his death near the Adams Street 91 Freeway offramp in the City of Riverside. Ms. Conger stated, "Leroy was a 48-year old black man who was tasered to death by the CHP on January 25, 2019." In her letter she called upon the HRC to assist in gathering answers to a list of eight (8) questions surrounding the death. She shared that she has repeatedly requested the police report of this event from RPD, CHP, and the District Attorney's Office, but has been unable to obtain it to date.

On December 16, 2020, The HRC met and this topic was on the discussion calendar, however due to a lack of a report and background information shared with the public, the item was not discussed in its entirety in keeping with the Brown Act. Rather, the HRC requested that this item come back at the next regularly scheduled meeting with a report and an invitation extended to Interim City Attorney Kristi Smith, Assistant City Manager that oversees RPD, Lea Deesing, and community member Amy Conger to speak on the topic.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Staff recommends three different routes for the HRC:

1. A discussion surrounding the topic of the HRC collecting the verifiable and publicly-available facts from staff representatives on the death of Leroy Stephenson as presented by community member Amy Conger, with the intention of selecting a member of the HRC to attend the next CPRC meeting and share the findings of the HRC during general public comment.
2. A discussion surrounding the topic of the HRC collecting the verifiable and publicly-available facts from staff representatives on the death of Leroy Stephenson as presented by community member Amy Conger, with the intention of informational purposes for those watching and reviewing the HRC meeting, then having further comments on the topic be directed to the lead investigatory agency on this matter: the California Highway Patrol.
3. A discussion surrounding the outlined roles of the HRC and CPRC from staff representatives and how the two vary in scope and purpose to determine which commission is best suited for discussing the topic of the death of Leroy Stephenson.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No fiscal impact is associated with this item.

Submitted by: Philip Falcone, Assistant to the Mayor, Office of the Mayor

Attachments: Letter from Ms. Amy Conger, 11-20-2020