August 23, 2024

Toronto Police Service Board

Public Order Policy Consultation

Dear Members of the Board,

Thank you for inviting members of the public to contribute to the formulation of the Board’s policy on public order policing.

I am grateful to the Toronto Police Service for its dedicated and responsive approach to keeping us safe and secure. I am a member of the 13 Division Police Community Liaison Committee. In that forum, I’ve learned about the challenges members of the service face on a daily basis. I’ve come to appreciate their professional skills and their sincere commitment to listening to the community they serve.

I am a retired Ontario and city of Toronto public servant. My experience included work on the policy staff of the Ipperwash Inquiry (2007), which examined the role of the OPP and the provincial government at the occupation of Ipperwash Provincial Park and the shooting death of Dudley George, a member of the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. The inquiry’s recommendations on public order policing remain relevant. I refer to them in my submission.

I am a Jew and an active volunteer in the Toronto Jewish community and in my synagogue. The rise of antisemitism in Canada, accompanied by incidents of intimidation, harassment and occasional violence, has shocked me and created insecurity of a kind I never before experienced. Some of these incidents occurred at pro-Palestine protests and demonstrations.

I have also participated in three rallies for Israel and the hostages held in Gaza over the past year. At each of these events, TPS officers were present, providing much appreciated security in a friendly and professional manner.

I mention my personal and professional background to set a context for the recommendations I am making to the Board. A principal recommendation of my submission is that the Board’s policy direct the Chief and TPS to report on, analyze and learn systematically from each incident of public order policing.

I am acutely aware of the challenges the TPS faces in public order policing. Officers are called upon balance respect for the constitutionally protected right to protest with preserving public safety, enforcing the laws and protecting citizens and communities.

The Board must likewise find the right balance as it sets policy in this area. I hope my perspective will assist in that important work. It is a project that requires ceaseless reexamination and correction. I wish you wisdom as you carry it forward.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Stutz