



Lake City Police Department

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Press Release

Argatha Gilmore
Chief of Police

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LCPD: Cedar Park Investigation Concluded

Monday, September 19, 2011, Chief of Police Argatha Gilmore initiated an Internal Affairs investigation into allegations of misconduct by several LCPD officers. The alleged misconduct complaints originated from the handling of an incident at Cedar Park Apartments on Thursday, September 8, 2011. Complainants stated the officers' used excessive force conducting multiple arrests during an incident at Cedar Park.

Reports indicated Lake City Police responded to Cedar Park Apartments for three separate incidents at different times on September 8, 2011: a reported riot/fight, a fight between 15-20 people, one of which had a firearm and an officer's call for assistance. At the conclusion of restoring order to the Cedar Park incident call, the incident resulted in the arrest of 10 subjects resulting in 27 charges. The charges were as follows:

- Assault on Law Enforcement Officer (2)
- Battery on Law Enforcement Officer (3)
- Resisting an Officer with Violence (3)
- Resisting an Officer without Violence (7)
- Incite/Encourage Riot (4)
- Disorderly Conduct (8)

Due to the seriousness of the allegations, Chief Gilmore submitted an official request to Orlando Police Department's (OPD) requesting assistance in conducting an independent Internal Administrative Investigation into the officers' alleged misconduct.

Orlando Police Department completed the investigation January 12, 2012. Chief Gilmore received the completed investigation January 20, 2012.

During a City Council meeting, the Council received approximately 50 letters of complaint pertaining to the incidents occurring at Cedar Park Apartments on Thursday, September 8, 2011. These letters, along with several videos from the in-car camera systems and YouTube® videos filmed by citizens at Cedar Park Apartments were turned over to OPD's Internal Affairs Section to be included in the independent administrative investigation.

OPD's review of the letters of complaint proved problematic. Individuals who signed the letters of complaint and provided contact information were all mailed two letters, one via certified mail and one sent as regular mail via the US Postal Service dated

September 27, 2011. The letters requested the complainants contact OPD's investigator by Monday, October 10, 2011, to arrange for their interview. OPD's Internal Affairs Section also attempted to contact by phone those individuals who provided phone numbers. Only two individuals agreed to provide a sworn interview. These interviews were scheduled for Tuesday, October 18, 2011. However, one of those individuals refused to cooperate and permit her children to provide an interview after learning she could sit in the interview, but a former employee of the Lake City Police Department, could not sit in on the interviews.

To determine if LCPD officers violated LCPD General Order 152.30, Non-Deadly Force, OPD reviewed all the information pertaining to the Cedar Park Apartment incident, the 16 officers from the Lake City Police Department who responded to calls at Cedar Park Apartments on Thursday, September 8, 2011, were separated into two categories; witness officers and subject officers.

The subject officers, during the course of resolving the three incidents at the Cedar Park Apartments either used physical force (hands on techniques) in assisting with or affecting an arrest; displayed or deployed their Taser or firearm to affect an arrest or offer protection to another officer. OPD investigators interviewed all 16 officers as well as 1 witness. OPD also interviewed the Director of Criminal Justice at Florida Gateway College in regards to an officer drawing his firearm and the technique used. The Director advised the technique was proper.

There was no testimony provided, specifically by those who originally complained about the officers' actions, and/or by those who were arrested, that would suggest as being inappropriate, the force officers used in effecting the arrests that occurred at the Cedar Park Apartments on Thursday, September 8, 2011. The hands-on techniques the officers employed, along with the use, display and or deployment of the Taser, all fall within LCPD guideline. Therefore, it was recommended by the OPD Internal Affairs Investigator the alleged violation of LCPD General Order 152.30, Non-Deadly Force, by all subject officers are Exonerated.

OPD's investigation also included the alleged violation of several officers' vehicle driving at a high rate of speed as they responded to the Cedar Park Apartments. The investigation of these allegations was conducted through officer interviews as well as in-car video systems, which also contains Global Positioning System (GPS) for speed recording. The officers' speed surpassed the posted speed of 45 miles per hour, this was not in violation of policy as a result of the policy not placing a ceiling on how fast an officer could drive while engaged in emergency response driving.

LCPD's General Order 155, Emergency Response Driving documents an officer engaged in emergency response driving may exceed the posted and non-posted speed limits and shall slow down or stop as needed for safe operation.

OPD Internal Affairs Investigation stated, during the officers response, it did not appear the officers' driving placed any individual's life in jeopardy; it appeared as though the officers used due care during the response. Chief Gilmore agreed with the statement of Orlando Police Department, "Although the investigation was tedious for all the officers involved, I am proud of all of our officers. They were cooperative, flexible with the many requests and requirements of this investigation. They continue to go beyond the call of duty."

Anyone having information about this incident or others can contact the Lake City Police Department anonymously on the TIP line at (386) 719-2068.

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