



July 6, 2020

Chief Michael Cox
Chief, City of Ann Arbor Police Department
Dr. Lisa Jackson
Chair, City of Ann Arbor Independent Community Police Oversight Commission

Dear Chief Cox and Dr. Jackson,

The purpose of this letter is to address Avalon Housing's long-standing relationship and experiences with the Ann Arbor Police Department.

For over 25 years, Avalon has provided housing, individualized services, community building, and property management to those in our community who have experienced homelessness. Our mission is to build healthy, safe and inclusive supportive housing communities as a long-term solution to homelessness.

Avalon is both a property owner and property manager as well as a service provider for tenants who live in properties owned by private landlords and the Ann Arbor Housing Commission. Avalon provides 24/7 on-site services at Miller Manor which is owned and managed by the Ann Arbor Housing Commission and we have discussed the issues below with the AAHC's Executive Director and Property Managers and they agree with the experiences we describe below as well as our requests for changes.

In light of the killing of George Floyd, and the Black Lives Matter movement, Avalon leadership engaged in conversations with our tenants and staff about their interactions with AAPD. We feel it is important to share with you the feedback that we received:

- *Black employees of Avalon report being treated differently than their white counterparts by various members of AAPD. Specifically, some have been asked to provide "proof" or documentation that they work at Avalon. On one occasion, a Black employee was asked to provide their social security number to an officer and got the impression their record was being checked.*
- *Staff members, members of Avalon's tenant advisory council, and other Avalon tenants report an inconsistency among officers who respond to situations in our community. Staff and tenants have reported that while some officers behave just and with compassion, others do not.*
- *Some officers have been reported to be authoritative and inappropriately aggressive when responding to situations involving Avalon tenants.*
- *There are consistent complaints about the number of officers who respond to a call. It is not uncommon for multiple police vehicles and officers to respond to a non-violent incident.*
- *There is a sincere desire among Avalon staff and tenants to be heard by AAPD responders and to have a better opportunity to collaborate with AAPD in responding to a situation.*

- *Avalon staff are concerned that they are not always welcomed or utilized in incidents involving their clients when AAPD responds.*
- *Staff and tenants feel that AAPD are not properly trained to respond to mental health crises and situations involving domestic violence.*
- *Community Mental Health response teams and other crisis teams are not always called or utilized by AAPD when responding to calls involving Avalon tenants and clients.*
- *There is a lack of follow-up from AAPD following incidents with Avalon tenants and clients. Staff feel uninformed following arrests and other responses led by the AAPD.*
- *Staff and tenants have concerns that de-escalation techniques are not consistently and effectively used by all AAPD officers when responding to stressful events.*
- *There is concern that there are significant differences in the level of de-escalation, mental health, and crisis intervention training officers receive. There is the perception that training on these matters within AAPD may be inconsistent.*
- *SWAT teams and use of force and/or weapons by the AAPD has created distrust and fear amongst our staff and tenants.*
- *Staff are concerned about unnecessary handcuffing, especially when clients are not being arrested, but rather are being taken to the hospital.*

On behalf of Avalon staff members, our tenant advisory council, and our tenants and clients at large, we ask the following of AAPD:

- *SWAT teams and other militarized shows of force not be used on Avalon properties.*
- *AAPD consistently collaborate with Avalon support coordinators, property managers, and other critical staff members. Increase communication between AAPD and Avalon staff prior to, during, and following any incidents with AAPD and Avalon tenants.*
- *Increase familiarity and communication between AAPD, Avalon staff, and Avalon tenants. Tenants are requesting that AAPD officers visit Avalon properties, meet with tenants, and provide Q&A sessions.*
- *Treat Black employees of Avalon the same as their white counterparts. Consistency should be established regarding the process or procedure for AAPD to identify Avalon staff members.*
- *Unnecessary force and aggression is not used when a tenant or client is experiencing a mental health or substance use disorder crisis.*
- *AAPD and Avalon staff co-respond to incidents involving Avalon tenants and clients, with Avalon staff acting as the primary facilitator. Avalon staff can take the lead in situations and request AAPD to participate as needed.*
- *CMH and other crisis teams will be utilized consistently.*
- *AAPD contacts Avalon staff members when responding to any call at an Avalon property.*
- *Assist Avalon staff in learning their rights and responsibilities when AAPD is called to an Avalon property so that Avalon staff can assert these expectations directly with officers on the scene.*
- *Continue to use less responders on Avalon properties (i.e. one patrol car and preferably only one officer).*
- *If an Avalon client is being hospitalized, handcuffing and force are not used unnecessarily.*

- *Avalon staff are informed on what type of de-escalation training, racial sensitivity, and other training is provided to AAPD officers. Avalon staff are consistently involved in the annual AAPD refresher training.*
- *Increase conflict resolution over arrests.*
- *Significantly decrease uninvited police presence on Avalon properties.*

We appreciate your attention to these important matters, and look forward to partnering with you to address these systemic issues.

Sincerely,



Aubrey Patino
Executive Director, Avalon Housing



Gary Bruder
President, Avalon Housing Board of Trustees



Jennifer Hall
Executive Director, Ann Arbor Housing Commission