1) Call to Order – Chair Bruce Delaney
The meeting was called to order at 6:10.

2) Introduction of Council Members
The Council members introduced themselves and Members Cohen and White gave a summary of the objectives of the Council. They expressed to those in attendance that the PAC was there to listen to their concerns and to relay those concerns to GPD staff.

3) Approval of Minutes
The minutes from the May 17, 2012 meeting were approved unanimously.

4) Update on GPD Issues from Chief Jones
Chief Jones gave an update on the Department’s Staffing Study. The company hired to conduct the study is still compiling data. The Chief has added the Reichert House Program to the study, so it will take longer for the completion. A draft should be ready at the end of July. The PAC will be sent the draft when GPD gets it.

GPD is teaming up with the City’s Parks and Recreation Department for a Summer Heat Wave Program again this year. This basketball program runs Monday through Thursday each week; with an Operation Respect Yourself swim party once a month at the various City pools. Safety information is also given out at these events and they are staffed by GPD’s School Resource Officers.

A brief update on issues from the previous month’s meeting at the Canopy Apartments was given by Officer Nicole Tierney.

Chief Jones talked about a meeting he had with representatives from the MacArthur Foundation in Washington, D.C. today, along with stakeholders from various court services and the State Attorney’s Office regarding the use of the $25,000 grant GPD received from the organization to study Racial and Ethnic Disparities. Gainesville and Aurora, Colorado were the only cities in the United States who received this grant. The grant money is not for programs. It is for statistics on disparities. They are looking at what causes a child to get in trouble.
At Chief Jones’ request, Officer Tierney gave an update on the Victim’s Rights information that will be given out to victims. This handout/brochure will be given out by the officers at crime scenes and distributed to Neighborhood Watch Groups.

Mr. Wes Wheeler spoke about the burglary to his home several weeks ago. Since that time he has set up a Neighborhood Watch group in his NW neighborhood and has made some suggestions on how the police department could improve their relationship with the victims and had input on the revised Victim’s Rights brochure. He feels the victims have a lot to contribute to a crime scene and officers and detectives should use them as a resource. Mr. Wheeler has been informed that most of his stolen items have been located in Colorado and will be returned to him and his wife. Chief Jones stated that he has recently shadowed Detectives and he was very impressed; there are a lot of dedicated people in that division. GPD Captain Ed Posey, Operations Bureau Commander, added that there is a suspect in the Wheeler’s case. Lieutenant Tim Hayes, Criminal Investigation Division, told the group that it helped that the Wheelers had serial numbers of their belongings and when their items were sold in Colorado, they were in a national system.

5) Public Comment

Area resident Lois Harrison commended GPD for their increased patrol and visibility in the neighborhood. However, she related a negative encounter she had with a GPD officer last month regarding her seatbelt. She said the officer was rude and nasty to her. Chief Jones asked Mrs. Harrison and any citizen with a complaint on an officer to let him or any supervisor at GPD know about the encounter so they can look into the incident. Otherwise GPD doesn’t know what the officers are doing out on the streets.

Jovial Webster, Pine Ridge, related negative encounters with police. He feels many of them, especially the younger ones, do not know how to talk to citizens. He would like to see police and citizens have a better relationship, instead of filling a quota. Chief Jones said that officers do not have quotas. Chief Jones recommends Community Oriented Police in the community have an event to let the citizens get to know, but that can be costly for the department in overtime costs. GPD had such an event in Pine Ridge that turned out to be a hostile meeting.

Geronnie Rollins commented on a problem he has with officers. He said officers should not automatically be aggressive with residents. If treated with respect, they will get respects. Officers should not assume everybody sells drugs. Mr. Rollins had a CD with him he wanted the Council to review, but Chief Jones said it was an on-going investigation and could not be discussed or viewed until the investigation was closed. Member Cohen said that when the case is closed, the Council will review it and look for patterns in the behavior of officers and make recommendations to the Chief.

Others in attendance agreed that being treated discourteously is not acceptable. Chief Jones explained how citizens can go on line and fill out a complaint form on an officer. He said that Florida Statutes regulate how complaints are investigated. Dr. Patricia Grunder, GPD’s Conflict Resolution Mediator, is working to train officers on how to interact with citizens. Also, starting in August all City employees will be required to take a Customer Service Training class given by the City’s Human Resources Department. Staff will get the Council a copy of that curriculum as soon as it is available.
Council Member Cohen commented that courtesy is critically important, but the other side of that issue is citizens being courteous of officers. There needs to be a balance of support to officers and still being courteous. It goes back to hiring the right officers. Chief Jones said that after GPD’s review by the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives that he added interviews by himself and his Major of each candidate, plus citizens now participate in the officer candidates oral boards.

Mr. Rollins asked what happens to officers who get a lot of complaints. Chief Jones explained that GPD has an “Early Warning System” that alerts supervisors when an officer receives several complaints. Discipline is progressive. GPD Captain Lynne Benck, Investigations Bureau Commander, gave an overview of the progressive discipline. A matrix is in place and each infraction has more severe discipline attached to it. She said that many officers start out with good intentions, but as they are treated badly by citizens, they often give up.

Another attendee commented that there is no trust between cops and citizens. He thinks Chief Jones is working hard to bring back the trust. Police Beat, the television show about the behind the scenes at GPD, tells how to handle reporting things and other ways to deal and communicate.

Gilbert Means stated that blacks don’t know why they are treated as they are either. He thinks the Chief is doing the best he can, but there are still some bad apples. It will take constant communication and training. Supervisors need to handle complaints as they come in and they should follow-up with citizens.

6) Member Comment
Chair Delaney stated that this was the best attended meeting the Council has had since it was formed. He would like to have an additional meeting at this location in two months. Staff will work to set that up.

Member White said this was a healthy, open dialogue meeting.

Member Miles-Hamilton thanked everyone for coming out for the meeting.

7) Next Meeting Date
The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 19, 2012, 6:30 P.M. at the Westside Park Recreation Center, 1001 NW 34th Street.

8) Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 7: 35 P.M.