



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE SHERIFF CIVILIAN
OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING HELD
ONLINE AT: <https://bit.ly/3DyPQOp>
coc.lacounty.gov**



Thursday, December 9, 2021

Attachment: [Video](#)

Present: Chair Priscilla Ocen, Vice Chair Sean Kennedy, Patti Giggans, James P. Harris, Lael Rubin, and Executive Director Brian K. Williams

Absent: Robert Bonner, Xavier Thompson

1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Call to Order: Chair Ocen called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Chair Ocen reported that the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC) has spent several months examining the issue of deputy gangs within the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department (LASD) and this meeting was scheduled to give the public an opportunity to share their concerns about deputy gangs and their impact on public safety. Chair Ocen requested staff to take attendance and advised that this is not a “traditional meeting” and that some Commissioners are not present.

2. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

2. Deputy Gangs within the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

Chair Ocen discussed the issue of deputy gangs within LASD and read the code of conduct. She then called on the Deputy Cliques Ad Hoc Committee Chair, Commissioner Lael Rubin.

Commissioner Rubin shared the ad hoc committee’s work over the last three years to address the issue of deputy gangs and highlighted the development of the [policy](#) to eliminate deputy gangs in LASD, which the Sheriff has refused to adopt. Rubin advised that the Board of Supervisors’ (BOS) [September 28, 2021 motion](#) focuses on eradicating deputy gangs and strengthening oversight of LASD and tasks the COC to get feedback from the public and create recommendations. Commissioner Rubin stated that this meeting may generate proposals from the speakers and community members that could be included in the recommendations. Following Commissioner Rubin’s comments, Chair Ocen reported there would be four guest speakers and introduced Journalist Cerise Castle as the first speaker.

Ms. Castle [outlined her research and investigation](#) into how the culture inside LASD’s broken system has allowed deputy gangs to form and continue to grow, and she shared the definition and differences between gangs and cliques. Ms. Castle stated at least 18 LASD gangs have

been identified and that they are responsible for the death of approximately 19 civilians. She shared the names of victims who were fatally shot between 2010-2018 and identified the deputies involved in the incidents, along with the alleged deputy gangs they are affiliated with, such as the Spartans, 3000 Boys and the Executioners. Ms. Castle reiterated the Sheriff's ongoing avoidance of subpoenas and Public Records Act requests with no accountability, and she encouraged listeners to visit lasdgangs.com for more information. Chair Ocen thanked Ms. Castle and introduced Commissioner Sean Kennedy as the next presenter.

Commissioner Kennedy reported that he and his students published a [report in January 2021 on deputy gangs](#), focusing on 50 years of LASD deputy gangs impact on constitutional policing and the justice system. Kennedy noted that the five year study showed that most shootings in L.A. County took place around specific stations (East Los Angeles, Compton and Century stations) known as "incubators" for deputy gangs, and a recent database was developed to track all fatal, non-fatal and non-hit shootings. Commissioner Kennedy acknowledged the new law, AB598, going into effect on January 1, 2022 that expands the definition of "Law Enforcement Gangs," and he advised the Commission should study the definition and litigate ensure there are answers to the questions about deputy gangs. Chair Ocen thanked Commissioner Kennedy and introduced Civil Rights Attorney Vincent Miller.

Mr. Miller reported eight deputies, who he represents, have broken the code of silence and has led to the call for reform. Miller noted more than 15 deputies have provided testimony under oath confirming that deputy gangs exist in LASD, and he provided examples of evidence collected and reported testimony confirming that the Banditos gang controls the training program in East Los Angeles. Mr. Miller advised that the deputy gangs issue requires reform, otherwise the issue will remain whether under the current administration or a new one. Miller stated that none of the deputies involved in the Kennedy Hall incident were reprimanded for their involvement nor transferred out of the station, as reported by the Sheriff, and that the Sheriff retaliated against the whistleblowers. Mr. Miller reported the Banditos recently held an inking party and stated that "deputy gangs are more dangerous than street gangs." Miller reported this is a county-wide problem and the BOS should take full advantage of their legal authority to create a policy.

National Lawyers Guild Staff Attorney Rebecca Brown then discussed the ongoing harassment of community members whose loved ones died at the hands of alleged deputy gang members, and she provided examples of unconstitutional policing being conducted by deputy gangs. Brown called on the BOS to place a charter amendment on the ballot next year that would "give the BOS the authority to remove the Sheriff for serious violations of public trust." Brown also recommended the BOS remove traffic enforcement from LASD's authority; continue establishing an external complaint, investigation and discipline system; build out funding for the Family Assistance Program; and maximize their authority to create policies for LASD."

Chair Ocen then thanked the panel and advised the Sheriff's absence is of his own decision. She stated that the Commission has consistently invited the Sheriff to attend Commission

meetings and he has constantly refused to participate. Ocen advised that anyone present from LASD is welcome to refute any of the comments made by the panel and that they have an open invitation to attend all COC meetings. Chair Ocen then opened the floor for questions from the panel and Commissioners.

Ms. Brown asked Mr. Castle about what types of harassment against families have been identified in her research, and Ms. Castle shared some examples of harassment experienced by family members.

Commissioner Rubin questioned Mr. Miller about the difference in policies between LAPD and LASD. Mr. Miller stated that LASD has policies in place that should prevent deputy gangs, but the policies are not being enforced. He stated the “Banditos have historically controlled the training program at East Los Angeles” and that members are recruited by bullying and abusing new trainees. He advised that LAPD has a zero policy in the abuse of trainees and the policy is enforced, and he shared additional examples of differences between LAPD and LASD policies regarding criminal and administrative investigations. Commissioner Giggans inquired about the inking party, and Mr. Miller reported that witnesses have testified in a deposition confirming the inking party took place approximately at the end of 2020.

Chair Ocen then provided instructions for making comments and moved to public comment.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were twenty-eight members of the public who provided comments.

Chair Ocen thanked family members for sharing their experiences and everyone for participating. She stated that RAND’s study did not investigate LASD operations and advised that the Commission is seeking BOS’s approval to hire outside counsel to conduct a thorough investigation into LASD deputy gangs. Chair Ocen then asked Commissioners for final comments.

Commissioner Giggans expressed her appreciation for the speakers on the panel and encouraged everyone to continue attending the COC meetings.

Commissioner Kennedy stated that “deputy gangs are a symbol of serious lack of accountability.” He advised that the Commission should continue to engage with the Sheriff despite his refusal engage with the Commission.

Commissioner Harris noted his appreciation for the panel and encouraged ongoing dialog.

Commissioner Rubin thanked the panelist and the public for their comments.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ocen announced that the December 16, 2021 meeting is canceled and that the next COC meeting will be held on January 20, 2022. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.