



Pasadena Police Department

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 13, 2020

City of Pasadena Park Incident

Yesterday evening, it was brought to our attention that there is a video circulating on social media depicting Pasadena Police Department Officers contacting two women with their children who were on and around playground equipment in a City of Pasadena park. What is not captured and clear from the video is how the officers came to be at the park, as well as how the matter was resolved.

Around 4:30 PM yesterday, our dispatch center received a call in regards to a person that had removed yellow caution tape around playground equipment and allowed children to play on the equipment. As with all calls for service to the police department, a call was generated by the dispatcher and officers responded to the scene. The responding officers contacted two women, explained to them that while the park has remained open throughout this pandemic, the amenities were closed in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19. While these officers did obtain their identities, there were no citations issued, nor were any arrests made. This matter is now closed and requires no further police action.

The officers handled themselves professionally in response to a difficult situation related to an issue in which citizens have strong opinions. The Pasadena Police Department has a reputation for being responsive to the needs of our citizens, and it would be improper for dispatchers or responding officers to arbitrarily decide when to respond to calls for service or assistance. To the best of our ability, we respond to all calls.

While there may be disagreement amongst members of the public as to whether or not executive Orders are legally enforceable, the Texas Attorney General has issued guidance confirming executive Orders are enforceable. It is not reasonable to expect police officers to substitute their personal opinion on particular laws for legal guidance in the enforcement of their duties. We live in a country of laws, and there are mechanisms to challenge or change laws in a legal and proper manner.

From the very first executive Order to today, the department's position, and that of Mayor Wagner, has been to obtain voluntary compliance through education. To date, the Pasadena Police Department has issued no citations and made no arrests related to violations of executive Orders. Mayor Wagner has permitted our city parks to remain open for use throughout this pandemic and has only closed the amenities in hopes of reducing community spread by minimizing the close proximity of persons who are not members of the same household. This

decision was made based on the clear guidelines issued by the Center for Disease Control regarding playground equipment in an attempt to keep our community safe.

The Pasadena Police Department remains committed to the health and safety of all our residents, while also respecting the various opinions on these issues. However, there are specific concerns regarding the removal of caution tape that has been lawfully placed around park amenities at the direction of city managers. When this tape is removed, it creates a scenario of substantial inconvenience to the city as they must utilize staffing to replace it, which unnecessarily results in additional labor and equipment costs.

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