



# VICTORIA & ESQUIMALT POLICE BOARD

MAYOR BARBARA DESJARDINS, LEAD CO-CHAIR

MAYOR LISA HELPS, DEPUTY CO-CHAIR

August 11, 2020

To: Mr. William Freeman

And To: Mr. Clayton Pecknold, Police Complaint Commissioner  
Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner

And To: Ms. Brenda Butterworth-Carr, Director  
Police Services Division

*Via Email*

## **RE: Service or Policy Complaint – VicPD (OPCC File No. 2020-18001)**

On July 7, 2020, the Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board Governance Committee received correspondence from the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner related to a Service or Policy complaint from Mr. William Freeman. Mr. Freeman advised that his complaint relates to the “...*unethical conduct of the Victoria Police in supporting actions to harm vulnerable populations...*” and that he “...*would appreciate a review of what should be done when actions directly deprive cancer patients of medicinal quality cannabis products.*”

As per section 171(1)(a) of the *Police Act*, the Chief Constable was directed to investigate and report on the complaint. Insp. Colin Brown undertook the investigation on the Chief’s behalf and spoke with Mr. Freeman over the phone. Mr. Freeman advised that he uses cannabis to manage his chronic pain and preferred to purchase his cannabis from the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club (VCBC) given their support for chronic pain sufferers, knowledge of cannabis, and proximity to his home. He was concerned when the provincial Public Safety Unit took enforcement action against the VCBC and that VicPD was on standby in a support capacity while the provincial Public Safety Unit took their enforcement action.

Mr. Freeman viewed the actions of the provincial Public Safety Unit as illegal given that Canada has still not adequately addressed supply, cost, and quality issues surrounding the purchase of cannabis by users, particularly those who suffer from medical challenges and/or face financial challenges.

Insp. Brown advised Mr. Freeman of the following: that VicPD has held the position for years that it would not take enforcement action against cannabis stores while the Federal and Provincial governments worked toward creating a regulatory framework; that the Province has now created a framework and the VCBC refused to comply with it; and that VicPD did not initiate the enforcement action against the VCBC but simply stood by to support public safety while the provincial Public Safety Unit did its work. Insp. Brown encouraged Mr. Freeman to discuss his concerns with the Province given that they created both the framework in question and the Public Safety Unit. Although Mr. Freeman indicated that he still feels that the actions of the provincial Public Safety Unit and VicPD were illegal, he appreciated the follow-up and advised that he required nothing further from the police.

As a result of Insp. Brown's findings, the Board is of the opinion that no further action is required and considers this complaint to be concluded pending the final disposition of the OPCC. Pursuant to Section 172(2) of the *Police Act*, if Mr. Freeman is dissatisfied with the actions of the Board in this matter, he may ask the Police Complaint Commissioner to review them. He has twenty business days from receipt of this letter to request a review. The Commissioner can be contacted as follows:

Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner  
#501, 947 Fort Street  
PO Box 9895, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9T8  
Telephone: 205-356-7458 or Toll Free: 1-877-999-8707

Yours Truly,



Mayor Barbara Desjardins  
Lead Co-Chair



Mayor Lisa Helps  
Deputy Co-Chair

- c. Chief Cst. Del Manak – VicPD  
Eric Chown, Investigative Analyst – OPCC