Summary of Common Council President Ellis’ Responses to Questions Posed in CFLJ’s April 7, 2020 Letter

1. Do you believe structural racism affects the operations of the Albany Police Department? If not, on what do you base that belief? If so, what steps do you intend to take to address it through city ordinances that establish ACPAC as a meaningful APD oversight committee?

   Common Council President Ellis responded that he does not know if structural racism exists in the Albany Police Department (APD). He stated that he has no supervisory role over the department and that he has not received any information or complaints from any officer within the Albany Police Department around structural racism.

2. Will you include in ACPAC’s bylaws a requirement that all APD policies must be subject to ACPAC review? If not, why not? If so, on what date will the ACPAC bylaws be modified to reflect this change?

   Common Council President Ellis responded that the ACPAC board is governed by its members, and that any changes to their bylaws should come from its members. He stated that he does not believe ACPAC needs to review ALL APD policies, as all policies may not be relevant to ACPAC.

3. Will you include in ACPAC’s bylaws a requirement that every new APD policy must be accompanied by a racial impact statement? If not, why not? If so, on what date will the ACPAC bylaws be modified to reflect this change?

   Common Council President Ellis responded that he would not recommend that ACPAC’s bylaws have a requirement that every new APD policy must be accompanied by a racial impact statement. He stated that that there may be a number of policies that do not deal with race, that he does not have the ability to amend the bylaws, and that he does not govern the ACPAC board.

4. Through your representative on ACPAC, will you encourage ACPAC to require annual data reports for the APD as a whole, and annual data reports for the LEAD program? If not, why not? If so, on what date will your representative be so directed?

   Common Council President Ellis responded that the ACPAC board should request the required data they feel is necessary from the APD, and that LEAD data should be given to ACPAC because components of The LEAD program address community policing.
5. Are you willing to have the Common Council pass a resolution stating the need for repeal of Civil Rights Law 50-A? If not, why not? If so, on what date will the Common Council take up this matter?

Common Council President Ellis responded that he has spoken to the Chair of the Public Safety Committee, who is willing to have a Public Safety Committee meeting to discuss and inform council members about the state legislation on Civil Rights Law 50-A.

6. Will you send a letter to the Governor and legislators advising them of the Council’s resolution urging repeal of Civil Rights Law 50-A? If not, why not?

Common Council President Ellis responded that if the Albany Common Council passes a resolution in support of Civil Service Law 50-A, he will do so.

7. Are you willing to co-sponsor and personally participate in Albany’s “Recommitment to Community Policing” Symposium to be conducted by the Center for Law and Justice in the fall of 2020? If not, why not?

Common Council President Ellis responded that he will attend a community policing symposium providing the Mayor and the Police Chief are in attendance, as they oversee the Albany Police Department. Before any changes can be made, the approval first must come from the Mayor and the Police Chief.