

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF LOCAL CONFLICT
AND ONE NATIONAL TRAGEDY

TRAYVON MARTIN & DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN SANFORD, FLORIDA

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INTRODUCTION

“When this initially happened to Trayvon, we thought it was about Trayvon.”

–Sybrina Fulton¹

Even Florida gets cold enough in February for a sweatshirt. It was a chilly, rainy night in central Florida on February 26, 2012.² Trayvon Martin was walking through a wealthy, gated community in Sanford to the condo where he was staying.³ He was on the phone with a girlfriend from another local high school while walking back from buying a pack of Skittles and iced tea at a nearby convenience store.⁴ Trayvon happened to be wearing a sweatshirt with the hood up that night, perhaps because of the weather.⁵ It began as an unassuming evening, but just weeks later, protesters would flood the streets of cities across the nation, “Trayvon Martin” would be a household name, and many would comment on how Trayvon’s “hoodie” and race may have led to his death.⁶

¹ Interview with Sybrina Fulton, Trayvon Martin’s mother, David A. Love, *Three years after Trayvon Martin killing, two women’s lives intersect*, CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/26/opinion/david-love-medgar-evers-trayvon-martin-survivors/> (last updated Feb. 26, 2015).

² Archive of Sanford weather data, Weather Underground, THE WEATHER CHANNEL, <http://www.wunderground.com/history/> (search “Sanford, Florida” and input “February,” “26,” and “2015”) (last visited Mar. 16, 2015).

³ Edward J. Blakely, *In gated communities, such as where Trayvon Martin died, a dangerous mind-set* (Apr. 6, 2012), http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/in-gated-communities-such-as-where-trayvon-martin-died-a-dangerous-mind-set/2012/04/06/gIQAwwG8zS_story.html. Trayvon was in the middle of serving a suspension from high school for drug residue in his backpack. See Greg Botelho, *What happened the night Trayvon Martin died*, CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/18/justice/florida-teen-shooting-details/> (last updated May 23, 2012).

⁴ Kim Segal, *Protestors declare “I am Trayvon,” but who was he?*, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/03/30/us/trayvon-martin-profile> (last updated Mar. 30, 2012).

⁵ Trayvon often walked around with a hood up, according to his former high school football coach. *Id.* In any event, the outfit was not unusual given the weather.

⁶ Jennifer Preston & Colin Moynihan, *Death of Florida Teen Spurs Outcry and Action*, The New York Times (Mar. 21, 2012), <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/21/death-of-florida-teen-spurs-national-outrage-and-action/>; CNN Wire Staff, *Martin supporters rally in Sanford, demand justice for teen’s killing*, CNN (Mar. 31, 2012), <http://www.cnn.com/2012/03/31/justice/florida-teen-shooting/> (hereinafter CNN Wire Staff, *Martin supporters*). Trayvon’s outfit became a poignant symbol for the racial issues surrounding his death. Jamie Wetherbe, *Trayvon Martin’s hoodie to be displayed at Smithsonian museum?*, LOS ANGELES TIMES (Aug. 1, 2013), <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/culture/la-et-cm-trayvon-martin-hoodie-smithsonian-20130801-story.html> (“Trayvon Martin’s hoodie . . . has become a symbol for race relations in America The garment became a sign of solidarity with the slain teen: Hoodies were worn at rallies, church services and by senators and celebrities.”). In an interview where President Obama was discussing the shooting death of Michael Brown, an African American man, by a white police officer in Ferguson, MO, the President referred to “hoodie[s]” as a potential trigger for racial profiling by police. See Interview by George Stephanopoulos with President Barak

The public has spent over three years analyzing, debating, mulling, and mourning over nearly every nuance, implication, and significance of Trayvon's death.⁷ "Hoodie,"⁸ "Stand Your Ground,"⁹ "Gated Communities,"¹⁰ "Implicit Bias"¹¹: these words are now suffused with three years of national discussion.

Although the national media primarily extracted from the story issues of national concern, the local conflict in Sanford is of paramount importance in understanding the turmoil surrounding Trayvon's death.¹² Sanford bears a rich, long, and tumultuous history involving over a century of conflict with its African American community, which began when Sanford

Obama (Nov. 23, 2014) ("Make sure the police are trained so they can distinguish between a gangbanger and a kid who just happens to be wearing a hoodie but just otherwise is a good kid and not doing anything wrong").

⁷ See *Trayvon Martin Case (George Zimmerman)*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/m/trayvon_martin/index.html (last visited Apr. 10, 2015) (a collection of the media coverage of Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman).

⁸ See discussion *supra* note 6.

⁹ "Stand Your Ground" is the popular name for Florida's statutory law regarding the use of force in cases of self-defense. Fla. Stat. Ann. § 776.012 (West 2005) (amended 2014) (relevant section amended for clarity); see also Tamara Rice Lave, *Shoot to Kill: A Critical Look at Stand Your Ground Laws*, 67 U. Miami L. Rev. 827, 832 (2013). The law was the basis for Zimmerman's defense. See Rice, *supra*, at 851. The law is similar to other states' self-defense laws in that it justifies the use of lethal force if one is threatened with death or serious harm. See *id.* at 832-33. However, the law goes further than other states by removing any "duty to retreat," by providing a presumption of the existence of a subjective threat of deadly force in certain situations, and by making prosecution difficult when an individual claims self-defense. See *id.* at 832-50. The law drew extensive scrutiny from the public and commentators for protecting the unjustified use of lethal force, especially in racially charged cases. See *id.*; see also Tamara F. Lawson, *A Fresh Cut in an Old Wound-A Critical Analysis of the Trayvon Martin Killing: The Public Outcry, the Prosecutors' Discretion, and the Stand Your Ground Law*, 23 U. Fla. J.L. & Pub. Pol'y 271 (2012); *When 'Self Defense' Violates Civil Rights*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Jun. 19, 2012), <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/20/opinion/when-self-defense-violates-civil-rights.html>. Ultimately, bids to repeal the law were unsuccessful. See Bill Cotterell, *Florida Bid to Repeal 'Stand Your Ground' Law Fails* (Nov. 7, 2013), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/08/stand-your-ground-repeal-fails_n_4237302.html.

¹⁰ See Blakely, *supra* note 3. Many speculated that gated communities encourage a dangerous "us vs. them" mentality that may have contributed to Trayvon's death. See *id.*

¹¹ See Jonathan Feingold & Karen Lorang, *Defusing Implicit Bias*, 59 UCLA L. Rev. Disc. 210 (2012).

¹² See Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, Senior Project Manager, City Manager's Office, Sanford, Florida (Mar. 11, 2015). Andrew Thomas is a leader in the field of dispute resolution. He was the Executive Director of the Center for Dispute Settlement in Rochester, NY for over twenty-six years. *Community Development CDBG/NSP Programs – Andrew Thomas, Senior Project Manager*, SANFORD, FLORIDA, <http://www.sanfordfl.gov/index.aspx?page=1020> (last visited Apr. 21, 2015). Since 2007, he has worked in Sanford, first as a consultant with the Police Department and later as a Senior Project Manager in the City Manager's office. *Id.* Mr. Thomas has played a central part in managing conflict in Sanford both before and after Trayvon Martin was killed. See Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra*.

absorbed the African American town of Goldsboro in 1911.¹³ The conflict has taken root over the decades since 1911; Trayvon’s death, a tree amongst a forest, was its tipping point.¹⁴

The conflict in Sanford is flush with age-old themes: a fight over land, a desire for autonomy, a want of justice, and a struggle to heal.¹⁵ Centering on a post-Civil War African American community’s efforts to succeed, the conflict is also deeply American. The conflict is stained by brewing points of contention and marred by explosive incidents, most notably, Trayvon’s death. The development of the conflict has also been paralleled by efforts to resolve it. In many ways, it is a quintessential, complex conflict. Analysis of this conflict provides insights into what happened in Sanford, why it happened, and what can be learned from it.

This paper examines the conflict and dispute resolution efforts in Sanford, both before and after Trayvon Martin’s death. Part I discusses the development of the conflict—the ‘Backstory’ to Trayvon’s death. Part II discusses Trayvon’s death and its immediate effects—the “Story”—and provides a summary of the dispute resolution tactics that were utilized at this stage of the conflict. Part III discusses the new wave of dispute resolution efforts in Sanford and how the Trayvon tragedy catalyzed them. Part IV reflects on what the dispute resolution community and other cities plagued by conflicts similar to Sanford’s can learn from this story.¹⁶

¹³ See, e.g., Nancy Imperiale, *Discovering a Lost City Historian Finds Surprising Past of the Goldsboro Community*, ORLANDO SENTINEL (May 20, 1990), http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1990-05-20/news/9005190395_1_sanford-goldsboro-elliott.

¹⁴ See Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

¹⁵ See Imperiale, *supra* note 13.

¹⁶ Since the turmoil surrounding Trayvon’s death subsided, several cities—and, in turn, the nation—have experienced crises like that in Sanford resulting from incidents of violence against blacks. See Monica Davey & Julie Bosman, *Protests Flare After Ferguson Police Officer Indicted* (Nov. 24, 2014), <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/25/us/ferguson-darren-wilson-shooting-michael-brown-grand-jury.html>; see also J. David Goodman & Al Baker, *Wave of Protests After Grand Jury Doesn’t Indict Officer in Eric Garner Chokehold Case* (Dec. 3, 2014), <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/04/nyregion/grand-jury-said-to-bring-no-charges-in-staten-island-chokehold-death-of-eric-garner.html>; Sebastien Malo, *Protests in U.S. cities against police violence prompt arrest* (Apr. 15, 2015), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/15/us-usa-police-protests-idUSKBN0N526W20150415>.

PART I: THE BACKSTORY

“We feel a pride in our town organization and earnestly wish to preserve it. To swallow us up in the corporate limits of Sanford will add very little to Sanford and take a great deal from us.”
–Mayor M.B. Bellamy, Council President G.W. Benton, and Town Clerk T.T. Green¹⁷

In the mid to late-nineteenth century, central Florida was churning.¹⁸ Reconstruction after the Civil War found the region with a newly free population of African Americans, an infrastructure in shambles, and an economy in flux.¹⁹ Amidst the settling dust of war, Florida’s new economy took form, and the towns of Sanford and Goldsboro were born.²⁰

Sanford became an economic and cultural focal point in central Florida.²¹ The town was a crucial transportation and railroad hub, and one of the nation’s largest producers of fruits and vegetables.²² Goldsboro, neighboring Sanford to the west west, began as a small African American community, home to laborers employed at a nearby rail yard.²³ When it was incorporated in 1891, just 26 years after the end of the Civil War and the demise of American slavery, Goldsboro became Florida’s second official African-American town.²⁴

¹⁷ Imperiale, *supra* note 13 (quoting a letter which leaders of Goldsboro published in local newspapers in 1911).

¹⁸ See TIFFANY RUBY PATTERSON, ZORA NEALE HURSTON AND A HISTORY OF SOUTHERN LIFE 55 (Temple University Press 2005) (“The end of the Civil War brought social chaos and economic instability to central Florida as throughout the South.”).

¹⁹ See *id.* at 69-70. The South’s economy had been dependent on a slave-labor system and “plantation agriculture.” *Id.*

²⁰ See *id.* As the economy re-formed, investors’ attention shifted away from cotton and toward the resource-laden, “underpopulated and underdeveloped” areas of northern and central Florida. *Id.*

²¹ See *id.* at 69. Henry Shelton Sanford, whom the City was later named after, pioneered the development of the area in 1870 by purchasing 12,535 acres of land along the southern side of Lake Monroe. *Id.* He developed the region’s economy by attracting African American workers and by taking advantage of the area’s central location and rich agricultural resources. *Id.* at 70.

²² See *id.* at 70; see also Jim Robinson, *2 Communities’ Heritage Rooted in Segregation*, ORLANDO SENTINEL (Oct. 5, 2003), http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2003-10-05/news/0310030456_1_city-of-sanford-goldsboro-celery (hereinafter Robinson, *2 Communities*).

²³ See PATTERSON, *supra* note 18, at 69-70.

²⁴ See PATTERSON, *supra* note 18, at 69. Goldsboro was one of up to 200 African America towns established by freed slaves after the Civil War. DeNeed L. Brown, *Black towns, established by freed slaves after the Civil War, are dying out*, THE WASHINGTON POST (Mar. 27, 2015), http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/black-towns-established-by-freed-slaves-after-civil-war-are-dying-out/2015/03/26/25872e5c-c608-11e4-a199-6cb5e63819d2_story.html. The Jim Crow laws, mandating segregation, were partially responsible for the isolated development of these communities. See PATTERSON, *supra* note 18, at 69. However, the communities also sought

Goldsboro flourished as an independent community.²⁵ By 1892, Goldsboro had its own church, postmaster, and school.²⁶ The town also developed “its own police and fire departments, town council and everything from drugstores to bakeries.”²⁷ Many residents owned their homes.²⁸ The town celebrated its accomplishments by naming its streets after local leaders.²⁹ Clark Street, for example, was named after William Clark, an individual involved in the town’s incorporation.³⁰ Fittingly, the town’s main street was named Goldsboro Avenue.³¹ The new community provided the “familial and community networks” necessary for its residents to “find success within their segregated world.”³²

In 1911, Sanford found itself territorially blocked in all directions and became concerned that it would not have enough space for its growing population.³³ The City lobbied Florida’s Legislature to integrate Goldsboro into Sanford to allow it to expand to its west.³⁴ The people of Goldsboro were desperate to maintain their municipal independence.³⁵ Goldsboro’s leaders fought to halt Sanford and attempted to convince the state Legislature to reject the plan.³⁶ In a letter that the town’s leaders published in a local newspaper, they made their pleas clear:

independence and self-sufficiency. *See* Brown, *supra*. The segregation of the white and African American communities may have been mutually desired at the time.

²⁵ *See* PATTERSON, *supra* note 18, at 70. Goldsboro and Sanford’s economies were certainly interdependent; many Goldsboro residents worked in the nearby rail yard and the area’s many farms and distribution centers. *See id.*; *see also* Robinson, *2 Communities*, *supra* note 22.

²⁶ *See* PATTERSON, *supra* note 18, at 70.

²⁷ Imperiale, *supra* note 13.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ Jim Robinson, *Political Sham - The Rise And Fall Of Goldsboro*, ORLANDO SENTINEL (Sep. 1, 1991), http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1991-09-01/news/9108310447_1_sanford-goldsboro-hurston (hereinafter Robinson, *Political Sham*).

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² PATTERSON, *supra* note 18, at 70.

³³ *See* Imperiale, *supra* note 13. In 1911, Sanford Heights, a sub-community of Sanford located to its south, threatened to separate from the City due to disagreements. Sanford feared that if Sanford Height’s seceded, Sanford would be trapped. *Id.* Goldsboro lay to Sanford’s west, Lake Monroe to its north, and marshlands to its east. *Id.*

³⁴ *Id.* Forrest Lake, a former Sanford mayor and state Representative at the time, spearheaded this campaign. *Id.* Lake was later reelected as Sanford’s mayor in 1916. Robinson, *Political Sham*, *supra*, note 29.

³⁵ *See* Robinson, *Political Sham*, *supra*, note 29.

³⁶ *See* Imperiale, *supra* note 13.

“We appealed to your council, protesting against the proposed action . . . but our appeal was unheeded . . . We now appeal to you, citizens of Sanford, for your help . . . We have always been . . . a peaceable, orderly and law abiding community . . . We have acquired some property as a town. We own our own house (sic), school and other corporate property. We feel a pride in our town organization and earnestly wish to preserve it. To swallow us up in the corporate limits of Sanford will add very little to Sanford and take a great deal from us.”³⁷

One month later, the state Legislature passed a bill revoking Goldsboro’s incorporation.³⁸

Sanford claimed its new territory. The city renamed many of Goldsboro’s streets.³⁹ Goldsboro Avenue became West 13th Street.⁴⁰ Clark Street became Lake Street, named after Forrest Lake, the politician who led the effort to dissolve Goldsboro.⁴¹ Sanford also inherited the \$10,375.90 in debt owed to Goldsboro and promised the Goldsboro community leaders they would repay it.⁴² Those debts would never be paid.⁴³

In losing their incorporation, the people of Goldsboro lost their ability to self-govern as well as their identity as an independent entity. Now a minority in numbers, the African-American community found itself without a voice. The community was marginalized; their prospects for success, already daunting in the Jim Crow-era South, were made bleaker.⁴⁴ The arch of Goldsboro’s development, bright in its early days, declined.⁴⁵ The community began to suffer from poor infrastructure, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and crime.⁴⁶ Many

³⁷ *Id.* (quoting the discussed letter).

³⁸ *Id.* Procedurally, the Legislature removed both Sanford and Goldsboro’s charters and reincorporated the combined territories as Sanford. *See* PATTERSON, *supra* note 18, at 70-71. The Legislature also voted against Sanford Heights’ plan to separate from Sanford, *see* discussion *supra* note 33. Imperiale, *supra* note 13.

³⁹ Robinson, *Political Sham*, *supra*, note 29.

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *See* PATTERSON, *supra* note 18, at 71.

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ *See* ANDREW THOMAS, NINE POINT PLAN: TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, CITY MANAGER’S OFFICE, CITY OF SANFORD, 2 (2015) (hereinafter TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT) (report on the progress the City of Sanford made towards meeting the action items in the Nine Point Plan, which was developed in the weeks following Trayvon’s death, *see infra* note 120 and accompanying text); *see also* Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

attribute these ailments to decades of Sanford's neglect, accusing Sanford of disproportionately allocating its resources to the white and more affluent areas of the City.⁴⁷

As the years passed after Goldsboro lost its independence, its community's identity as a party in the conflict with Sanford shifted. While the conflict began as a territorial and governance dispute between two cities—one primarily white, one primarily African American—it came to be defined by race and class: the smaller, indigent, African American community against the City of Sanford. With this change, the African American community's interests expanded to include not only municipal and governance issues but race-related issues as well.⁴⁸

Several incidents enflamed the conflict and highlighted its underlying issues.⁴⁹ In 1946, Sanford locals drove out two African American Major League Baseball players, Jackie Robinson and Johnny Wright, from Sanford Memorial Stadium, where they were located for spring training.⁵⁰ Later that year, when Robinson and Wright's team came back to Sanford for a minor league game, Sanford's police chief threatened to shut down the stadium in the middle of the game unless the two players left the stadium.⁵¹ Though Sanford did not apologize for this incident for many years, the City proudly displayed in a local historical brochure that Robinson played one of his earliest professional games in Sanford.⁵² The brochure omitted the fact that his participation in the game was cut short by the City's sheriff.⁵³ In 2012, a Warner Bros film called *42*, a biographical film about Jackie Robinson's life, revived the memories of this incident

⁴⁷ Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

⁴⁸ This observation is based on the issues and incidents that exacerbated the community's conflict with the City. See TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 2.

⁴⁹ See *id.*

⁵⁰ Daryl E. Owens, '42' reminds us Sanford, U.S. haven't crossed home on race, ORLANDO SENTINEL (Apr. 14, 2013), http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2013-04-14/news/os-darryl-owens-jackie-robinson-sanford-20130414_1_jackie-robinson-d-c-brock-sanford-avenue. Jackie Robinson was the first African American player in Major League Baseball, a top performer in the league, and a legendary figure in professional sports and the fight for racial equality. See CHRIS LAMB, BLACKOUT: THE UNTOLD STORY OF JACKIE ROBINSON'S FIRST SPRING TRAINING 6 (2006).

⁵¹ Owens, *supra* note 50.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*

by portraying a recreation of Robinson's experience in Sanford.⁵⁴ Sanford's African American community was embarrassed and resentful that its City was responsible for this stain on the otherwise uplifting story of Robinson's success.⁵⁵ Moreover, this incident of institutional racism on the part of the City validated the African American communities desire and need for independence.

Another incident of perceived institutional racism occurred in the 1970's, at the height of the civil rights movement, when there were allegations that Seminole County Public Schools, including Sanford's public schools, did not comply with Florida's Consent Decree of 1970 ("Consent Decree").⁵⁶ The Consent Decree outlined how Florida would comply with the new federal requirements of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which mandated the desegregation of public schools.⁵⁷

The African American community's conflict with the City of Sanford expanded to include Sanford's Police Department. Elevated crime rates in African American areas and a perception that the Police Department deprioritized safety in those areas led to sentiments of mistrust and resentment.⁵⁸ Furthermore, several specific incidents exacerbated the tension.⁵⁹ First, in 2005, two white security guards shot and killed an African American sixteen year old who was driving a car with two other people in it.⁶⁰ The Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigated the case instead of the Sanford Police Department because one of the

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ See TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 2; Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

⁵⁷ Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000c-2; TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 2.

⁵⁸ Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ See Rene Stutzman, *Fatal bullet hit teenager in back, records reveal*, ORLANDO SENTINEL (Jan. 29, 2006) http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2006-01-29/news/GUARDS29_1_sanford-ansley-security-guards; see also Arelis R. Hernandez & Rene Stutzman, *Trayvon Martin: Sanford officials, Rep. Corrine Brown meet with Justice officials in Washington* (Mar. 20, 2012) <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-trayvon-martin-doj-investigation-20120320-story.html#page=2>.

security guards was the son of a Sanford police officer and the other volunteered with the Police Department.⁶¹ Both guards were charged and indicted, one for firing into a vehicle and the other for manslaughter; the prosecutors later dropped the charge for firing into the vehicle and a judge acquitted the officer charged with manslaughter via a directed verdict.⁶² In a later incident, on December 4, 2010 a bystander recorded on video Justin Collison, the son of a Sanford police lieutenant, assaulting a homeless man.⁶³ Although the police investigated the assault that night, they did not issue an arrest warrant for Collison until December 28, 2010.⁶⁴ This raised suspicions that Collison received “preferential treatment” from the police.⁶⁵ As the police later acknowledged, this incident further eroded “public confidence” in their department.⁶⁶

The African American community’s feelings of “mistrust and tension,” first instilled in 1911, permeated the conflict with the City and its Police Department.⁶⁷ These sentiments deepened and hardened during the century leading up to Trayvon Martin’s death. Although the City had made efforts to improve the relationship, those efforts were largely ineffective and viewed as insincere.⁶⁸ On the night that Trayvon walked home in his hoodie, the echoes of discontent reverberated in the air.

⁶¹ Stutzman, *Fatal bullet*, *supra* note 60.

⁶² Hernandez & Stutzman, *supra* note 60.

⁶³ USAtalk2008.com, *Cops Son Caught On Camera Punching Homeless Man*, YOUTUBE (Dec. 28, 2010), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHGEam82GME> (video of the incident).

⁶⁴ The CNN Wire Staff, *Florida police chief out over investigation involving lieutenant’s son*, CNN (Jan. 3, 2011), <http://www.cnn.com/2011/CRIME/01/03/florida.officer.son/>. There were also allegations that the officers who responded to the incident viewed the video showing the assault that night. Rene Stutzman, *Sanford cop’s son gets probation for punching homeless man*, ORLANDO SENTINEL (Oct. 3, 2011), http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-10-03/news/os-sanford-cop-son-plea-20111003_1_sherman-ware-justin-collison-jerry-hargrett.

⁶⁵ Stutzman, *supra* note 64. The fact that Collison was arrested only after the video of the assault “went viral” drawing negative publicity to the police department supported this perception. *Id.*

⁶⁶ *Id.* In response, the police department internally investigated the decision to delay the arrest and the Sanford City Commission voted to move up the retirement date of the police chief, effectively firing him. Rene Stutzman, *Sanford police chief forced out the same day cop’s son goes to jail, accused of attacking homeless man*, ORLANDO SENTINEL (Jan. 3, 2011), http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-01-03/news/os-sanford-police-homeless-attack-20110103_1_justin-collison-sherman-ware-jerry-hargrett.

⁶⁷ Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

⁶⁸ See TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 5. For example, Sanford had established a Human Relations Advisory Board in 1985, whose mission was to increase communication and decrease tension between the City and

PART II: THE STORY

“National shame to this city.”
–Velma H. Williams⁶⁹

When police officers responded to 911 calls reporting screams, cries for help, and gunshots, they found Trayvon Martin dead from a gunshot wound lying in a field between several condominiums.⁷⁰ George Zimmerman was near the body.⁷¹ Zimmerman, who is Hispanic, lived in the predominantly white, wealthy neighborhood where he shot Trayvon.⁷² He had been patrolling the area as a “neighborhood watch.”⁷³ He admitted to shooting Trayvon, but claimed it was in self-defense.⁷⁴ Zimmerman said that Trayvon attacked him after he confronted Trayvon for acting suspiciously.⁷⁵ Trayvon was unarmed; he had on him only “Skittles, along with a lighter, a T-Mobile brand cell phone, headphones and \$40 and some change.”⁷⁶

Although there was much uncertainty regarding the details of the night, Trayvon’s family and the local community felt that charges should be filed against Zimmerman to allow the full judicial process to determine his innocence or guilt.⁷⁷ However, the police decided not to arrest

its communities. *Id.* However, the City Commission disbanded the Board in 2005, which many interpreted as reflective of the City’s relative disinterest in repairing the relationship. *Id.*

⁶⁹ Serge F. Kovaleski & Jennifer Preston, *Resignation of Police Chief in Martin Case is Rejected*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Apr. 23, 2012) <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/24/us/chief-bill-lee-jr-expected-to-resign-in-trayvon-martin-case.html>. Ms. Williams, a member of the Sanford City Commission, was explaining her vote to accept Chief Bill R. Lee Jr.’s resignation following handling of the case against George Zimmerman. *Id.* She explained that it was because of the effect of the department’s handling of Trayvon’s case on Sanford’s national reputation. *Id.*

⁷⁰ Charles M. Blow, *The Curious Case of Trayvon Martin*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 16, 2012), <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/17/opinion/blow-the-curious-case-of-trayvon-martin.html>.

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² *Id.*

⁷³ *Id.*

⁷⁴ *Id.*

⁷⁵ Lizette Alvarez, *911 Calls Add Detail to Debate Over Florida Killing*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 17, 2012), <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/19/us/911-tapes-released-in-killing-of-florida-teenager.html>. In his 911 call to the police, Zimmerman described Trayvon as looking “real suspicious” and like he was “up to no good or on drugs or something.” *Id.*

⁷⁶ Botelho, *supra* note 3.

⁷⁷ Lizette Alvarez, *Justice Department Investigation Is Sought in Florida Teenager’s Shooting Death*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 16, 2012), <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/17/us/justice-department-investigation-is-sought-in-florida-teenagers-shooting-death.html> (hereinafter Alvarez, *Justice Department Investigation*).

Zimmerman on the night of the shooting, and the local and state prosecutors declined to press charges.⁷⁸ The police and prosecutors said that they needed probable cause to arrest Zimmerman and that they could not press charges without any evidence contradicting his claim of self-defense.⁷⁹ Trayvon's supporters accused the police department of incompetence at best, and, at worst, of unfairly presuming that Zimmerman was justified in shooting Trayvon due to their racial biases.⁸⁰

The African American community in Sanford rose up in support of Trayvon.⁸¹ The community participated in protests, lobbied the media, and developed a list of goals.⁸² These goals included Zimmerman being arrested,⁸³ an investigation into why the Police Department was delaying the arrest,⁸⁴ the resignation of the police chief,⁸⁵ and intervention by the Justice Department.⁸⁶ Local outcry in Sanford spread nationally; people from around the country came to Sanford to participate in the protests, and other protests involving thousands were held in cities across the country.⁸⁷

⁷⁸ *Id.*

⁷⁹ *Id.* See *infra* note 9 for discussion regarding the legal scheme prosecutors applied to the case.

⁸⁰ Charles M. Blow, *The Whole System Failed Trayvon Martin*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Jul. 15, 2012), <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/16/opinion/the-whole-system-failed.html>. Criticism of the technical execution of the investigation into Trayvon's death was not unfounded. See Serge F. Kovaleski, *Trayvon Martin Case Shadowed by Series of Police Missteps*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (May 16, 2012), <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/17/us/trayvon-martin-case-shadowed-by-police-missteps.html>.

⁸¹ Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

⁸² CNN Wire Staff, *From coast to coast, protesters demand justice in Trayvon Martin case*, CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/03/26/justice/florida-teen-shooting-events/> (last updated Mar. 26, 2012) (hereinafter CNN Wire Staff, *From coast to coast*).

⁸³ *Id.*

⁸⁴ *Id.*

⁸⁵ Daniel Trotta & Barbara Liston, *Police chief in "Stand Your Ground" killing steps down*, REUTERS (Mar. 23, 2012), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/23/us-usa-florida-shooting-idUSBRE82L14S20120323>.

⁸⁶ Alvarez, *Justice Department Investigation*, *supra* note 77. The Justice Department did ultimately investigate Zimmerman for potential civil rights crimes, but decided in February 2015 not to file charges. Litzette Alvarez, *U.S. Won't File Charges in Trayvon Martin Killing*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Feb. 24, 2015), <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/25/us/justice-dept-wont-charge-george-zimmerman-in-trayvon-martin-killing.html>.

⁸⁷ *Timeline: The Trayvon Martin shooting*, ORLANDO SENTINEL (Mar. 22 2012), http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-03-22/news/os-timeline-trayvon-martin-shooting-20120317_1_shooting-sanford-police. Protests first began on March 8, 2012, with the a group of people from the New Black Panther Party

The turmoil was a conflict in need of structure.⁸⁸ The parties involved needed avenues for resolution in order to resolve the issues in Sanford and return calm to the City as peacefully, amicably, and productively as possible.⁸⁹ The U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service (CRS)⁹⁰ was a key player in facilitating the dispute resolution efforts.⁹¹ These efforts were forms of complex, community-scale dispute resolution strategies.⁹² Throughout the process, the CRS team was a neutral, third party facilitator and encouraged open, peaceful communication.⁹³ As an initial step in ‘managing’ the protests, Sanford officials chose the deliberate approach of supporting and facilitating the protests, as opposed to trying to constrain them.⁹⁴ This provided the public with a safe, structured outlet to vent their grievances. Furthermore, Sanford’s affirmative support of the protests represented to the protesters that they would be reasonable counterpart in the dispute, which avoided enflaming the conflict and allowed for productive dialogues. These dialogues were the next step in managing the protests. City officials organized conversations between relevant officials from various departments and

gathered in front of Sanford’s police department’s headquarters. *Id.* Protests grew dramatically. *Id.* On March 26, one month after Trayvon’s death, thousands marched in Iowa City, Houston, Detrain, Philadelphia, and Washington DC. CNN Wire Staff, *From coast to coast*, *supra* note 82. Hundreds more marched in Sanford on March 31, 2012. CNN Wire Staff, *Martin supporters*, *supra* note 6.

⁸⁸ See Audra D.S. Burch, *Federal mediator Thomas Battles serves as peacemaker in Sanford*, THE MIAMI HERALD (Jul. 4, 2013), <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/state/florida/trayvon-martin/article1953005.html> (“‘There was so much angst and fear of the unknown,’ said Sanford Mayor Jeff Triplett . . . ‘We had never been through something like this before. We didn’t know what was going to happen and if this thing was going to blow.’”).

⁸⁹ *See id.*

⁹⁰ The CRS is a specialized arm of the Justice Department that dispatches dispute resolution experts, called “Peacemakers,” to communities where “conflicts and tensions” arise over issues involving “race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and disability.” *Community Relations Service*, THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, <http://www.justice.gov/crs> (last visited Apr. 19, 2015). Thomas Battle led the CRS’s team of Peacemakers in Sanford. Burch, *supra* note 88.

⁹¹ See Burch, *supra* note 88; see also Arelis R. Hernandez, *DOJ ‘peacekeepers’ helped Sanford stay cool amid rising tensions*, ORLANDO SENTINEL (Apr. 15 2012).

⁹² *See id.*

⁹³ See Burch, *supra* note 88. For the most part, the CRS team did not act as prototypical mediators as it does not seem that they facilitated joint conversations. See CARRIE J. MENKEL-MEADOW & LELA PORTER LOVE & ANDREA KUPFER SCHNEIDER, *MEDIATION: PRACTICE POLICY, AND ETHICS* 85-86 (2nd ed., 2006) (describing mediators as active participants in conversations with the parties). However, the CRS team did act as mediators by coordinating the discussions of the involved parties from behind the scenes. *See id.*; see also Burch, *supra* note 88.

⁹⁴ *Id.* The CRS team particularly encouraged this tactic, for example, by organizing police protection for a group of student-protesters called the Dream Defenders who marched 40 miles to Sanford. See Hernandez, *supra* note 92.

with representatives of the protestors.⁹⁵ For example, Sanford's pre-scheduled City Commission meeting for March 2012 was entirely dedicated to discussing the protestors' concerns.⁹⁶ In another instance, city officials ended a sit in at the Sanford Police Department headquarters by holding a community forum.⁹⁷

Overall, the dispute resolution efforts in response to the protests in the initial months after Trayvon's death were well planned and effective.⁹⁸ Eventually, on April 11, 2012, Zimmerman was arrested and charged with murder in the second degree.⁹⁹ Chief Lee was fired on June 20, 2012.¹⁰⁰ As the parties prepared for trial, the "national fervor" over the case subsided.¹⁰¹

PART III: THE POST-STORY

"The name changes recognize[] the founding forefathers of Goldsboro and the historical name of 13th Street prior to the merger in 1911."
—Andrew Thomas¹⁰²

A conflict that had brewed for over one hundred years reached its tipping point.¹⁰³ The African American community's heartbreak for the Martin family and anger at the Police Department for delaying Zimmerman's arrest were emotions at the outer layer of the conflict

⁹⁵ See *infra* notes 96-97.

⁹⁶ CNN Wire Staff, *From coast to coast*, *supra* note 82. ("The day's most anticipated event was initially expected to be a standard city commission meeting. But in response to the public outcry -- and criticisms over the Sanford Police Department's handling of the case -- city officials decided to focus the meeting on the incident.")

⁹⁷ Rene Stutzman and Bianca Prieto, *Trayvon Martin: Protestors leave Sanford police department*, Orlando Sentinel (Apr. 9, 2012), http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-04-09/news/os-trayvon-martin-civil-disobedience-20120409_1_special-prosecutor-angela-corey-protest-leaders-community-forum (protesters "blocked the front doors of the Sanford Police Department for nearly five hours but walked away peacefully after convincing city officials to hold a community forum).

⁹⁸ Protests in Sanford were largely civil and peaceful; there was no media coverage of violence or arrests.

⁹⁹ *Zimmerman charged with second-degree murder*, CNN (Apr. 11, 2012), <http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2012/04/11/prosecutor-to-announce-decision-on-zimmerman/>.

¹⁰⁰ CNN Wire Staff, *Sanford police chief fired in wake of Trayvon Martin case*, CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/06/20/justice/florida-martin-case-police-chief/> (last updated Jun. 21, 2012). Chief Lee had offered to resign two months earlier but the City Commission rejected his offer. *Id.*

¹⁰¹ Serge F. Kovaleski, *Trayvon Martin Case Shadowed by Series of Police Missteps*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (May 16, 2012), <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/17/us/trayvon-martin-case-shadowed-by-police-missteps.html> ("The national furor has subsided for the moment."). Albeit, the national protests began again when a jury acquitted Zimmerman in July 2013. See Matt Williams, *Trayvon Martin protests being held in more than 100 US cities*, THE GUARDIAN (Jul. 20, 2013), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/20/trayvon-martin-protests-us-cities>.

¹⁰² TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 2 (Andrew Thomas authored the report).

¹⁰³ See Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

between them and the City.¹⁰⁴ With the City ready to “blow” from the turmoil, the status quo was no longer tenable.¹⁰⁵ For the first time, both sides collectively undertook the mission of beginning the healing process between the local African American community and the City of Sanford.¹⁰⁶

Although the dispute was large-scale, volatile, and extraordinarily public, the resolution process retained the skeletal fundamentals expected in organized resolution efforts of more typical disputes.¹⁰⁷ The threshold step necessary before resolving any issues was to initiate communication between the parties—a difficult task with so many large interested parties.¹⁰⁸ With the support of the CRS, leaders of the interested parties successfully convened and engaged in structured, open dialogue.¹⁰⁹ The parties involved in the dialogues included city officials, local community leaders, local religious leaders, and representatives of the protesting groups.¹¹⁰ They represented a broad range of interested parties, not only those most immediately related to Trayvon’s death.¹¹¹ Therefore, wider portions of the communities, and their respective interests, were represented.¹¹² This increased the odds that potential agreements would be broadly

¹⁰⁴ *See id.*

¹⁰⁵ *See* Burch, *supra* note 88 (quoting Sanford Mayor Jeff Triplett).

¹⁰⁶ These efforts, which focused on Sanford’s African American community’s relationship with the City and the Police Department, in many ways overlapped in both time and space with the dispute resolution efforts discussed in Part II, which focused on efforts to ease the local and national protests calling for Zimmerman’s arrest and promoting awareness of general race-related issues. However, this paper analyzes the two tracks of dispute resolution efforts distinctly. The “issues” that unified protesters across the country were the “tip of the iceberg” for Sanford’s African American community. Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12. Resolving the underlying issues in Sanford required a localized, and focused process, distinct from broader the efforts to resolve the issues that the nation was invested in. That said, implementation of an effective process resolving one of the ‘tracks’ of issues likely increased the efficacy of the other, and *visa versa*.

¹⁰⁷ *See* MENKEL-MEADOW, *supra* note 93, at 85. Namely, the parties convened, identified underlying interests, issues, and principles, and worked to resolve them. *See* TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 2-3.

¹⁰⁸ *See id.* at 85. A fundamental role of a mediator or one facilitating dispute resolution efforts between parties is “convening the parties for discussions.” *Id.*

¹⁰⁹ *See* Burch, *supra* note 88.

¹¹⁰ *See id.*; *see also* Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

¹¹¹ *See* Burch, *supra* note 88; *see also* Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12. For example, Battles, who led the CRS team, convened “70 or 80 Sanford-area ministers — of varying races and faiths — and talked to the group about the role they should play in bringing peace back to the city.” Burch, *supra* note 88.

¹¹² This approach can sometimes make it more difficult to find a mutually acceptable solution to issues

acceptable and therefore successful in improving the various relationships involved. Moreover, the ‘dialogues’ were not static and concrete; rather, they were held regularly, spontaneously, and with various combinations of interested parties.¹¹³

These conversations aimed to identify all of the issues involved in the dispute—not only the most recent or prominent ones—and to develop approaches to resolve them.¹¹⁴ This process unearthed the myriad deep-seated issues that had been largely repressed for decades.¹¹⁵ The City and the Police Department also independently identified a host of other issues that contributed to the turmoil.¹¹⁶

The depth and scope of the identified issues required a similarly large-scale effort to resolve them.¹¹⁷ In the three or so years since these efforts began, the City and Police Department have embarked on a massive and highly structured mission to do so.¹¹⁸ The City designed much of this mission during the dialogues that were held in the months immediately following Trayvon’s death.¹¹⁹ The City developed a Nine Point Plan in April 2012, which provided a broad agenda to improve community relations.¹²⁰ For example, it included an action

¹¹³ See *supra* notes 96-97 and accompanying text; see also *infra* notes 130-32 and accompanying text.

¹¹⁴ See TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 2

¹¹⁵ See *id.* at 2. The report lists several of these underlying issues: Goldsboro merging with Sanford, Sanford’s renaming of streets in Goldsboro, the Jackie Robinson incident, non-compliance with the Consent Decree of 1970, “poor housing inventory,” “high unemployment,” and “inadequate infrastructure.” *Id.*

¹¹⁶ See *id.* at 3.

¹¹⁷ See *id.* at 2-13; see also Chief Cecil Smith, SANFORD BLUE RIBBON PANEL: POLICE DEPARTMENT/COMMUNITY RELATIONS ASSESSMENT REPORT – TWENTY MONTH PROGRESS REPORT, CITY OF SANFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT (2015) (hereinafter BLUE RIBBON PANEL PROGRESS REPORT) (report on the progress the Sanford Police Department made towards meeting the action items recommended by the Blue Ribbon Panel, see *infra* text accompanying note 120).

¹¹⁸ See *infra* notes 119-20 and accompanying text.

¹¹⁹ See TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46.

¹²⁰ See *id.* at 4-13; see also John W. Davis, *George Zimmerman: Community meeting leads to 9-point proposal*, NEWS 13,

http://mynews13.com/content/news/cfnews13/news/article.html/content/news/articles/cfn/2012/4/19/trayvon_martin_commu.html (last updated Apr. 19, 2012). Andrew Thomas public presented the plan on April 19, 2012 at a community meeting located at a local church. Davis, *supra*. The “nine points” were “1) [r]equest an investigation by the Department of Justice, 2) [c]reate a local Human Relations Commission, 3) [c]reate a Director of Community Relations Staff Position, 4) [c]reate a Community Panel to take a critical look at the Sanford Police Department, 5) [c]reate a working relationship with the Florida Commission on Human Relations, 6) [c]reate an inter-faith alliance

item to develop a “Blue Ribbon Panel,” which would include a “diverse broad cross section of the community,” whose mission would be to identify ways to improve community relations with the Police Department.¹²¹ The efforts to improve the relationship ultimately led to initiatives that were developed in the years after the initial dialogues, indicating that positive momentum from the initial efforts had lasting effects.¹²²

One of the primary steps in improving the City’s relationship with its African American community was to address the concern that the community was deprioritized and marginalized by underinvestment.¹²³ The City worked to address this concern by upgrading the infrastructure of the distressed communities as part of an “extensive streetscape project.”¹²⁴ This project included fixing broken sidewalks and curbs and installing additional streetlights.¹²⁵ The City also cleared out overgrown alleyways, tore down abandoned and decrepit buildings, upgraded local parks, and added bike and walking trails to the area.¹²⁶ The City replaced smoke detectors in senior and disabled persons’ homes.¹²⁷ The City sought to improve those areas’ economies, and thus decrease unemployment and homelessness, by providing grants to small businesses and by building low-income housing.¹²⁸ The City invested in the community’s future by developing summer employment and leadership programs for local youth.¹²⁹ The City also sought to maintain and further improvements in the relationship by creating a structure for ongoing

to take a look at issues of race and ethnicity in Sanford, 7) [c]reate a youth anti-violence program, 8) [s]et a schedule for general community meetings to address Sanford problems at a neighborhood level, 9) [r]equest that the Department of Justice Communications Department facilitate future meetings and engage in community building in Sanford.” *Id.*

¹²¹ TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 6.

¹²² *See id.* at 2.

¹²³ *See* Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12. This “issue” included the sub-issues of poor infrastructure, homelessness, poverty, and increased crime rates. *See id.*

¹²⁴ *See* TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 3.

¹²⁵ *Id.*

¹²⁶ *Id.*

¹²⁷ Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

¹²⁸ *See* TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 3. These efforts were done in with the support of the federal Community Development Block Grant Program and in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity. *Id.*

¹²⁹ *See id.* at 3, 11-12.

communication.¹³⁰ Separately, the City sought to improve race relations amongst its diverse communities by leveraging the help of local religious leaders.¹³¹ The City established a network of religious leaders who regularly met and formed subgroups to improve race relations and foster local harmony by hosting joint events and regular meetings.¹³²

In conjunction with the Police Department, the City worked to reduce local crime.¹³³ The City began an “Anti-Violence Campaign,” which involved community and youth-focused events aimed at increasing awareness about crime and gang violence.¹³⁴ The Police Department made independent efforts to reduce crime in the communities that had felt neglected.¹³⁵ The Police Department also sought to improve its relationship with the African American community by, for example, establishing a “walk, knock, and talk” program where police went to homes in African American communities simply to introduce themselves.¹³⁶

In a groundbreaking effort, the City worked to make amends for the pain caused to the African American community by Goldsboro’s absorption into Sanford in 1911.¹³⁷ The City worked “with the community to rename streets in Historic Goldsboro that had been changed

¹³⁰ *Id.* at 5-6. The City established the Community Relations Unit as a subdivision of the City Manager’s Office to manage communication with all of Sanford’s sub-communities. *Id.* The City also hosts monthly “Westside Community meetings” where Sanford residents can come share concerns with representatives from a number of City departments. *Id.* at 12; *see also Event Calendar (All-in-One) - Westside Community Meeting*, CITY OF SANFORD, <http://www.sanfordfl.gov/index.aspx?page=892&recordid=1469> (last visited Apr. 19, 2015).

¹³¹ *Id.* at 8-9.

¹³² *Id.*

¹³³ *Id.* at 10-12.

¹³⁴ *Id.* at 10-11.

¹³⁵ BLUE RIBBON PANEL PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 117, at 3, 11.

¹³⁶ Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12. For many of these homes, “this was the first time officers had ever come by without a warrant.” *Id.* The Police Department made many other efforts to improve their relationship with the city, many of which were recommended by the Stanford Blue Ribbon Panel. *See* BLUE RIBBON PANEL PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 117, at 9-13. The Police Department participated alongside the City for many of the initiatives and events that the City held in its own efforts to improve its relationship with the African American community, such as the infrastructure improvement efforts. *Id.* at 11-12. The Police Department also hired a Public Information Officer to improve communication with the people of Sanford. *Id.* at 9-10.

¹³⁷ *See* Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12; *see also* TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 2-3.

when” the two cities merged.¹³⁸ 13th Street was returned “Goldsboro Avenue,” and Lake Street was returned to “Clark Street.”¹³⁹ In renaming the streets, the City gave the African American community “unparalleled acknowledgment” of the troubles it had endured.¹⁴⁰ The City returned to the community some of the dignity and identity that was taken from it. Goldsboro and its “founding forefathers” were finally formally recognized and honored on Sanford’s streets.¹⁴¹

Improving the relationship between the City of Sanford, its Police Department, and the African American community is a long-term project.¹⁴² The relationship suffered for many years and, in turn, requires many to heal. The job “is still a work in progress.”¹⁴³ However, the turmoil that erupted from Trayvon Martin’s death catalyzed a new, unprecedented wave of dispute resolution efforts. The City has acknowledged the harm its African American community has suffered and is now actively working to reverse it.¹⁴⁴ The Police Department is striving to improve itself and its relationship with the communities it is sworn to protect.¹⁴⁵ Perhaps most importantly, the relationship is now defined by regular and open communication.¹⁴⁶ These new dynamics have created optimism that “the many communities of Sanford can be united into *the* community of Sanford.”¹⁴⁷

PART IV: THE LESSONS

The Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman saga in Sanford is uniquely suited to provide insights to the dispute resolution community and to other cities dealing with similar

¹³⁸ See TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 3.

¹³⁹ See *id.*

¹⁴⁰ Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

¹⁴¹ TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 3.

¹⁴² *Id.*

¹⁴³ *Id.*

¹⁴⁴ See *id.* at 2.

¹⁴⁵ See *supra* note 135.

¹⁴⁶ See TWO YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, *supra* note 46, at 2.

¹⁴⁷ Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

crises.¹⁴⁸ Enough time has passed since the peak of the turmoil for the dispute resolution efforts in Sanford to begin to take effect and, in turn, be evaluated. However, not so much time has passed such that America's culture and political environment would have significantly changed to render Sanford's experience less relevant.¹⁴⁹

One of the most significant lessons to be gleaned from Sanford's experience is that national problems require local solutions. Although Trayvon's death and the delay in Zimmerman's arrest captured the nation's attention and came to symbolize broadly applicable issues of social and racial injustice, many other more nuanced, personal issues lay below the surface for the local African American community.¹⁵⁰ Harmony between that community and the City could only be reached by resolving those issues, not only the ones that the nation and media took hold of.

This observation highlights another important takeaway. An incident may represent to different people and communities issues that an outside observer may not expect. Unique experiences and perspectives, of course, drive this disparity. The result may be that outsiders find others' reactions to be unpredictable and perhaps illogical. In this case, one would not necessarily have expected Trayvon's death to trigger the outpouring of emotion that it did from

¹⁴⁸ See discussion *supra* note 16.

¹⁴⁹ In today's media and technology driven culture, three years is arguably enough time for public attitude toward a specific issue to dramatically change, which would alter the applicability of Sanford's experience. However, the series of incidents that have occurred since Trayvon's death have maintained a relatively consistent thread in the social narrative surrounding incidents of violence by security and law enforcement against African Americans. See *supra* note 16; see also *Mothers of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice Speak Together for the First Time*, HUFFINGTON POST (Dec. 12, 2014), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/12/mother-deceased-unarmed-black-men_n_6318494.html (vide of and text describing interview with the mothers of the victims in several of the more prominent, recent incidents of violence by security and law enforcement towards African Americans); Charles M. Blow, *The Beating of Floyd Dent*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (MAR. 30, 2015), http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/30/opinion/charles-blow-the-beating-of-floyd-dent.html?rref=collection%2Fcolumn%2Fcharles-m-blow&_r=0 ("So much about Dent's case is troublesome, and so he has become the latest touchstone in our coalescing conversation about the intersection of police forces and communities of color, particularly in the parts of this country that African-Americans fled to in search of a better life.").

¹⁵⁰ See *supra* Part III.

the African American community. Trayvon was not from Sanford, so his ancestors presumably had no history in Goldsboro.¹⁵¹ Zimmerman also did not work for the City or Police Department, whom the African American community primarily clashed with.¹⁵² Although the delay in arresting Zimmerman did implicate the Police Department as a participant in the incident from the African American community's perspective, other incidents where the Police Department was criticized did not evoke the same level of vitriol as this case did.¹⁵³ Furthermore, Florida's robust self-defense laws made building a strong case against Zimmerman objectively difficult.¹⁵⁴ Thus, Sanford's African American community's reaction must be explained by its unique and tortured history in Sanford and the resulting communal identity that evolved.¹⁵⁵

Local and federal officials in Sanford understood that Sanford's African American community—the community most proximate to the crisis, as opposed to America's broader black community—had its own set of interests and issues in the turmoil surrounding Trayvon's death.¹⁵⁶ The CRS and the City incorporated this understanding into their strategy to quell the unrest; their efforts prioritized Sanford's African American community's interests and sought to broadly identify the community's issues.¹⁵⁷ This proved to be essential to the dispute resolution efforts.¹⁵⁸ Thus, Sanford's experience highlights the importance of prioritizing structured communication with local communities to swiftly identify and understand their concerns and issues.

¹⁵¹ See *supra*, note 3 and accompanying text.

¹⁵² See *supra* text accompanying note 73.

¹⁵³ See *supra* pp. 9-10.

¹⁵⁴ See *supra* note 9

¹⁵⁵ Telephone interview with Andrew Thomas, *supra* note 12.

¹⁵⁶ See *supra* Part III.

¹⁵⁷ See *supra* notes 109-11 and accompanying text; see also Leonard L. Riskin, *Mediator Orientations, Strategies and Techniques*, 12 *Alternatives to High Cost Litig.* 111, 113 (1994) (describing a "broad" approach to issue identification).

¹⁵⁸ See *supra* Parts II-III.

The positive effects that the efforts in Sanford had emphasize this lesson. The protests in Sanford and cities around the country were generally peaceful and civil public demonstrations.¹⁵⁹ In part, this can be attributed to the messages of peace that Trayvon’s parents and community leaders consistently presented.¹⁶⁰ However, other protests driven by similar incidents have devolved into violence even while those closest to the crisis have called for peace.¹⁶¹ Thus, the dispute resolution efforts in Sanford were likely a causal factor of the protests’ civility. Furthermore, that protests across the nation were also peaceful can be linked to the protests in Sanford; protests in Sanford provided a standard for protestors in other cities.¹⁶²

Sanford’s experience also provides other cities and communities a stark reminder to carefully consider when to initiate dispute resolution efforts to resolve their communal conflicts.¹⁶³ Although the conflict in Sanford remained relatively dormant for decades,

¹⁵⁹ This is stated considering the violent nature of the underlying issue and the history of protests over similar issues resulting in violence. Here, there was no media coverage of violence or arrests resulting from protests in Sanford. Except for several dozen arrests for unlawful assembly and disorderly conduct, protests around the nation involving thousands of individuals were also relatively civil. See Jelani Cobb, *After the Verdict: The Zimmerman Non-riots*, THE NEW YORKER (Jul. 15, 2013), <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/after-the-verdict-the-zimmerman-non-riots>.

¹⁶⁰ See *id.* (“Martin’s mother and father, Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton, were models of grace and fortitude, making consistent appeals for peace”).

¹⁶¹ See Seth Mydans, *Jury Could Hear Rodney King Today*, The New York Times (Mar. 9, 1993), <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/03/09/us/jury-could-hear-rodney-king-today.html>. During the 1992 Los Angeles riots, Rodney King, the victim of the incident of allegedly race-driven police brutality that led to devastating rioting, famously pleaded: “‘People,’ . . . ‘I just want to say, can we all get along? Can we get along?’ . . . ‘We’ve just got to, just got to. We’re all stuck here for a while. Let’s try to work it out. Let’s try to work it out.’”

¹⁶² The recent protests surrounding Michael Brown’s death after being shot by a white police officer in Ferguson, MO, see *supra* note 16, support a causal inference from the correlation observed here—a peaceful local protest leading to peaceful national protests. Protests in Ferguson were unruly and violent; other cities’ protests mirrored those in Ferguson and were disruptive and contentious. See *Vandalism, Looting After Vigil for Missouri Man*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Aug. 10, 2014) (reporting violence in Ferguson after the death), <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2014/08/10/us/ap-us-police-shooting-missouri.html>; Monica Davey & Julie Bosman, *Protests Flare After Ferguson Police Officer Is Not Indicted*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Nov. 24, 2014) (reporting violence in Ferguson after the decision not to indict the officer who shot Michael Brown), <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/25/us/ferguson-darren-wilson-shooting-michael-brown-grand-jury.html>; Carly Schwartz & Christopher Mathias, *Protesters Shut Down Three New York City Bridges in Reaction to Ferguson Decision*, THE HUFFINGTON POST (Nov. 25, 2014), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/25/nyc-ferguson-protests_n_6216528.html (discussion of disruptions and arrests in New York City after decision not to indict the officer who shot Michael Brown).

¹⁶³ With many of the other post-Civil War “all-black towns” “disappearing” around the country, the conflict between Goldsboro and Sanford may not have been the last of its kind. See Brown, *supra* note 24.

Trayvon's death unearthed underlying issues and emotions and led to unrest. Long-term unresolved conflicts are not static; the status quo may not always remain intact, and the incident that changes it may not be predictable. Whether dispute resolution efforts can be fully effective prior to a "tipping point" event, like Trayvon's death was, is a question without an agreed upon answer.¹⁶⁴ However, even if absolute resolution requires an element of timing, leaving a brewing conflict unchecked can certainly increase the damage done when it does eventually erupt.

CONCLUSION

Trayvon Martin's death was a personal and national tragedy. It devastated his family, captured the attention of the country for months, and brought issues of implicit bias and institutional racism to the forefront of national discussion.¹⁶⁵ At the same time, Trayvon's death held a deeply unique significance to the local African American community in Sanford.¹⁶⁶ His death marked the latest incident in a thread of conflict that wove back well over a century to the aftermath of the Civil War.¹⁶⁷ While Sanford's history was notably absent from national discussion, city officials, community leaders, and dispute resolution experts in Sanford were well aware that significant efforts had to be made to address this history.¹⁶⁸ As a result, Sanford

¹⁶⁴ See WILLIAM I. ZARTMAN, THE TIMING OF PEACE INITIATIVES: HURTING STALEMATES AND RIPE MOMENTS, CONTEMPORARY PEACEMAKING: CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND PEACE PROCESSES 19-20 (John Barby & Roger MacGinty eds., 2003). One school of thought theorizes that there is a "ripe moment" when protracted largescale disputes are ready for resolution, which "centers on the parties' perception of a mutually hurting stalemate." The conflict in Sanford reached this moment when the national unrest surrounding Trayvon's death, which was the tipping point for the African American community, became intolerable for the City and Police Department, thus creating a mutually hurting situation. Others believe that waiting for the "ripe moment" is a form of "cherry picking," and that dispute resolution efforts must be used to "cultivate" improvements. JOHN PAUL LEDERACH, CULTIVATING PEACE: A PRACTITIONER'S VIEW OF DEADLY CONFLICT AND NEGOTIATION, CONTEMPORARY PEACEMAKING: CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND PEACE PROCESSES 33-35 (John Barby & Roger MacGinty eds., 2003).

¹⁶⁵ See *supra* note 7-11 and accompanying text.

¹⁶⁶ See *supra* Part I.

¹⁶⁷ See *id.*

¹⁶⁸ See *supra* Parts II-III.

embarked on a long-term effort to heal century-old wounds.¹⁶⁹ The coming years will show whether Sanford will ultimately find the lasting peace it now seeks. In any event, other cities, communities, and dispute resolution professionals can glean lessons from Sanford's experience in order to improve future efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts between communities and their cities.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ *See supra* Part III.

¹⁷⁰ *See supra* Part IV.