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City of Santa Cruz Announces Settlement In Arlt Case

SANTA CRUZ - The City of Santa Cruz has reached a \$1,600,000 settlement to resolve a lawsuit brought by the family of Sean Arlt against the City of Santa Cruz stemming from the shooting death of Mr. Arlt in October of 2016.

The City Council approved a settlement agreement with the Arlt family in exchange for a release of liability and dismissal with prejudice of all claims against the City of Santa Cruz. The settlement does not constitute an admission of liability or fault by the City, or the defendant officers.

The City's decision to settle the Arlt lawsuit is, in no way, a criticism of the officers involved, nor should it reflect adversely on their dedication and professionalism. The Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office concluded after an extensive investigation that there was no legal wrongdoing on the part of the officer involved in the shooting, who acted in self-defense, and that the other police officers on the scene responded appropriately.

"This settlement reflects our desire for the Arlt family, the City and community to progress forward, said Mayor David Terrazas. We know that the City of Santa Cruz, its police department, and its residents will continue to seek comprehensive collaboration, for solutions to address our concerns over the mental health crisis."

"The death of Sean Arlt was a tragic incident, and I hope this resolution will help heal all parties involved by not reliving this tragedy again in court. The decision to settle is fiscally responsible when compared to the financial realities and risks of proceeding to trial."- City Manager Martin Bernal

"In the early morning hours of Oct. 16, 2016, our officers were compelled to take immediate action in a very dangerous circumstance which led to tragic consequences," said Chief Mills. "It was a tragedy for Mr. Arlt's family, the community and our officers. We are pleased that there is a settlement. We hope that Mr. Arlt's family and the officers involved can move forward with healing. As a Department, we view the protection of human life as our highest priority. We can always do more and are consistently looking for better options to prevent the use of force as evidenced by our recent department-wide effort to provide advanced de-escalation training," said Chief Mills.

The Department continues to improve police strategies and techniques when confronted by individuals who are impaired by substance abuse or mental health issues. SCPD's training for mental health interventions exceeds the common standards and provides training specifically related to crisis communications and de-escalation.

The Department continues to implement new approaches in comprehensive use of force training, ongoing policy review, and technology integration to improve officer and community safety and to build trust between the community and the Santa Cruz Police Department.

The funds used to payout the settlement are pending approval by the City's insurance carrier.

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