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## **Be careful calling the MPD – *you* could be the one getting the ticket**

### **Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan November 28, 2012**

My grandfather was a proud Milwaukee police officer for 43 years, serving with the department from 1922 until his retirement in 1965.

I remember my grandfather telling us that one of the most important lessons he learned on the job is that common sense goes a long way when dealing with the public. Apparently, this is a lesson that some of our current officers could also benefit from.

Unfortunately, common sense has been nowhere to be found during the past few days, when one of the near south side's most decorated neighborhood stakeholders (his wall is literally covered with commendations from the MPD and the Common Council) – a Block Watch captain and someone I've known for many years – received a disorderly conduct citation from the MPD *after he called to report nuisance (and potentially criminal) activity!*

It started with a neighbor who decided it would be good to have her car stereo blasting from her parked vehicle at 2 a.m. on Friday (November 23). After the Block Watch captain left his home and asked the neighbor to turn down her stereo, he was met with expletives and a firm "no" for an answer. The Block Watch captain then called MPD to report what was happening, and officers did respond between 3:30 and 4:00 a.m. Friday, but by that time the woman had gotten into her car (the Block Watch captain said she appeared very intoxicated and at one point attempted to enter a vehicle that was not hers) and drove away. The officers then left the location.

To me this is very troubling because it begs the question whether she was driving while intoxicated (a very serious crime) and endangering the public. If an officer had responded sooner, perhaps she would not have been driving anywhere.

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On Monday, November 26 at approximately 7:30 a.m., the Block Watch captain again encountered the same woman outside his residence, and she immediately began berating him with expletives. He called MPD to report what was happening, but by 8:30 a.m. he still had not been contacted by MPD and there were still no responding officers. He then called me, and I contacted MPD personally and asked for a response.

Finally – around noon Monday – officers and two sergeants, I'm told, respond to look into the matter, and spend a few hours investigating (a response I'm certain would not have occurred if not for my repeated phone calls and involvement). After issuing the neighbor disorderly conduct and loud music violation citations (based on the Block Watch captain's testimony and the woman's *own admission* to what had occurred), the neighbor gets angry and (wrongfully) tells the MPD officers that the Block Watch captain and his girlfriend were swearing at her during the 7:30 a.m. encounter that day (the Block Watch captain's girlfriend never once left their home, much less swore at anybody-!).

So, based solely on the testimony of this loud music blasting (and possibly drunk driving) neighbor, the MPD issued two \$185 citations – one to the Block Watch captain and one to his girlfriend!

Neighbors who were eyewitnesses to Monday's encounter (who had to work and had already left by the time MPD showed up at noon) can back up these claims and can exonerate the Block Watch captain, who at no time uttered an expletive toward the woman.

But that looks like it's not going to happen, and now one of the most helpful, dedicated (he once painted over graffiti on Easter Sunday morning at my request) and decorated neighborhood stakeholders on Milwaukee's near south side is holding a \$185 DC ticket. He also tells me he's done, that he's never getting involved again. And so the big loser here is the community, all of us. It's a damn shame.

I've discussed this matter with the assistant police chief, the district captain, as well as one of the responding sergeants, unfortunately to no avail.

While I understand that officers are often times placed in difficult situations, and it is important to treat everyone as fairly as possible, if any mistakes are made let's err on the side of the longtime homeowner, Block Watch captain and community volunteer who called police for help in the first place.

In a nutshell, let's use a little common sense.