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ROBERT G. DONOVAN

ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

Offer of police substation laudable, but real problem remains scarcity of cops

Administration continues to pursue “magic bullets” that don’t exist

Statement of Alderman Bob Donovan

May 18, 2016

I want to thank the residents and business owners who have generously offered up their property for use as a police substation in Police District 4 on the Northwest Side. Their commitment to the well-being of their community speaks volumes about their character, and I’m appreciative of their concerns and their offer. The fact that it’s come to this is indicative of the rising levels of concern that residents have about police presence and the maintenance of order in our city.

However, the concern that I have is that people may have the impression that police officers are like firefighters—that they wait at their station for a call to come and then respond. That’s simply not the case. Cops work a beat, and are most effective as a visible presence in neighborhoods. Granted, Police District 4 is huge, and it has been grossly understaffed for years—as has Police District 6 on the far South Side, Police District 2 on the near South Side and other areas.

But the real problem here is the lack of police officers to patrol the increasing areas of the city that are challenged by crime and disorder. More cops certainly aren’t the only solution to reducing crime, but they are the essential ingredient, without which order and stability cannot be maintained.

We’re hundreds of officers short of where we were in 2008 when Chief Flynn arrived. Shootings, car-jackings, reckless driving, stolen autos—all of these crime categories are on the rise, and it’s a clear indication of just how out-of-control parts of Milwaukee have become!

These issues aren’t going to be solved by another year of Ceasefire Sabbath and hand-holding. We need to get tough on criminals, and we need cops out there to do it. It’s high time this administration offered something substantive, otherwise these problems will continue to grow and fester. I’m sad to say I think there are already certain neighborhoods that have become numb to the level of crime and violence, and see it as an accepted part of urban living.

(More)

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Ald. Donovan Statement/ADD ONE

There seems to be an interest on the part of this community and this administration to find a “magic bullet.” They can certainly find resources to dedicate to initiatives like ShotSpotter, StarChase and police body cameras.

And while these are all helpful tools to have at our disposal, there are no shortcuts to public safety, and there are no substitutes for having more cops on the beat to maintain order.

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