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ROBERT G. DONOVAN

ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

April 20, 2017

Ald. Bob Donovan
(414) 531-2096

Thirteen Council members demand action from MPD, FPC

Seek re-prioritization of traffic enforcement, immediate review of pursuit policy

Thirteen Common Council members have joined forces in demanding that the Fire and Police Commission order Chief Edward Flynn to re-prioritize traffic enforcement activity by the Milwaukee Police Department.

In a letter (**attached**) to the Fire and Police Commission, the 13 members also ask the commissioners to order the chief to redraw the MPD's pursuit policy.

According to **Alderman Bob Donovan**, chair of the Public Safety Committee, the Council members have seen repeated reckless driving incidents firsthand and have been hearing about them for some time from fed up residents. "For the safety of innocent citizens, we need to do something to reduce the problem, and we are asking the Fire and Police Commission to order the reset by the chief on traffic enforcement – something the Council cannot do," he said.

Additionally, Alderman Donovan said he spoke "at length" with Chief Flynn Wednesday (April 19) to discuss the pursuit policy, traffic enforcement, and juvenile justice issues. "Chief Flynn indicated that efforts to increase traffic enforcement are underway, so that is encouraging to hear. I expect our officers to enforce all of our laws at all times, and that expectation is shared by my colleagues, as well," he said.

On the "broken juvenile justice system," Chief Flynn pulled no punches, Alderman Donovan said. "The police arrest individuals for serious offenses, multiple times, and then nothing happens to them (in the system)," he said. "I agree with the chief that our judges and our system need to be held accountable, or else the cycle will just continue."

-More-

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Alderman Donovan said on the pursuit policy, Chief Flynn has “staked out his position, and it is not aligned with mine nor with most of my colleagues. “He (chief) said he is willing to defend his pursuit policy before the Fire and Police Commission, so hopefully he will have that opportunity very soon.”

During what he described as yesterday’s “spirited” conversation with Chief Flynn, Alderman Donovan said there were some “very enlightening comments” about the criminal justice system in Milwaukee County.

“I agree with the chief that we have far too many lenient judges, far too many lenient (assistant) district attorneys, and we are working with a juvenile justice system that is universally recognized as broken,” Alderman Donovan said.

“I’d be very interested in knowing how many cases are plea-bargained down, how many cases are dismissed, and how many criminals are regularly slapped on the wrist and then released back into the community – only to end up re-offending,” he said.

Alderman Donovan said the city can continue to “ask the Milwaukee Police Department to do more with less manpower,” but if that continues in a vacuum, nothing will change. “Until these other components of our criminal justice system become more accountable, I fear our problems will persist,” he said.

“And there was one last thing that the chief and I agree on: Isn’t it rather ironic that some of the same Council members seemingly eager to sign this letter were unwilling to support state legislation holding repeat criminals more accountable,” he said.

He added: “Go figure.”



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202 • www.city.milwaukee.gov

April 20, 2017

The Honorable
Members of the Milwaukee Board of Fire and Police Commissioners
Room 706A
City Hall

Honorable Members,

Over the last three weeks, we learned that three more Milwaukee residents were killed by hit-and-run drivers bringing the 2017 total to eight. The news reports are always depressingly similar and short. The location of the incident is given as is the age of the victim and the time of the accident. And then there's always this line at the end about how the investigation is on-going.

This is becoming unacceptably routine.

We did not, however, need this as proof to believe our constituents when they continue to tell us of their concerns about the way some are driving in this community. Speeding, red-light-running, and other forms of reckless driving are occurring at levels we have not seen before.

In 2010, Chief Edward Flynn chose very publically to limit the circumstances in which Milwaukee Police Department officers could pursue suspects. His arguments had merit but many argued at the time that this could have a deleterious effect on public safety. In addition, he has for years de-emphasized enforcement of traffic safety regulation as evidenced by the significant decrease in the number of citations issued by officers and heard by Milwaukee's municipal court.

The public, particularly those less inclined to obey traffic laws, now knows that there are certain offenses for which there is little or no likelihood of ever being caught. They have learned dangerous habits in this period of neglect and these have cost the lives of innocent citizens who ought to have been protected.

We commend the City of Milwaukee's Youth Council for its #NoFreeRides campaign intended to warn young people of the dangers of stealing cars and using them for "joyriding". Even these bright young leaders are acknowledging and presenting a solution for a critical problem the police department appears either unable or unwilling to address – a segment of our community believes they can engage in this kind of activity without consequence.



April 19, 2017

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With all this in mind, we come to your honorable body to ask you to do what the Common Council cannot: direct the chief of police to re-prioritize traffic safety and to redraw his pursuit policy. With respect to the pursuit policy, we think that after seven years it only appropriate that a review of such an important policy be conducted. We ask you to take testimony, gather facts, ask questions, and perform your full due diligence, and ask the basic question: Is or is not the current form of this policy in the best interest of the community? But we ask you to do so as quickly as possible. The winter seems to have, mercifully, ended, and summer is fast approaching when we all know incidents of this kind increase.

We recognize that the first priority of the Milwaukee Police Department must remain fighting violent crime. This cannot come, however, at the cost of neglecting traffic safety. Our constituents demand a police department capable of addressing both.

We know acting in this way is a most serious and difficult matter. We believe the circumstances demand no less.

Respectfully,



Ald. Ashanti Hamilton
1st District



Ald. Cavalier Johnson
2nd District



Ald. Nik Kovac
3rd District



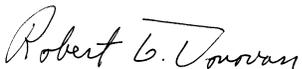
Ald. Robert J. Bauman
4th District



Ald. James A. Bohl, Jr.
5th District



Ald. Khalif J. Rainey
7th District



Ald. Robert G. Donovan
8th District



Ald. Chantia Lewis
9th District



Ald. Michael J. Murphy
10th District



Ald. Mark A. Borkowski
11th District



Ald. José G. Pérez
12th District



Ald. Tony Zielinski
14th District



Ald. Russell W. Stamper, II
15th District