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Common Council President Hines Decries Murders, Calls For Genuine Collaboration With Residents

In the aftermath of the quadruple homicide that our community suffered in the early morning of Independence Day, there have been many promises made – by the Police Department and the Mayor’s Office. The residents with whom I have talked in the past four days are elated that there is a newfound sense of urgency. However, as the local alderman for the area that has been ravaged by gang activity since early spring, my concern is what is done on the ground in these communities, not what is said on camera.

For months, I have been meeting with residents and representatives of the MPD’s District Three Police Station in an attempt to curb the summer violence that is plaguing parts of the central city. I commend Captain Harpole (District Three commander) and his outstanding staff for their work, but it is clear to me that they are stretched thin and cannot adequately address the situation on their own. As recently as July 1, I met with a District Three lieutenant and a group of residents who have been caught in the crossfire of this resurrected gang war. They are doing what they can, but this must be a true priority for Chief Flynn and Mayor Barrett.

The good citizens who have seen their neighborhoods turn around since our work in the late 1990s have witnessed a definite increase in disorder since the weather began to get warmer. This is not a new development; but I agree with the Mayor and the Chief that it does deserve immediate attention. Like the residents in my district, I am grateful for the new sense of urgency that I have witnessed.

Unfortunately, residents have long known that this type of gang activity has resurrected itself, and they have strenuously attempted to make this clear to the Police Department. While I am relieved to hear that Mayor Barrett and Chief Flynn are now aware of the situation, I am sorry that it required a quadruple homicide to illustrate the seriousness of the situation. Community leaders, churches and the office of the local alderman are all willing and able to help the Police Department turn around these crime-controlled areas once again.