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| **OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL** |
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**CM Newby, CM Priestly Jackson and CP Wilson Noticed Meeting Regarding**

**The Safety and Crime Reduction Commission**

**January 15, 2020**

**1:00 pm**

Meeting Minutes

**Attendance:** Council President Wilson; Council Members Newby, Priestly Jackson, White and Gaffney

**Also:** Tracy McGeathey, ECA At- Large Group 5; Carol Brock, ECA District 3; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

**Topic:** Safety and Crime Reduction Commissionpriorities and funding

**Meeting convened:** 1:01 pm

Councilman Newby welcomed the group and called for introductions. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss priorities and funding for the Safety and Crime Reduction Commission, which was not included in the City’s FY 2019-20 budget. CM Newby spoke about the high number of homicides in 2019 (there were 158), the shooting in Arlington twenty minutes prior to the meeting, and the need for public safety and crime reduction throughout the city. CM Newby commented that while there are other anti-crime initiatives in place currently (JSO gang intervention, Cure Violence), the programs are somewhat disjointed and the level of violent crime is still high. CM Newby said that the Safety and Crime Reduction Commission is a group of local experts donating their time to address the issue and to not allocate funds to the group makes it appear like council does not care. CM Priestly Jackson asked for a brief history of the potential funding for the commission. CM explained the intent was to allocate $1 million for the commission to be included as a council initiative in last year’s budget, but it did not happen.

CM Newby spoke about some of the priorities highlighted by the Safety and Crime Reduction Task Force last year, which included increasing mentoring programs, afterschool activities/jobs for teens, and workforce training for ex-offenders and those who do not finish high school. Ms. McGeathey said that DCPS is assessing what programs exist for the high school age group. The council members discussed upcoming cuts KHA may be making to summer camps because they are prioritizing quality over quantity programming. CM Newby disagreed, noting the importance of having as many children as possible supervised over the summer months. It was mentioned that traditionally crime spikes in the hours after school and over the summer. CM Priestly Jackson said that high school students need incentives to participate in after school and summer programs, and jobs would be of greater value to them than just supervised activities.

CP Wilson asked if it would be better to just give KHA more money, rather than the commission, so as to not be duplicative. CP Wilson also talked about the now effectively defunct Jacksonville Journey, which was initially well funded but was zip code specific which excluded many children in need of services. CP Wilson recommended that if certain geography must be focused upon, it should be Health Zone 1. CM Priestly Jackson said that the commission represents the whole city and that their focus should be on crime throughout Jacksonville not just in certain neighborhoods. The council members agreed that the commission should focus on those who are no longer in school, and let KHA handle the ones who still are enrolled and attending. The focus should also be upon the population aged 16-24, include career placement not just job training, and address employment barriers stemming from criminal records. It was mentioned that the JAXChamber should be involved to encourage local business participation and hiring.

The group discussed who would manage the money allocated to the commission, if any. The members talked about economic incentives the City offers to new companies looking to expand or relocate to Jacksonville, and how city council should mandate local neighborhood resident hiring to counter high levels of unemployment in some parts of the city. On behalf of CM Bowman, Ms. Brock said the Finance Committee is working on the priorities for the next budget and that the commission’s possible funding should be included in that process. CM Newby agreed but said that it was attempted last year and there is no guarantee of receiving funds that way. CM Newby said that there will have to be a way to find the funds now. Before the conclusion, it was decided that there will be a future meeting with the Chair, Mark Griffin, to discuss the commission’s priorities, how they would utilize finding if received and what programs they would want to fund.

**Public comment:** Stanley Scott expressed his frustration with City leadership.

With no further business Councilman Newby adjourned the meeting.

**Meeting adjourned:** 1:42 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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