

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

To: Ashanti Hamilton

Re: City-County Carjacking and Reckless Driving Task Force

I have been a lifelong resident of the City of Milwaukee, spending the majority of my early adolescence and 17 years of adulthood residing in the 1st Aldermanic District. Since 1994, I have resided in the 9th Aldermanic District. I attended Milwaukee Public Schools as well as the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. I am a 2004 retiree of the City of Milwaukee Police Department. I have been very active in the social scene of the Milwaukee Metro area, promoting as well as attending social events and activities through-out the region. In this regard, I created and launched the group M.A.P. (Milwaukee Ambassadors Project) a number of years ago, on the social media platform Facebook. Its purpose was and is to highlight a regular example of positive events, places, and people doing good works in the Milwaukee Area. I too, serve on the Board of Directors of Milwaukee Crime Stoppers, currently as the Vice President of the organization.

I give a brief overview of my history here only to indicate my dedication to This City and my Commitment to making a Better Milwaukee for Us All. That being said, I am truly concerned regarding the approach that the aforementioned Task Force is taking toward the reckless driving issues in the City of Milwaukee. The approach in my opinion, is too Reactive, rather than Proactive. It places the brunt of the changes on the masses of responsible drivers and extra tax dollar expenditures from taxpaying Citizens in funding street configuration changes etc., instead of placing the burden squarely on the Violators and their Facilitators. While I won't say that some of the proposed ideas such as narrowing lanes, road diets, roundabouts, red light cameras, speed bumps may not be somewhat effective, these as well as other proposals would be adhered to by those already largely abiding by current traffic rules and regulations. Violators whom have been shown to deliberately violate traffic regulations and even lead Police on often disastrous pursuits would not in my opinion, be even slightly swayed by many of the proposals given. The task force recommendations indicate that some of the proposals have shown effectiveness in other Metro areas, yet it is the adopting

the proposals from a former OUTside sourced, Milwaukee Police Chief, that set into motion the chaos that has occurred on OUR streets over the past few years!!! The adjacent Communities surrounding Milwaukee did not adopt the policies of the former Milwaukee Police Chief; they did not neuter effective traffic enforcement/ control as they did not hand-cuff their officers' ability to enforce traffic regulations. It is therefore not a coincidence that our adjacent communities didn't and don't, by and large have the issues of Milwaukee, even as we share many streets and thoroughfares. It is not lost on the Violators WHERE they can exploit traffic regulations and the law, as WE, the City of Milwaukee, had given them tacit permission to do so by accepting bogus and ill advised reasons NOT to enforce our existing laws. Wauwatosa, Shorewood, Glendale etc., are not changing a bunch of street configurations and adding unnecessary Tax burdens on its Citizens. They require their law enforcement officers to enforce the law, as the citizens expect and will not accept less!!! So why again is Milwaukee, seeking answers from others states and Metro areas when the more correct answers are adjacent to and completely surrounding us!

I sincerely believe that just two things would have an immediate impact and effect, at minimum Taxpayer costs. First give Milwaukee Police Officers and the Milwaukee Chief the support as well as a mandate to enforce ALL current traffic and vehicle regulations/laws. Second, impound for a minimum of 72 hours any vehicle involved in reckless driving. After 72 hours, owners would be required to pay any applicable towing/ storage fees, outstanding vehicle citations, show proper vehicle registration and show proper insurance coverage as well. As these reckless vehicles are being used as dangerous weapons on our streets they should be regarded as same. In the past 2 years, I have personally had 2 friends killed and another hospitalized for an entire month as result of being struck by purposefully reckless drivers. We cannot afford to keep treating a cut artery with bandages!!! We need to be aggressive and deliberate in our approach. WE have to send a message that this reckless driving behavior is NOT, and Will NOT be acceptable in this community regardless of who's son, daughter, sister, brother, mother, father, cousin, neighbor or friend that it involves, PERIOD!

The means of reckless driving is the VEHICLE, the cause is the driver. Removing the offending Vehicle from the equation should be looked at no less than removing a firearm from someone arrested for or charged with reckless endangerment, attempted homicide and the like. Though it is warranted and necessary, there is a much longer process needed to reeducate the drivers. Removing an offending vehicle from the equation can have immediate effects. The impoundment is not necessarily permanent, but is for Public safety. As such, it would therefore not be an unjust denial of property. Moreover, it would place the burden on the driver or the vehicles owner if not owned by the driver to be responsible, and consider the consequences before the acts. It would place the burden on car owners to be more responsible in determining who they let use their vehicles. There too is already a precedent for such, as even a person can be detained for 72 hrs if he or she is deemed to be a danger to themselves or others. We too can remove firearms from the homes of domestic violence offenders, even if the offenses didn't involve firearms. The bottom line is, that the well being of the community and safety of its citizens should trump any inconvenience born by the violators and/ or those vehicle owners who may facilitate them. Regarding some who may question what, if the vehicle had been stolen? There can always be adjustments to the impoundment hold if investigations show that a proper stolen vehicle report was made, at which time said vehicle could be released within the aforementioned 72 hours with no penalties.

Again, while some of the committee's recommendations are warranted, others I believe are missing the core issue and too cause an unnecessary increase to the Tax burden of the general public. Some also unnecessarily affects the traffic flow/patterns of law abiding citizens driving on our city streets. We don't need to re-invent the wheel here, we just need to return to active and deliberate traffic enforcement, instituting a few deliberate inconveniences for those who purposely Violate Traffic Laws/ Rules of the Road while endangering this Community and the Public at Large.

Sincerely, Harrison D. Kern

