

PROPOSITION: It is highly desirable that there be a Safety Commission established with its own charter ordinance in the City of Milwaukee.

1. The Safety Commission has served the City of Milwaukee, the Common Council and the Mayor with enormously successful effect over the years, but did so without being fully constituted under City Charter. Since about 1920 the Safety Commission has considered and made recommendations directly to the Common Council on traffic safety, home safety, fire safety, construction safety and numerous other matters related to the safety of people living and working in Milwaukee. Under this informal relationship the Safety Commission could recommend public policy for formal enactment by the Common Council and the Mayor, had its own Safety Director who was administrator of its policies and functions when adopted, and also managed its program of crossing guards.

2. Over the years the Safety Commission successfully coordinated the work of persons in traffic control, in police work, in fire protection, and in housing and industrial safety. It also worked extensively on school safety. This coordinated approach was essential, for it gained the input of many different branches of government serving the city and allowed cross fertilization of ideas on safety practices and policies.

3. This previous happy relationship now has been disturbed by a removal of the voice of the Safety Commission's administrative officer. This new relationship in effect emphasizes police safety only and mutes the direct approach of the Safety Commission to the community. The change further makes much less effective the voice of the Commission in addressing the Common Council and the

Mayor since there is now no principal executive officer to report for the Commission.

4. For the Commission to be as effective as the Common Council should want it to be and as it once was, it needs its own executive administrator and its own identification through a wisely drawn Common Council ordinance defining its mission, its duties and its relations to the Common Council, the Mayor and other units of city government.

5. The Commission makes the point that causing it to function indirectly only after its work has been screened by the chief officers of the Milwaukee Police Department is a procedure which likely would limit the scope of its inquiry and investigation into the totality of public safety issues, which encompasses housing, education, fire safety and other missions, and not only police safety issues.

6. Therefore, for the City of Milwaukee, the Common Council and the people to enjoy the great benefits of safety policy of which the Safety Commission has demonstrated in the past, it is highly desirable that the Safety Commission now be constituted under a Charter Ordinance defining its mission, its composition, its authority and powers.

Frank P. Zercher
Mayor, 1948-1960
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