

2007 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ANTI-GRAFFITI POLICY COMMITTEE

Members of the Committee are:

Ald. Tony Zielinski – Chair

Ald. Terry Witkowski – Vice-Chair

Ald. Robert Donovan

Richard Badger – representative from the Mayor's Office

In 2007, the Committee met 5 times (January, April, June, September and November) with updates provided by the following city departments: Neighborhood Services, Public Works, Municipal Court and the Police Department. The Milwaukee Christian Center also provided updates at the meetings.

In this year, the Committee met with representatives from the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office related to the recent arrest of 10 individuals in the WR Crew, the first time in the United States that a large graffiti gang had been arrested. Office policies of the District Attorney's office were also discussed, as well as collaborative efforts with city departments in the arrest and prosecution of graffiti vandals. The Committee, however, was still concerned at the light sentences imposed by Circuit Court judges for acts of graffiti. The City Attorney's Office also reported to the Committee that it is investigating the possibility of having civil lawsuits filed against graffiti vandals. Said judgments would be in effect for 20 years and could not be discharged through bankruptcy.

State Senator Jeff Plale appeared before the Committee to address graffiti-related state legislation that he has drafted related to decreasing the cumulative graffiti damage threshold from when an individual is charged with a felony from \$2,500 to \$1,000. Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge William Sosnay, who sat on the bench for the prosecution of WR Crew, also appeared before the Committee this year to address its concerns related to the perceived light sentences given to members of the WR Crew.

The Committee also discussed enforcement by the Milwaukee Police Department of the parental responsibility ordinance as it relates to acts of graffiti. The Police Department noted that it has worked with the Municipal Court to get access to juvenile records and will be getting reports from the Municipal Court providing the department with the needed information.