



MINUTES
COMMISSION FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES - REGULAR SESSION
THURSDAY, May 28, 2026, 1:00 PM.

The Commission for Safe Communities convened in regular session in the Government Center Boardroom at 1:00 PM, on May 28, 2026. Chairperson Bertrand called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Ryan Bertrand	Commissioner	Present
Cathy Lust	Commissioner	Present
Kaitlyn Selman	Commissioner	Present
Cierra Aiden	Commissioner	Present
Scott Denton	Commissioner	Present
Robert Harris	Commissioner	Present
Elizabeth German	Commissioner	Absent
Aaron Veerman	Ex-Officio Member (non-voting)	Absent

Staff Advisors Present:

Lieutenant (Lt.) Clayton Arnold, Bloomington Police Department (BPD)
April Wozniowski, BPD

Chairperson Bertrand directed the Staff Advisor to call roll.

Public Comment

No public comment was received via email or in person.

Approval of Minutes

The following item was presented:

Item 4.A. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the January 22, 2026, Regular Session Commission for Safe Communities Meeting.

Commissioner Lust made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Denton, to approve the item as presented.

AYES: Lust; Denton; Harris; Bertrand; Aiden; Selman

Items 4.B. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the March 26, 2026, Regular Session Commission for Safe Communities Meeting.

Commissioner Lust made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Denton, to approve the item as presented.

AYES: Lust; Denton; Harris; Bertrand; Aiden; Selman

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 5.A. Presentation and discussion by the Bloomington Police Department on the current status of gun violence in the Bloomington-Normal area.

Staff Liaison Lt. Arnold shared the following information, provided by Crime and Intelligence Analysis Unit Supervisor Jack McQueen:

- BPD had no incidents of gunfire in the month of April 2026
- On May 9, BPD responded to a non-fatal shooting on Four Seasons Road, where a subject was shot inside a hallway area of an apartment complex. A 17-year-old local male, also a resident of the complex, was arrested by BPD for the shooting.
- On May 18, BPD responded to a report of gunfire on South Western Avenue, where several adult males were gathered drinking. No injuries or property damage were reported. Officers located a handgun concealed near a parked vehicle at the property as well as spent shell casings. All three men were arrested on a variety of charges related to the activity that night.
- On May 20, BPD responded to a report of gunfire on Valley View Circle. Officers located two different apartments with projectile damage. Shell casings were recovered and numerous youths were interviewed. There were no reported injuries in this incident.
- On May 23, officers responded to the area of Gridley/Jefferson for a report of a shooting at a gathering nearby. During an altercation, one subject was run over by a vehicle. This caused two men to produce guns and fire at the suspect vehicle as it drove away. BPD arrested a 24-year-old male for the shooting and currently has a warrant for the second shooter. No one was hit by gunfire during the shooting incident.

This brings the Bloomington YTD shootings to 7, well under our usual pace historically. It should also be noted that none of the shootings in May were interrelated.

Item 5.B. Presentation and discussion by Rachel Sizemore, Director of Countering Domestic Violence Program, with Mid Central Community Action.

Director Sizemore thanked the commission for taking domestic violence (DV) seriously. She explained Karina's Law. Mid Central Community Action (MCCA) has limited grant funding for a DV program, and they are seeking outreach and partnership.

Commissioner Lust noted that in regard to Karina's Law, DV victims don't always know how many weapons an offender owns, so the police may not be aware of all of the weapons to confiscate under the law. Additionally, a search warrant can unintentionally affect the victim if the victim lives with the offender, as the warrant will include the victim's personal belongings (drugs, etcetera).

- DV survivors may have trouble trusting the people and organizations that are trying to help them.
- Neville House is a local safe house and hotels can be used to keep survivors safe
- MCCA works with the YWCA, Brightpoint and more
- They have done over 2,000 hours of community education

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- They provide medical advocacy as well
- They are working to get into schools more to provide DV prevention education and teach school personnel how to recognize warning signs of DV in a home, and make sure schools and families know what resources are available.
- They welcome any partnerships with the community and with the Commission for Safe Communities
- One issue faced is advocate turnover due to burnout
- The former BPD DV advocate program, which was comprised of a multi-disciplinary team with quarterly meetings and DV advocate ride-alongs with officers, was helpful before it lost funding in 2015
- When a gun is involved in a DV incident, the likelihood of the event resulting in a homicide increases by five hundred percent
- Seventy percent of DV incidents involve guns being present, even if the gun(s) are just sitting nearby on a table
- Rural areas are worse for DV victims
- Survivors are afraid to ask for weapons to be removed from homes
- One tactic DV offenders use is to threaten to commit suicide if the DV victim leaves
- In 2023, pretrial services started to monitor offenders while they are awaiting trial in DV cases

Item 5.C. Brief discussion by Commissioner Cierra Aiden of a proposed idea for Recommendation Number 5 on the commission report, "Strengthen Domestic Violence Programs."

Commissioner Aiden asked for clarification on what actions are envisioned for her to take regarding the portion of the report on Strengthen Domestic Violence Programs. Commissioner Bertrand said the goal for each commissioner is to turn recommendations from the report into actionable items - what can be done, who to talk to, what new programs can be introduced, look into funding, outreach, conducting surveys, advocacy, etcetera.

Commissioner Denton reminded commissioners that Commissioner Selman had a summary, and he suggested using it as a roadmap for all report recommendations.

Commissioner Aiden noted that she would like to work with three existing programs to introduce a course in schools on emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships, beginning in first grade and continuing through twelfth grade. Commissioner Lust commented that District 87 has a pre-K-12 "Seven Mindsets" program. The expectation is that each class incorporates the 7 mindsets into the classroom at some point each school year.

Item 5.D. Presentation and Discussion by Commissioner Scott Denton on a grant request letter to Congress for federal funding of research into firearm morbidity and mortality prevention.

A letter was sent to Congress Senate and House of Representatives members of the Committee on Appropriations asking for additional funding for the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, and the National Institute of Justice. The requested funding would go to conduct research into firearm deaths and prevention. The

letter was signed by representatives from 410 medical, public health, and research organizations across the nation.

Item 5.E. Presentation and Discussion by Commissioners Ryan Bertrand on the status of a youth survey on gun violence risk factors.

Commissioner Bertrand worked on a survey with Suzanna Montoya designed for youth and young adults to identify risk factors for gun violence.

The judge did not want only youth in the probation program to participate; they wanted other youth perspectives. Seventy-one surveys were collected from students at Bloomington High School before the 2025-2026 school year ended.

Commissioner Harris inquired if questions about gun violence can be added to the "Illinois Youth Survey", which, according to its website, is "an online survey for Illinois schools to assess health and social indicators". It is given to students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grade. Commissioner Harris asked if the survey could be sent out to parents as well. He will discuss this with Principal Moore at Bloomington High School. He will also find out when the survey is sent out each year.

New Business

Commissioner Lust reported that as of May 21, 2026, there were two suicides recorded since the last meeting on March 26, 2026.

Commissioner Lust inquired how far should commissioners go with their area(s) of assignment? Specifically, she mentioned she was interested in reaching out to Champaign County, Illinois State Police, Bloomington Police Department, etcetera, and wanted to know if the city council needs to give approval for her before she does so. The commissioners discussed and reached the determination that the scope of the commission is to gather as much information as possible and it is okay for commissioners to reach out to other counties and organizations.

Commission Member Comments

Commissioner Selman shared that a grant was received to extend Skate Park Saturdays at Fairview Park in Normal through mid-September 2026. Skate Park Saturdays are held the first and third Saturday of each month from 10:00am - 1:00pm. There are a variety of art and community partners at each event. The events have been successful. There is a Facebook page set up called Skate Park Saturdays; the page is maintained by Hannah Johnson.

Adjournment

Commissioner Denton made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Harris, to adjourn.

Motion carried (viva voce).

The Meeting Adjourned at 1:55 PM.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON



Ryan Bertrand, Chairperson

ATTEST



April Wozniowski, Staff Liaison