



**MINUTES
SPECIAL COMMISSION FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES - REGULAR SESSION
THURSDAY, March 27, 2025, 1:00 PM.**

The Special Commission for Safe Communities convened in regular session in the Government Center Boardroom at 1:00 PM, on March 27, 2025. Chairperson Denton called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Scott Denton	Commissioner	Present
Elizabeth German	Commissioner	Present
Cathy Lust	Commissioner	Present
Kaitlyn Selman	Commissioner	Present
Timothy Harris	Commissioner	Present
Ryan Bertrand	Commissioner	Present

Commissioner Aron Klein resigned from the Commission.

Staff Advisors Present:

Aaron Veerman, Assistant Chief of Police, Staff Liaison

Public Comment

Public comment was provided in person by Molly Ward, Ward 7 Bloomington City Council Member.

Approval of Minutes

The following item was presented:

Item 4.A. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the January 23, 2025, Regular Special Commission for Safe Communities Meeting.

Commissioner German made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Harris, to approve the Item as presented.

Chairperson Denton directed the Staff Liaison to call roll:

AYES: German; Lust; Selman; Harris; Bertrand

Motion carried.

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 Aaron Veerman shared that since January 1, 2025, there have been nine recorded incidents of shootings in Bloomington-Normal, six of which were in Bloomington. A breakdown of the shooting incidents is as follows:

- On January 13, a shooting on Riley Drive stemmed from a drug deal and resulted in one person being non-fatally shot. This was the first drug-motivated shooting in Bloomington in several years. Bloomington officers received a search warrant, and the search produced almost \$10,000 cash, 20 pounds of marijuana, and nine handguns.
- On February 23, on North Lee Street, an adult male subject fatally shot his girlfriend, her adult associate and a 13-year-old child before he fatally shot himself. These were the first gun-related homicides in Bloomington in 34 months.
- During the month of March, Bloomington and Normal each had two incidents of gunfire at the following locations: 23rd Street; East Mulberry Street; North Linden Street; and North School Street.
- All the above shootings were isolated events and none of the shooters in those incidents was a juvenile.
- The Illinois State Police has not released any information regarding the investigation into the Officer Involved Shooting at the time of the meeting.

Discussion ensued about Karina's Law. Staff Liaison Veerman reported that training for Bloomington Police Department (BPD) officers will begin soon.

Commissioner Denton asked if the previously reported number of 300 FOID card revocations a year is accurate for Bloomington, which Staff Liaison Veerman confirmed. Staff Liaison Veerman stated it is extremely dangerous for officers to revoke people's firearms.

Commissioner Selman inquired if any other agencies could support BPD when going to revoke firearms. Staff Liaison Veerman replied that support is unlikely due to the risk involved and one option being explored is seeing if any grants are available to provide overtime pay to officers to go out and confiscate firearms.

Commissioner German asked if the Normal Police Department will be following the same process as BPD in responding to Karina's Law. Staff Liaison Veerman replied that it is unknown at this point because those conversations have not yet occurred.

Commissioner Bertrand commented that because gun ownership is frequently passed down within families, it could expose gaps in any processes law enforcement agencies establish for finding and seizing firearms. He questioned if there may be non-hostile environments for seizing guns other than police going to someone's home. Staff Liaison Veerman replied that location doesn't matter - all gun seizures can be high risk, because officers are trusting that someone is going to do the right thing and not use the gun against the police. He further stated that people self-report how many and what type of firearms they have and not everyone is truthful when self-reporting.

Commissioner Bertrand asked if self-reporting is the most likely scenario. Staff Liaison Veerman said it is the most likely and it is what has already been happening. He mentioned that there is not enough staffing to go out to everyone's home to seize their firearms when there is a FOID card revocation. People have already been required to turn in their weapons when their FOID card is revoked, and non-compliance has already been an issue. Commissioner Bertrand inquired after the expected timing of getting an ISP grant for officer overtime; Staff Liaison Veerman stated they are hoping for a quick turnaround but do not know timing yet.

Commissioner Lust asked what instigates a FOID card revocation. Staff Liaison Veerman stated that a couple ways would be if BPD believes someone is a "clear and present danger" to someone or there have been two domestic violence situations involving someone. Also, community members can report a concern about someone as well.

Commissioner Lust asked if there are any convictions that trigger FOID card revocation. Staff Liaison Veerman said that a felony conviction would trigger one.

Commissioner Bertrand asked if there are scenarios where some interactions between police and someone could lead to revoking a gun. Staff Liaison Veerman replied that even if they seized a weapon during an interaction, the subject may not have all of their owned firearms on their person at the time of the interaction. He also mentioned "feigned compliance", which is when a subject turns in a weapon(s) in apparent compliance with a revoked FOID card but does not turn in all their weapons.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.B. Review and discussion of the 2024 Special Commission for Safe Communities Meetings and Report progress.

Commissioner Denton brought up that the commission has until November to pull together everyone's individual reports and information. Anyone who wants to share information either another commissioner should send that information to Staff Liaison Veerman and he will send it out to the rest of the commission.

Staff Liaison Veerman looked up the commissions for the current members and most expire October 9, 2025. He recommended that any recommendations by the commission for the city council be determined and made at the September commission meeting. Commissioner Selman suggested that all commission members should have their individual reports drafted by the June meeting. Commissioner Denton stated that a city council member could make a motion to continue the commission beyond November 2025; however, even if the commission is extended, the same, current commission members may not be re-appointed by the mayor.

Commissioner Denton asked if anyone from Project Oz had ever requested to be added to the commission after Jay Shannon left. Staff Liaison Veerman replied that the mayor is notified every time someone leaves the commission. The mayor would need to appoint any new commissioners.

The following sections were identified and are being handled by the commissioners:

1. Data - Commissioner Denton
2. Youth Issues - Commissioners Bertrand and Harris
3. Gun Violence Prevention - Commissioners Selman and German
4. Domestic Violence - Commissioners Selman and German
5. Pull everything together - Commissioner Bertrand

Commissioner German suggested coordination with other City commissions to share resources and avoid duplication of efforts. She suggested inviting one person from each commission to meet with members of this commission 1-on-1 to share information.

Staff Liaison Veerman reminded commissioners to only put in their reports what has already been brought up in former meetings. New items can still be brought forward in future meetings if the commission would like to gather more information for their reports beyond what

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has already been presented. He said the commissioners should share their reports or outlines with Staff Liaison Veerman when they are done writing them and he will share them with Commissioner Bertrand to collate and compile.

Commissioner German mentioned that as of 2020, McLean County's reported rate of domestic violence is twice the reported rate for all of Illinois. She mentioned one possibility for that is they are using crisis center statistics, and not all parts of the state have crisis centers. Another reason could be local officers taking a conservative approach in reporting incidents.

Commissioner Lust told the commission that another organization maintains a list of names and ages of victims of gun violence from 2018 to current. She wondered if the commission might include an acknowledgement of loss to those victims in the final report. Staff Liaison Veerman recommended to be sensitive to people who may not want their family member(s) named in a report that will be publicly available.

Commissioner Bertrand mentioned that the State of Illinois has a public dashboard where you can drill down into gun violence from the past few years at a city and county level. He will send it to Staff Liaison Veerman to send out.

Commissioner Denton remarked that the homicide rate in Bloomington has not remained constant or consistent from year to year; for example, 2018 was a bad year, but there were zero homicides reported in 2023. Commissioner Bertrand added to that, to keep in mind that suicides are not publicly reported.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Commissioner Member Comments

Commissioner German reminded everyone that April is Sexual Assault Awareness month. The YWCA will be holding many events throughout the month to bring attention to it.

Adjournment

Commissioner Lust made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bertrand, to adjourn.

Motion carried (viva voce).

The Meeting Adjourned at 2:02 PM.

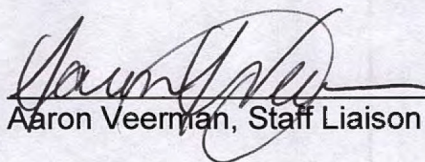
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Scott Denton

Scott Denton (Jun 16, 2025 15:06 CDT)

Scott Denton, Chairperson

ATTEST


Aaron Veerman, Staff Liaison