



**MINUTES
SPECIAL COMMISSION FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES - REGULAR SESSION
THURSDAY, January 23, 2025, 1:00 PM.**

The Special Commission for Safe Communities convened in regular session in the Government Center Boardroom at 1:00 PM, on January 23, 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
Ryan Bertrand	Commissioner	Present
Kaitlyn Selman	Commissioner	Absent
Timothy Harris	Commissioner	Absent
Aron Klein	Commissioner	Absent

Staff Advisors Present:

Assistant Police Chief (Asst. Chief) Aaron Veerman

Chairperson Denton directed the Staff Advisor to call roll.

Public Comment

No public comment was received.

Approval of Minutes

Item 4.A. Consideration and action to approve the Minutes of the October 24, 2024, Regular Special Commission for Safe Communities Meeting.

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

AYES: Lust; Denton; Bertrand; German

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 the following information with the council regarding 2024 gun-related crime statistics, which were collated by Crime Analysis and Intelligence Unit Supervisor Jack McQueen:

- Weapons violations were up 17% compared to 2023, but did not significantly alter the 5-year averages (103 violations in 2023 and 121 in 2024).

- The number of shootings involving injuries to persons was approximately half of the number from 2023 (9 persons shot in 2023 and 4 persons shot in 2024).
- A large number of the shootings in 2024 involved subjects aged 20 or younger shooting at inanimate objects, leading to an increase in property damage related to shootings.
- Home and vehicle burglaries increased by approximately 16% compared to 2023.
- There were 37 overall shootings in 2024 compared to 30 shootings in 2023.
- Handgun seizures were comparable with 60 seized in 2024 compared to 59 in 2023.
- In 2024, 6 rifles and 5 shotguns were seized compared to 2 and 1, respectively, in 2023.
- In 2024, there were 37 guns reported stolen compared to 32 reported stolen in 2023.

Commissioner Bertrand inquired about the forfeiture of guns and Firearm Owner Identification (FOID) cards when an emergency Order of Protection (OP) has been issued in a domestic violence situation. Staff Liaison Veerman said that a law did pass but the courts haven't yet worked out who will be responsible for collecting the firearms. There is a lot to be worked out and it could be months before the details are worked out. There is currently not enough manpower for police agencies to do house searches to confiscate and catalogue weapons in all of the emergency OP situations.

Commissioner Bertrand asked how many emergency OPs are issued per year. Staff Liaison Veerman's estimated guess is over 100 per year.

Commissioner Bertrand asked if there are other scenarios besides an emergency OP where police are put into a position of collecting guns from people. Staff Liaison Veerman stated that if the police are called to a situation where someone has suicidal ideations and there is a "clear and present danger" to themselves or others, the police can remove firearms from the premises.

Commissioner Lust asked what the difference is between "clear and present danger" and an "extreme risk OP". Staff Liaison Veerman replied that OPs are signed off on by a judge and the revocation of the person's FOID card is built into that judge's order. In the situation of a "clear and present danger" situation, the police complete a form that is then sent to the Illinois State Police to have a FOID card revoked.

Item 5.B. Presentation and discussion by Dr. Dawn Beichner-Thomas regarding the relationship between gun violence and domestic violence.

Commissioner Denton stated the commission needs to decide on a structure for how to write the report of recommended actions to the city council at the end of the year. It was decided that the report will be organized into sections and Staff Liaison Veerman will send out a list of the report topics to commission members to volunteer to write each section. If needed, sections will be assigned. Topics to be covered by the report to council include the following:

- Juveniles, gun violence and prevention / School Resource Officers / Moms Demand Action / Social Emotional Learning (SEL) / Restorative Justice
- Domestic Violence / extreme Orders of Protection

- Coroner / suicides involving firearms / local resources (PATH, 211, Stepping Stones, etc)
- Presentations by Bloomington Police Department (BPD) Sergeant Kiel Nowers and Sergeant Joe Rizzi
- Technology in crime fighting - presentation by BPD Crime Intelligence & Analysis Unit Supervisor Jack McQueen

It was decided that the first page of the report to city council should be the commission's recommendations, followed by supporting documentation for each of the recommendations.

Staff Liaison Veerman suggested that commissioners mention in their reports when a topic was introduced and discussed during the commission meetings.

New Business and Commissioner Member Comments

Commissioner Lust mentioned The Vault, which is a community center in Clinton that is a hang-out spot for juveniles. She also mentioned Lifelong Access and the Regional Office of Education have been working together to come up with a plan for a similar program for Bloomington-Normal.

Commissioner German stated the YWCA has been approached about providing after class care and they are in discussion with Lifelong Access and Chestnut Health Services regarding that. She indicated she is not sure that program would be so much a "hang-out spot" as a focus more on health.

Commissioner Lust also mentioned that the Youth Build school allows students up to 21 years old to register and participate. She suggested asking someone from Youth Build to speak at the February commission meeting.

Commissioner German discussed the need to learn how to build trust between communities.

Commissioners Bertrand and Denton mentioned the commission at some point will need to "turn off the faucet" of presenters to focus on developing recommendations for city council based off of the information already learned.

It was suggested that at each meeting going forward, a commission member will present an update on their chosen topic(s) for their reports.

Adjournment

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

Motion carried (viva voce).

The Meeting Adjourned at 1:52 PM.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

ATTEST

Scott Denton

Scott Denton (Apr 10, 2025 13:57 CDT)

Scott Denton, Chairperson



Aaron Veerman, Staff Liaison