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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

The scourge of out of control prostitution, drugs

**Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan
June 29, 2017**

Citizens across Milwaukee and the metro area would be shocked, embarrassed and angered if they witnessed the blatant prostitution and drug activity taking place on a daily basis at certain locations on the near south side.

For some time Alderman José Pérez and I have been working behind the scenes with Milwaukee Police, with neighbors and others to put a stop to the brazen and disgusting behavior -- acts taking place for instance at and near S. 23rd St. and W. Greenfield Ave. During my 17 years as 8th District Alderman I have never seen any criminal activity flaunted so often and cavalierly as we are seeing at S. 23rd and Greenfield every day!

It saddens and sickens me that the activity has ramped up, in my view, because of the heroin epidemic. Those engaged in the prostitution related activities shoot up and then just throw their needles into the street or in the gutter, left behind for children to see and for someone else to remove (the same goes for spent condoms – disgusting!).

It is difficult for most citizens and observers to imagine what it must be like to live down the block or across the street from this daily activity. No one should have to live with blatant prostitution happening outside their windows!

Alderman Perez and I have done our due diligence and we have stood up for our constituents. We have held numerous meetings with the police, with the District Attorney's office, with the City Attorney's Office and with Chief Flynn (with the exception of the City Attorney's Office, largely to no avail).

Prostitution has been a concern along portions of National, Greenfield and Lincoln avenues for years but it has never, ever, ever been as out of control as it is now. Years ago I would have placed a call to a police sergeant and problems would have been handled quickly. Today the department seems to just be going through the motions on the issue – either unable or unwilling to take decisive action.

-More-

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I'm told that as a result of our urgings to do something officers have been instructed to increase arrests (in many instances logging valuable overtime in the process), but those arrested are taken in for booking, issued a municipal citation and then released within about an hour to go right back to committing the same crimes.

That approach is a joke!

The arrests, however, provide cover for Chief Flynn ("hey we are doing our job -- look at all these arrests we've been making") but do NOTHING to reduce the activity!

Someone needs to explain to Chief Flynn that there IS indeed a difference between activity and results and it is not acceptable in my opinion for MPD to just repeat the same failed efforts. Our citizens deserve far better, for God's sake.

The prostitution problem is so bad that it may require a monumental effort to restore order. I would hope MPD and the District Attorney are thinking about what that effort might look like and how quickly it can be deployed because the residents have had enough.

I have certainly had enough and I am frustrated beyond words. My responsibility is to my constituents, but my power as an alderman is limited. I can urge the Chief to take action (which I have done repeatedly – please see the **attached recent letter**) but I cannot order him or the department to do anything.

It may require a groundswell of public anger and outrage in Milwaukee to demand action that SOMETHING be done to reduce the prostitution activity and to clamp down on the drug problem that seems to be fueling it.

This is a fight that we cannot back down from and one that we must win.

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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

June 5, 2017

Edward Flynn
Chief of Police
749 W. State St.
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Chief,

If this letter seems long, it's only because I have a great deal to say and I must admit, it saddens me to have to say it. I am also sending this letter with a great deal of frustration. Quite frankly I am at the end of my rope. I am asking yet again, one more time, for your help. I am referring to the ongoing out of control prostitution and drug dealing problems going on in my District. Specifically the area surrounding Greenfield Ave. from 16th (Chavez Dr.) to 27th (Layton Bl.) This neighborhood finds itself under siege by pimps, prostitutes, and drug dealers.

This problem has become so brazen and so pervasive that I feel it will require a monumental effort to restore order. If anyone feels I am exaggerating, please consider the following:

- 1) When a Lutheran Pastor who lives on 23rd and Greenfield tells me that pimps are in the street stopping traffic so that prostitutes can easily approach cars , we have a problem.
- 2) When I'm told by a grandmother who lives nearby that she must instruct her grandchildren not to pick up the discarded hypodermic needles and used condoms (the kids think they're balloons), we have a problem.

- 3) When a resident tells me she was so disgusted by “zombie-like” prostitutes high on drugs parading down the middle of the street she confronted them and called the police only to have her property vandalized later that night. We have a problem.
- 4) When a Catholic Priest assigned to a nearby parish is walking down the street in full clergy attire and is approached by two prostitutes trying to pick him up and both exposed their breasts to him, we have a problem.
- 5) When a business owner already paying lots of money in local taxes finds it necessary to chase away drug dealers and prostitutes on a daily basis and for his efforts is threatened, we have a problem.

I could go on and on. Please understand first and foremost, my job is to fight for the best interest of my constituents. Very simply put, their best interests are not being served by the status quo.

Over the last several years, I believe myself and Ald. Perez have done our due diligence when it comes to advising all interested parties as to the severity of this ongoing problem. Largely to no avail. Now I realize, Chief, that there seems to be a growing consensus amongst some in positions of influence regarding this matter that prostitutes are the victims here. I’m not going to argue that point. But what about the pimps and the Johns - are they victims as well? Since we are on the topic, let me point out another class of victims. They are the hardworking, law abiding tax paying citizens who happen to live in this besieged neighborhood. In addition, I might add that they don’t engage in illegal drug use nor break the law on a daily basis.



I'm also certain that I speak for Ald. Perez when I say that we are convinced that if this same problem was occurring in certain other parts of Milwaukee, it would have been dealt with effectively years ago. With that in mind, very simply put Chief, I cannot allow my constituents to be treated as second class citizens. I am not interested in placing blame or pointing fingers. Also, my comments should in no way reflect poorly on Capt. Wurth, whom I respect and have a good working relationship with. I believe she is doing the best she can with the resources she has. I realize that violent crime needs to remain Milwaukee's number one priority. I further realize that the police dept. is short staffed, after all, I've been saying it for years. However I have no doubt that if this problem was given a higher priority, the resources would be found.

Officers tell me that even if they arrest these prostitutes, it's just a revolving door and they are back out in the street within hours because the D.A. won't charge. If in fact that is the case, then I will ask once again for you to please provide me with the necessary and appropriate information to address that problem with the D.A. Until then, I expect the MPD to enforce the laws, all laws, fairly, equally and without prejudice.

Over the years, a great deal of talk and emphasis has been placed on outreach efforts to help prostitutes get out of that lifestyle. The MPD has wholeheartedly supported these efforts. I too have stated publically that I will support any effort proven effective in eliminating this problem in my District. However, Chief, can you suggest to me what I might tell my frustrated constituents when they tell me that these outreach services are giving the prostitutes food and water, new clothing and new, clean needles and new condoms? How should I respond when they tell

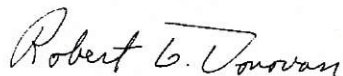


me that these programs are not helping get the prostitutes off the streets, but instead, enabling them to continue their illegal activities?

With all of this in mind, I am respectfully asking that a plan be provided to me so I can share it with my constituents. A plan that is designed to provide hope and some light at the end of the tunnel. This plan should include the number of officers assigned, their respective duties, the number of arrests made and the number of individuals referred to the D.A.'s office and the disposition of those cases.

Finally Chief, I will say this – in my 17 years as an Alderman, I have never found it necessary to take the steps I am taking now, nor was I ever placed in the position I find myself in now. There was indeed a time when a phone call or two would have addressed this problem long before it ever got so out of hand. Times have most certainly changed, and so I say, I am not only asking, not only urging, but I am literally begging you to take the necessary steps to restore order and stability to this beleaguered neighborhood.

Cordially,



Robert G. Donovan
Alderman, 8th District

Cc: Capt. Heather Wurth, Commanding Officer, 2nd District
MPD Command Staff Members
District Attorney John Chisholm
Mayor Tom Barrett
Patrick Curley, Mayor's Chief of Staff
Members of the Common Council
Members of the Fire & Police Commission
Pastor Joel Jaeger – Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
Diljeet Khahra – Owner, Tiger Mart Gas Station, 2310 W. Greenfield Ave.



Arnold, William

From: Donovan, Robert
Sent: Thursday, June 15, 2017 10:26 AM
To: Flynn, Edward; mpdchief
Cc: Wurth, Heather; Chisholm, John - DA; Mayor Tom Barrett; Curley, Patrick; Council Members _Aides; Joel Jaeger; Harpole, James; Brunson, Michael; Jessup, William; Yerkes, Carianne; Gordon, Terrence; Owczarski, Jim; Regan, MaryNell
Subject: Prostitution out of control - pastor threatened

Dear Chief,

I received a call last night (and the subsequent e-mail below this morning) from Rev. Joel Jaeger, Pastor of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church on S. 23rd and Greenfield. Now I've got a Lutheran Pastor who is being threatened with sodomy by a bunch of thugs, pimps, prostitutes and drug dealers. This disgusts me. This problem has gone on far too long and has been allowed to get worse with the passing of every day.

It sickens me to see this going on in my District, or in any part of Milwaukee for that matter. Please help!

Finally, no officers drove by from 9 p.m. to 12:47 a.m.? No patrols who would have witnesses this incredible disorder and taken action? That's shocking. Second of all, there is an MPD surveillance camera on the corner of 23rd and Greenfield that is capable of being monitored by Dist. 3 officers 24/7 and installed at great expense to Milwaukee taxpayers. What the hell is going on here?

Bob

Alderman Donovan
8th District
(414) 286-3533

Dear Bob,

O would like to share with you my experience this past Saturday night (June10).

By 9:00 P.M. there were four vehicles parked on South 23rd St. on the west side of our house. I had seen all four in the previous few days parked with there or across the street in the "No Parking" zone next to the gas station. There was a group of 10-12 adults loitering on the side walk, yelling at each other. It appeared like a Saturday night party. There is no reason for them to gather on this corner. They aren't waiting for the bus. None of them live in this neighborhood. There presence and defiance of the law have made this citiizen afraid for his physical welfare and very cautious to leave my house after dark. On the previous evening I had asked the owner of one of those vehicles, an SUV, to turn down his music. It was so loud that we had to turn up the television. The glasses in our china cabinet where rattling. He finally turned it down about ten minutes later.

My cell phone rang at 11:21 pm. No number. It said "restricted" All I heard was very loud rap music. I hung up. Within a minute it rang again. This time a voice over the rap music said "You are going to get it in your butt." I hung up immediately. Wasn't sure what to do. For the first time in fifteen years of living here on this corner I felt unsafe and threatened. I finally went down to the basement and loaded my 9 mm and kept it by my side for the rest of the night. At 11:40 I called the police non-emergency number. Sadly I don't need to look up the number anymore, since I have used it so often over the past year.

I told the lady what was happening, how I felt, and my readying of my hand gun. At 12:12 A.M. the police operator called back to assure me that a squad would come. At 12:47 an officer from a squad called to say that he was here at the corner of 23rd and Greenfield. All was quiet, because the vehicles had all driven away as he pulled up.

The next morning, it took 15 minutes to pick up all the trash -- lunch bags, beer cans, styrafoam trays, napkins, hot sauce containers and three empty brandy bottles. For the first time in several weeks there were no needles or syringes only (?) used condoms.

These autos that are clearly involved in sex trafficking are parked on this block of S. 23rd Street frequently. The owners are just loitering on the side walks or on the service station property.

Is it possible that "no loitering" signs would help. Perhaps reduced hours at the gas station would also shorten the loitering

Is this how a law-abiding citizen of Milwaukee should live? I long for the good old days when only the prostitutes were hanging on the corner. The loitering of all of these non neighborhood males is very unnerving. Now one of the pimps has moved in next door and frequently is parked in the bus zone on Greenfield Ave.

Thanks for listening, Bob!

**Prince of Peace Parish
1138 S. 25th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204**



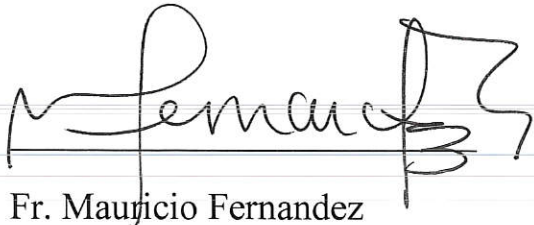
June, 2017

To Whom it May Concern:

There are many serious problems in our neighborhood. Our church is located on the south side of Milwaukee on 25th, Street between National and Greenfield. There is also a grade school from 1st to 4th grade and 5th to 8th in our other location at St. Vincent de Paul located at 2100 W Mitchell St. There is a severe problem of open prostitution, open selling of illegal drugs and syringes and drug paraphernalia left in the street. We are concern how this affects our neighborhood, our church, our employees and the school children. Also, there is a constant lack of respect for the speed limit; two unattended cars were hit during Holy Week.

We feel we don't have a strong enough police presence. We are very worried for the safety of the Church, our young students and the neighborhood. We are requesting help from you and would like to set up a meeting to discuss this further with options to better this situation.

Thanks for your help. We look forward to hearing from you soon.



Fr. Mauricio Fernandez

Associated Pastor: Prince of Peace, St. Vincent de Paul & St. Adalbert