

Ottawa Police Services Board **Finance and Audit Committee**
 Agenda 6 -Thursday, 14 November, 2019
 COMMUNICATION: *Email dated October 16, 2019 from Melanie White*

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From: M Vindum

Sent: Wed, Oct 16, 2019 12:21 pm

Subject: Ottawa 2020 Budget - Concerns and input

Hello.

I regret that I was unable to attend the city of Ottawa 2020 Budget Consultation meeting last night due to a conflict of events.

I feel that it is very important not only to myself but for the safety and security of my family, friends and community to express my concerns and the need for tools and resources - financial from the city of Ottawa budget, as well as in time and resources through improved bylaws from our city council as November 2019 will be 1 year from our second breakin and theft from our second home in Ottawa.

There have been increasing concerns of "Guns and Gangs" not only within our city but throughout our province.

Gun incidents are in the news for our city.

I understand that the Federal Government has allocated funds to be distributed to aid in this concern.

While it is currently *considered* quite easy for criminals to take stolen belongings - jewellery, valuables, antiques, tools/equipment and bicycles (not just a "toy" but the primary mode of transportation for many!) and more just past a city border or to just sell it online (as noted in the OttWatch Nov 2017 document), by Ottawa not creating strong supports **within our city**, our city permits this mode of income locally. Why would a criminal expend any profit to travel beyond if the city is not **actively** deterring within?

If I was able to have confidence that the city of Ottawa bylaws and my Ottawa Police have active resources and tools available to proactively locate and identify my stolen belongings (for which we provided reports of to police) from local second-hand use shops, I could focus *my* attention and search for my items online, for example.

Even police examination of a required ledger for reported items taken in by a **regularly visiting**, out of province traveling "**we buy your gold and valuables**" "business" would have provided victims some peace of mind. At this time such a business is aided by our city as they may function without any required bylaw license (I have called bylaw and been told such), may then pack up items immediately from sight, after 1-2 days acquiring items from various locations within the city they may leave the city / province, with the gold / jewelry / valuables - **UNCHECKED, all approved** by current bylaw, not apparently bound by By-law No. 2002-189 Schedule 14, overlooked by our police for Ontario Pawnbroker Act regulations in part as *who* has been in active position *to* enforce.

As the current situation is, I found out that I had to search impossibly, in **ALL** directions - ON MY OWN! Second-hand and "pawn" established location shops, visiting "we buy your gold and valuables" of various forms for which you may see nothing that has been taken in to flag to police *to* investigate following up from previously reported stolen, as well as the "other" vendors. These business' may purchase - to later sell items both legal from owners as well as those items reported as stolen to police - **UNCHECKED!** This permissiveness is providing known profit to the criminals who accessed items illegally - unchecked! There are not currently active resources in place to deter this, financially provided from City of Ottawa budget nor tools / resources in bylaws or checks.

I am very concerned about the ease of funding provided to the criminal industry from these stolen belongings being sold that become free profit, profit to pay for drugs as one concern, to then grow in drug profit - as any successful business plan does - to provide free funding to access the guns in the first place.

I am aware that the Provincial Government has set the Ontario Pawnbrokers Act to repeal instead of improve. (Passed April 2019 as a part of Bill 66).

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Yet Ottawa has not yet provided, proactively, aid our police.

Ottawa has not made resources accessible to our Ottawa Police - tools such as an electronic, searchable (ideally photo) database to compare *reported* stolen items to police to items located via Second-Hand shops (theoretically "required" as an example of a ledger) to aid in locating and identifying stolen belongings, **not yet required** on *any regular, required schedule*, as one concern. I am understanding that when a pawn ledger *may* be made available, merely *upon request*, it is often (in Ottawa) still in an **inconsistent, often manual (paper) format minimally required** by Ottawa bylaw (By-law No. 2002-189 Schedule 14 Section 13(1)) "...a record is made in a ledger book in chronological order with the **entries transcribed in ink** in a clear and legible manner or in a recording system approved by the Chief of Police...", 1800's technology despite modern technology that has been made available to other city of Ottawa facilities and departments, thus it is not considered to be time nor resource efficient and as a result, often neglected. (Please see the **Ottwatch Nov 2017 document regarding "Review of Provincial Pawnbrokers Act"** - A document *dated one year* prior to our second painful breakin and theft! **Choices** were made **to not improve** as "The Pawnbrokers Act". As "manually....difficult and time-consuming....", despite acknowledgement that a previous 1-day "blitz" was **successful**, despite acknowledging that such resources exist - in reference to the Ontario IPC ruling in 2007 - and thus have been available for years, to be time and resource efficient, made use of elsewhere in Ontario despite the Ontario IPC ruling, despite a pursuit - and I believe success - to turn a similar IPC ruling in Alberta in 2009, a pursuit I have yet to learn of if or how Ottawa followed likewise....)

Meanwhile, Ottawa has provided resources to Ottawa Recreational Facilities to make available and maintain a form of a searchable electronic database to ease the process by residents / clients, locating and registering for programming with ease by residents, utilizing multiple electronic platforms and multiple locations, available at all recreational facilities.

In addition, Ottawa has provided funding and resources to Ottawa Public Libraries to make available and maintain a searchable electronic **photo** database (in this context it is called the online catalogue). These city resources have been provided funding from the city of Ottawa that has aided in resident / client productive, positive, successful ease of use whereas a city resource for our safety and security - the Ottawa Police - have had resources not made available or willingly taken away (BWI).

How would Ottawa residents react to loosing city tools/resources with the reinstatement of the paper Card Catalogue within Ottawa Libraries or return to lining up at recreational facilities to learn about and enroll in programming? How would residents react to withdrawal of support for the tools/resources of modern technology for speed radar, to return to paper/pencil logging of license plates to deter speeding. As residents do not interact with the resources to aid in locating and identifying stolen belongings, they have - *until now* - been blissfully unaware.

I have been informed that the City of Ottawa has yet to improve our bylaws and resources as (again) "The Ontario Pawnbrokers Act". Set to repeal on an as yet unknown date ("This Act is repealed on a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor") and yet it is still apparently in place? (Not necessarily enforced.) Yet the existence of this Act **does not prevent** the City of Ottawa from being able to make a choice to be ****Proactive**!** To improve bylaws and resources *prior* to the final predicted repeal of the Ontario Act. Other municipalities within the same province have improved bylaws and resources to their local police to PROACTIVELY locate and identify stolen belongs, to identify and thus be able to hold criminals accountable, to deter such crime and thus the crime it may feed. Hamilton, improving their bylaws in June 2017 is one municipality I have read about in greater detail and I have pursued information from although I have heard about other municipalities being similarly **proactive** as well, **under the same Provincial restrictions!** While Ottawa made other choices in November 2017. Choices that need to be discussed openly for improvement to enable active deterrent and identification of individuals to be held accountable **locally**.

I have initiated over the last year and continue to pursue conversations with Federal and Provincial government regarding this concern as well as it requires proactive input from all levels of government to

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deter the "feeder crime" that gains funds, funding for accessing guns - one significant and overlooked of which is breakin and theft.

Federal pursuit is required to provide funding (I believe distributed to the province) for resources and legislation to hold individuals identified as responsible accountable, as well as to aid with resources for the cross provincial border concern - especially as Ottawa directly shares a border another province.

Provincial pursuit is required to aid police in legislation and tools/resources for communication to locate and identify stolen belongings moved between municipalities.

Municipal pursuit is required to provide tools and resources - including active staffing and bylaws for which to enact on - to our local Ottawa Police to enable them to locate and identify reported stolen belongings within our city thus to be able to identify criminals to be held accountable Federally and thus deter such criminal profit locally and prior to movement between the municipalities.

All 3 levels of government support are currently lacking in providing **pro-active** resources to deter such base level, "feeder" funding, profit driven crimes.

Choosing to wait for *any one* other level of government **permits these crimes** to continue to occur, to escalate and to fund our greater community concerns! Including increased funding and thus accessibility to guns and illegal drugs!

There is a need for the city of Ottawa to enable and provide active resources to our Ottawa Police for our safety and security.

The frequency of breakin and theft, theft *from* car, theft *of* car, theft from business', theft of bicycle (which is not recognized the same as theft of vehicle despite the fact it is many citizen's primary mode of transportation, improving the environment with active transportation),... within my immediate community alone is very concerning. When I listen to events within the communities bordering my own....

We lock our doors, lock our cars, remove "valuables" from cars - and yet if they want in, they want in - a crowbar will break through and has occurred in my community.

Our sense of safety and security and that of our families is at frequent risk! Our enjoyment and quality of life *within this city* has been and continues to be impacted!

"Events" continue and escalate as there is a lack of ACTIVE and PROACTIVE deterrent within our city, despite even photographic images from individuals homes - as the criminals are aware, observed at times flippantly "tipping their hat" or "waving at the camera" as they engage. Visiting our homes even when we ARE home - as occurred **again** recently at my home one evening this month!

Without improved aid - financial, tools and resources, how does the City of Ottawa deter being "Open for Business" with the criminal industry? Why would those "struggling" not turn to this free source of income? To gain funds and provide profit to others above this base "feeder fund level" to access the guns - a growing concern within our city.

Thank you for your time.

I look forward to hearing **how** these concerns will be acknowledged through proactive funding in the 2020 budget and future decisions and input made by our City of Ottawa Council and Ottawa Police Council as well as how our city will interact **pro-actively** with our Federal and Provincial government to locate, identify, and thus be able to hold individuals accountable and thereby provide active, proactive deterrent to return a sense of safety and security to my community and my home.

Melanie White.

Concerned Glabar Park resident.