

**MINUTES FROM SECOND COMMUNITY FORUM**

Giffen Elementary School

May 15, 2008 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

**Task force Members:**

Rev. John U. Miller (chair)	Rev. Valerie Faust	Michael P. McDermott, Esq.
Rev. Dr. Edward B. Smart (vice chair) <sup>1</sup>	Leslie Fisher	Dr. Leonard I. Morgenbesser
Allison Banks	Mark Harris, Esq. FOR Hon. P. David Soares	Robert L. Serenka, Esq.
Hon. Betty Barnette	Judge Gerald Maney	Chief James Tuffey
	Robert E. Worden	

**Common Council Members Present:**

Hon. Barbara Smith<sup>2</sup>

Hon. Shawn Morris

<b>CM</b>	<b>Question/Concern/Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
1.	What has been accomplished so far?	Rev. Miller responds
2.	Supports the Task Force but wonders how they can be sure it does not end up like the citizens' police board.	Mr. Fisher responds that it is cheaper to prevent than treat gun violence  Rev. Miller points out that this is not an implementing body.  Rev. Faust says that it is going to take the support of the community in order to be successful.
3.	(Charles Smoof, Children's Hospice employee) It is important to recognize that there are programs that can help kids to deal with gun violence. The Wave Riders program is an example. These kinds of programs should be included in any crisis intervention measures.	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Absent due to an annual conference in Boston

<sup>2</sup> Common Council liaison to the City of Albany Gun Violence Task Force

4.	<p>(Mr. Anderson) This Task Force is the first action city council has taken to address violence in this community. The time for debate is over. I have observed the problem of violence in Albany for over a decade. I live in West Hill right off Quail St. Albany is in desperate need of action and the turnout for this meeting is a testament to this. Major change is needed. We need a plan of action. I like Chief Tuffey because he comes out and listens. I have a 5 point plan to address gun violence. (hands out 5 point plan to members)</p> <p>I am recommending a rollback and not a curfew for city services. Kids are visual and do what they see. They need to see action being taken.</p>	<p>Chief Tuffey said that they had made some internal changes to bring the police and the community closer together. Talking to kids is very important. We need to address societal issues as well.</p> <p>Ms. Barnette said that she agrees that we need to “hit the problem where it lives.” We know there is a problem and when people don’t complain it makes it worse. Elected officials respond when you call. You need to call. You have to stand up and demand the things that we need. No one is going to pay any more attention to you than you demand.</p> <p>Dr. Morgenbesser said that it is going to take one or more generations to turn around a lot of this because of illegal guns. If we don’t get serious about the funding of agencies that track illegal guns none of what we do will do any good.</p> <p>Mr. Harris said that it was good he came with a plan not just complaint. We also have a “No Snitching” problem that needs to be addressed.</p>
5.	<p>One of the recommendations should include educating people about the responsible use of guns.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

6.	I'm here because I am tired of all the killing and placing blame. We need to educate our kids instead of sending them to prison. They need to know that you have to work for what you want in life. We also need affordable childcare and after school programs.	Rev. Miller said that he went to the YMCA with Chief Tuffey and other members. The visit was very productive and it is important to note that we have a lot of young people who are doing the right thing.
7.	(Lestor Freeman, born and raised in Southend) There used to be a lot of community centers. Our children are being displaced because they have nowhere to go. There are just children hanging out in the street. We need funding. Has the city council committed to a budget for this? Hopelessness is the abandoned buildings in the streets.	N/A
8.	I would like to thank all the members for coming. My oldest son just graduated with his master's degree and we're doing exactly what you're all saying. Some of our kids are doing well. Community centers are so valuable. Sometimes the bad kids get too much press.	N/A
9.	We are dealing with people who are hurt. A lot of young kids are dreaming but living nightmares. We need to make more opportunities for them.	N/A
10.	(Cathy Soulker) There are dvds and books for families that could be purchased to help them with the training of their children. Dr. Charles Whitefield (cbwhit.com) wrote a book called <u>Boundaries and Relationships</u> which could help children learn about emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual boundaries.	N/A
11.	(Stanley Oliver) Albany is a beautiful place and I am striving to be a hip hop community leader. Parents and children need to work together and dance can help facilitate that.	N/A
12.	(Kevin Jones, 1 <sup>st</sup> Ward) In regards to children and I guess that's who is committing a lot of this violence, a curfew makes a lot of sense. I see that Albany High School and it's pretty easy to see why. Concealed and Carry laws would help because the people who have illegal guns are not the most brave in society. They know that society does everything it can to keep guns out of the hands of law abiding citizens.	N/A

13.	I love kids and mothers' burying their kids is sad. Grandmothers are younger than before. The whole family structure has changed.	Ms. Barnette said that it needs to be able equal distribution of resources.  Ms. Banks said that today was her son's birthday and he would have been 26 and then read from a pamphlet about discussing with teenagers and children about gun violence.
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Minutes Submitted by,

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