

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Consideration of Police Defunding

From: Heather Watson

Sent: June 28, 2020 11:22 AM

To: Merulla, Sam <Sam.Merulla@hamilton.ca>; Office of the Mayor <mayor@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Consideration of Police Defunding

Good morning,

I am a lifelong resident of Hamilton and homeowner in the Crown Point East community. I chose to make Hamilton home again after studying abroad, where I work as a solicitor in the downtown area.

I write to express my **support for the defunding of Hamilton Police Services by 20% and redirecting those funds to social services** better suited to respond to wellness checks and mental health crises. I very much disagree with Ward 5 rep Collins who was reported to say that his constituents want “more policing, not less.” Living in Crown Point East, I notice a very high police presence. I have never felt unsafe and my neighbours who have lived in the area for approximately 25 years rave about what a great community it is. I do not think that a 20% decline in patrol would be enough to change what a safe community the east end can be, especially when coupled with a corresponding increase in other social services.

I've worked in the criminal justice system and I have seen the good work that police do. It is unfortunate that some members of the HPS and other police services are taking the widespread cries to defund the police personally. **Systemic racism is real and it is not the fault of any individual - it is the system.** That is why, in addition to defunding the HPS, I think it is extremely important to:

1. Reform the minimum requirements for eligibility to apply to HPS to include training in constitutional law;
2. Expanding the requirement that the applicant must "be of good moral character and habits, meaning that they are an individual other people would look upon as being trustworthy and having integrity" to include express reference to treating everyone equally under the law regardless of race, sex, religion, nationality, or affluence;
3. Either (a) fire and then rehire all HPS under the more stringent standards or, if that is not feasible (b) implement a mandatory training course to be passed before duty can resume.

As society changes, the laws change too. That is what I love about the law. I see no reason why law enforcement should not be the same and evolve alongside society.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing of your work to remedy this issue.

Yours,

Heather Watson, BA (Hons), LLB