

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Hamilton - Defund the Police

From: Carole Holmes & Lorraine Green

Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 4:54 PM

To: Office of the Mayor

Cc: clerk@hamilton.ca; Stevenson, Kirsten;

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GRAND(M)OTHERS ACT
TO SAVE THE PLANET

Dear Mayor Fred Eisenberger,

We, Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet (GASP), are committed to leaving our grandchildren a healthy planet and a just, equitable society. We advocate for Climate Justice and Social Justice. To achieve this we know that systemic changes are required in every aspect of society to ensure public safety for all, not just those of us in white middle class families. Policing is one system that, with our compliance, has become untenable. This is evident in its brutality against Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

We are not opposed to the people within the policing institution but with the institution itself. Policing has become a replacement for proper spending on mental health and social supports within our communities.

We struggled with the word "defund" but it highlights the fact that monies that could be spent on social and health supports are being spent on the militarization of the police, the purchase of armoured vehicles, the latest tactical weapons and increased surveillance. As a community, we must prioritize the expansion of community led health and safety initiatives over future financial investments into policing. No more criminalization of mental health and addictions. We know that prison will not help many of the people who have been criminalized. Our present system is punitive and expensive. The cost of keeping someone in prison for a year is upwards of \$100,000.

More police is not the answer. Investments in body cameras, civilian reviews, de-escalation and implicit bias training, although mostly beneficial, have not worked. They amount to tinkering with the system. Our public safety system needs a complete overhaul.

An increased security presence, which includes transit inspectors, enforcement officers, and school police does not build trust. In fact, it makes us more fearful and it directly threatens the lives of our most vulnerable people.

Let us prioritize vital community-based systems that support our vulnerable communities, instead of increasing police budgets. These systems must focus on the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and

People of Colour in the city of Hamilton. We are impressed with the activism in Hamilton around the Defund Police movement and support their focus in advocating a transformation of public safety.

Hamilton can lead the way in defining public safety in a new way. We are asking you to create a better future for all residents in Hamilton by ending the increased militarization of police and investing in life-affirming services to set an example for police forces in Canada.

Sincerely,
Carole Holmes & Lorraine Green
Co- chairs of GASP Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet

CC: Office of the City Clerk of Hamilton
Police Board of Hamilton

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