

December 15, 2020

Press Release from Councilors Tim Allen, Malo Brown, Melvin Edwards and Mike Fenton

Good afternoon,

We write this statement because of the importance of policing and police reform. The year 2020 has brought even more attention to police reform as an important national and local issue. It is a common topic on the City Council floor. It is clear from our years on the Council that it is an issue that will not correct itself. It will take the collective efforts of all of us to implement the police reforms that will improve our policing and our community. At the core of the issue are the concepts of respect and trust.

We are ready to work with the Mayor, the administration and the police on improvements in this area. To this end, we plan to attend the Community Outreach Event on Police Reforms this Saturday morning, December 19, on Zoom. It will provide a moment for the city to come together to have a conversation, to listen to one another, to understand more deeply what the issues are, and to commit to working together on them.

Councilor Tim Allen commented 'Thanks to Mayor Sarno and his administration, our consultant the Honorable Roderick J. Ireland, and the police leadership for the efforts that are consistently being made to improve in the area of policing and police reforms. We all recognize that changes need to be made, and feel that working together on them in an open, respectful manner is the best approach. Thanks to the Mayor for setting up this forum. Hope to see you Saturday morning.'

Councilor Malo Brown said 'I urge all residents and stakeholders to join me in participating in the 3rd open forum conducted by Mayor Sarno. I look forward to the exchange of thoughts and ideas and to engage with the residents to form solutions to the issues our community faces with regard to policing. I applaud Mayor Sarno, Judge Ireland, Commissioner Clapprood, other elected leaders and the residents of the City of Springfield who want to work together to improve our city. This is all of our responsibility. The Mayor, Judge Ireland, and Commissioner Clapprood need to hear from us and they invite our participation.

From Councilor Melvin Edwards: 'I have accepted the invitation and look forward to listening to the concerns expressed'.

In the words of Councilor Mike Fenton: 'Overcoming challenges and achieving progress requires honest dialogue. I am glad that the Mayor is having this forum and has brought in the expertise of Judge Ireland, whom I greatly respect. I will participate in the event and I encourage others to do the same. We owe it to our City to have these tough conversations.'