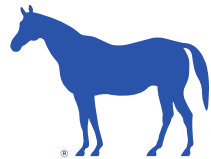


GUN VIOLENCE TASK FORCE REPORT OUT

Jennifer Reynolds, 11th District Council Member

Social Services and Public Safety Committee

April 9, 2024



LEXINGTON

Overview

- Task Force Established October 11, 2022 and started meeting August 17, 2023.
- To provide recommendations to Council and the Administration on ways to prevent, mitigate, and address gun violence in Lexington.
- Asked by the public to explain what the city is doing to address gun violence head on.

Participants

Task Force Members	Organization
Jennifer Reynolds	11 th District Councilmember, Chair
Tayna Fogle	1 st District Councilmember
Shayla Lynch	2 nd District Councilmember
Kendra Thompson	Research Analyst, Support Staff
Sara Moreles	Legislative Aide, Support Staff
April Ballentine	Survivor
Corey Dunn	Independent
Andre Wilson	Seize Your Given Opportunity
Tonya Lindsey	Sisters and Supporters Working Against Gun Violence
Alexis Nickols	UK Trauma Surgeon
Rolanda Woolfork	Independent
Jon Larson	Criminal Defense Attorney
Freida Downey	Independent
Cheryl Birch	B.U.I.L.D.

Participants (continued)

Task Force Members	Organization
Whit Whitaker	President of NAACP of Lexington
Diane Cahill	Moms Demand Action
Mark Gay	Men of Action / Needing U to Survive
Melissa Moore – Murphy	Fayette District Court Judge
Lindsay Hughes Thurston	Fayette District Court Judge
Larry Johnson	Community Outreach Coordinator - ONE Lexington
Kenneth Payne	Crisis Response Coordinator - ONE Lexington
Devine Carama	Director - ONE Lexington
Kathy Witt	Fayette County Sheriff
Ricardo Franklin	Community Outreach Coordinator – Fayette County Sheriff’s Office
Angela Evans	Fayette County Attorney
Brian Maynard	Assistant Chief - Lexington Police Department
Jason Wells	Chief - Lexington Fire Department

Task Force Groups

- Started meeting in (2) separate groups once a month from August 2023 – March 2024.
- Community Pillars Group was comprised of community partners. The City Leaders Group was comprised of government officials and public safety.
 - The Community Pillars Group sought to answer, from a constituent’s perspective, what else local government could be doing to address gun violence.
 - The City Leaders Group sought to answer how we, as a local government, can further intervene and prevent gun violence in Lexington.
- The groups met separately to look at things from different angles:
 - City leadership and community leadership
 - The groups met separately for 4 months and together for 3 months

Task Force Work

- Productive conversations led us to recommendations in addition to how LFUCG is already addressing gun violence in the community.
- It became evident that the community wants us to talk about gun violence and not shy away from it.
- After meeting, we came up with two short lists of recommendations that were agreed upon by all members.

Community Pillars Recommendations

- 1. Recommend LFUCG to define gun violence as a public health crisis.**
 - This emphasis will include but not be limited to, funding, marketing, research, implementation, and data collection to support these programs, identify risk factors, use evaluation to help frame policies for LFUCG and LFUCG will ensure these policies. Model and elevate to the status of the opioid crisis, to activate social services in the community.
- 2. Recommend LFUCG and community to support a three-month long gun violence awareness movement with events and services to provide support and acknowledge affected families. Starting with the annual Antonio Franklin Jr. VIP Peace Walk in April, through the end of June (National Gun Violence Awareness Month). Additionally, locally recognize the month of June as Gun Violence Awareness month.**

Community Pillars Recommendations

3. Recommend expansion of access and services at all community centers in the city.

- Expansion of access will include flexible evening and weekend access by community organizations to offer programming to prevent violence in surrounding communities.

These would include:

- a. Dunbar
- b. Castlewood
- c. Tates Creek
- d. Kenwick
- e. Also, William Wells Brown, Charles Young, and Black and Williams



Community Pillars Suggestions

- Collaborate with community, neighbors, and all levels of government and medical/health providers
- Create a policy and provide funding for renovation of abandoned buildings and lots. – Tabled: to be continued in on-going gun violence workgroup
- Create more jobs and more activities for minors, “Hard to stop if there’s nothing to do”
- Provide second chance opportunities to the families affected, re-entry into social society
- Start working with youth as early as elementary age to address gun violence
- Some have a fear of Police in community. Put energy into Police accountability and working on compassion, building relationships, and trust with community members and Public Safety
- Reallocation funds from city services (e.g. crime scenes)
- Need for gun control
- Special Requirements:
 - Have insurance on guns
 - Training for gun owners
 - Have a gun safe
- Recognize responsible gun owners
- Address irresponsible gun owners, whose gun was stolen / used to commit a crime
- Lack of safe gun ownership training and education
- Guns left in vehicles
- Correlation of alcohol and substance abuse with untreated mental health issues leading to gun violence
- Need more mental health services



Community Pillars Suggestions

- Need more treatment and services for youth who are experiencing mental or living instability.
- Need more severe consequences for those youth that commit crimes with a gun.
- Discussed requiring accountability from parents who has a child that committed a crime with a gun or irresponsibly owned a gun in their possession - there needs to be an educational piece so parents are aware and can be held accountable (some disagreement here).
- Lack of responsible parents or parental figure in a child's life and many grandparents raising children.
- It was stated that currently 500 children are homeless in Fayette County.
- Issue of "it takes an act to get an advocate." Propose more preventive services for those struggling with an unsafe or unstable living condition before a tragic event happens.
- Youth Job Fairs
- Offering services and treatment for youth that have committed crimes with guns, as opposed to simply serving jail time.
- Working more in depth with the schools to create services and more youth programming.
- Need more mentoring programs.
- It was suggested to have a meeting with Louisville's stakeholders that have out these policies/ programs in action after the task force members have more research and meetings.



City Leaders Recommendations

- 1. Recommend ONE Lexington provide a flowchart to show how Council can get involved and share information with their constituents about gun violence. ONE Lexington will inform the Council of their neighborhood engagement events.**
- 2. Recommend Council provide continued support for co-response teams and mobile crisis teams to allow for rapid response to acute behavioral health emergencies in the city (this could reduce gun violence). Providing support for additional behavioral health specialists to assist public safety like the Paramedicine program.**
- 3. Recommend establishment of a grant for victim services for the needs of families impacted by gun violence through social services. (One Lexington has a request in MPB)**



City Leaders Recommendations

- 4. Recommend LFUCG expand their scope to address gun violence for all ages, not just ages 13-29.**
- 5. Recommend support of funding for extensive counseling for youth and families impacted by gun violence.**
- 6. Recommend support funding in budget for youth group trauma informed care sessions for youth impacted by gun violence.**
- 7. Recommend LFUCG communicate more fully with the community about their work and services dealing with gun violence and have transparency and accountability about their budget.**



City Leaders Suggestions

- Recommend that Council advocate for continued conversation with Parks and Recreation to identify ways to allow people with lived experience to provide mentorships and volunteer in Lexington-Fayette County Public Schools.
- Encourage residents to be responsible gun owners by locking vehicles and taking firearms inside.
- Share the statistics of firearms being stolen and air those on network television.
- Look at unconventional ways to get the message out (i.e. campaign mode for PSAs, Crime Stoppers, a catchy message, DARE, etc.)
- Focus on both experiences at the table when mentoring. Folks who have lived experiences and folks who were able to deter from making bad decisions.
- The city government providing services vs the city funding entities/ facilities that are already providing these services.
- There is a need for a more robust response to gun violence.

Questions?



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