



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA
MAYOR JACQUES M. ROY

PRESS RELEASE ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA DISCUSSES WEEKEND VIOLENCE MAY 10-14, 2023

The City of Alexandria Informs Citizens Regarding Shots Fired, Serious Violence Against Persons and (Related) Property Crime—A Frank Discussion

May 15, 2023

(Alexandria, Louisiana) Over the weekend, *and this year generally*, youth violence has continued to claim the lives of violent-crime victims. We know youthful offenders committing offenses share some common traits. We are seeing these offenses as: (1) occurring very late at night (early morning), (2) often where youth are not lawfully present (*i.e.* places and times), and (3) following social media disputes (which would be largely insignificant to adults).

Specifically and unfortunately, youthful victims and assailants may be who “got to” whom faster. We are seeing that “beefs” are advertised on social media, and often with the visualized existence of illegal weapons in the possession of these youthful offenders. When one violent event occurs, a retaliatory event follows. Also, we commonly see the failure to appreciate the value of life, a “disconnectedness” to positive institutions or influences, and in many cases, failure of adult oversight even after many warnings. We see this same destructive force of disconnectedness repeated in youth with significant parental and family involvement, even “taking over” and surprising families. Kids may seem healthy, go to church, and struggle with this disconnectedness. We are changing our way of doing things to stem some of the activities leading to these crimes. We are and will continue to make those changes. We outlined many of those interventions in previous releases, and will discuss some specific ones here.

Downtown is not the problem. No single district is the problem. A neighborhood alone is not the problem. What we do as a community about these issues has to be part of the solution to our problem. There is no cure-all.

To illustrate the complication, it may “feel good” to know that the family-friendly *AlexRiverFête* went off without a single incident, following a violent and dangerous killing in downtown the previous weekend. We disclosed that murder was neither random nor indicative of a “downtown” crime spree. We encouraged attending the Fete and remembering that the week-prior violent event was not to be generalized as downtown violence. On the other hand, we released proposed changes to law and practice to avoid circumstances making downtown fertile ground for non-family-friendly all-day drinking events. During these “promoted” events for a fee, youth and adults interact with increased likelihood of violence because of deficient or improper safeguards and security. The very promotion without safeguards attracts youth “beefing,” and in this case contributed to violence the week before the Fete. However, the true basis most likely to come out of the completed investigation of the downtown event should not make citizens “feel good” about societal drivers within our youth. So-called “beefs” leading to death are epidemic in America. Are we powerless? No. We are not powerless if we work together.

Our approach to much of this past weekend’s issues occurs through increasing the resources to, and building out the infrastructure of, the office of Gun Violence, the offices of Juvenile Services, Focused Deterrence, and Organized Crime, and intelligence-led policing activities. We must increase neighborhood-led intelligence gathering, crime prevention, and neighborhood participation in the solutions to City problems. The tracking of illegal guns, particularly in the hands of juveniles, is paramount to stem the epidemic of gun violence within the youth community. We are removing guns from the streets. And we must continue to harden businesses, remove guns from our vehicles at night, and secure guns in our homes to deter access and make it harder to steal weapons.

Additional details were released regarding each of the weekend events. We can confirm two things: the response to all of these crimes was appropriate and according to need and risks to the public, and each of the investigations is being conducted in a manner that is **professional**, **constitutional**, and **swift**; violent and property crimes add to the problem and will be taken seriously. We thank *all* our agency partners for a job well done.

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA DISCUSSES WEEKEND VIOLENCE MAY 10-14, 2023

Here are brief summaries indicative of these concerns:

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, at 11:13 P.M. the Alexandria Police Department was dispatched to the 500 block of Avoyelles Drive in reference to shots fired. When officers arrived, the body of a 19-year-old black male was found deceased from apparent gunshot wounds. The victim has been identified as Dontravius Williams of Alexandria La.

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, at 10:39 P.M. the Alexandria Police responded to a report of someone being shot at Levin Street and Chester Street. Responding officers located a victim who suffered a gunshot wound. The victim was transported to a local hospital where he remains in critical condition.

ACTIONS:

1. Illegal gun tracking and removal.
2. Referral tracking to Office of Gun Policy; Office of Juvenile Offense.
3. Track violent offenders through the system.

* * * * *

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, at 02:10 a.m., in reference to several gunshots being fired, the Alexandria Police Department was dispatched to 1303 Windsor Street, a local bar doing business as the Bayview Yacht Club. A seventeen-year-old victim had been hit by gunfire and sustained non-life-threatening injuries. The victim was treated at a local hospital.

- The initial investigation yielded two arrests.
- Further charges and arrests are pending.
- Weapons were confiscated and removed from the scene. A determination will be made about the weapons and involvement in past events, if possible. There were a total of **five guns** seized by the Alexandria Police Department in connection with this case.

Jaheim Johnson is an Alexandria 21-year-old, who was arrested and charged with one count of Illegal Use of a Weapon or Dangerous Instrumentalities.

Arcadius Jackson, an Alexandria 23-year-old, also was arrested and charged with one count of Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon and Possession of CDS I.

This is currently an ongoing investigation.

Can we *directly* modify behavior for this activity—yes.

ACTIONS:

1. Changes to city ordinances on curfew law; enforcement of neglect laws.
2. Social media intelligence tracking.
3. Changes to city ordinances on Sunday Closing Law and bar room operations.
4. Requirements for security for bar rooms.
5. Requirements regarding loitering in bar room parking lots.
6. Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission (ABC) investigations and tracking.
7. Referral tracking to Office of Gun Policy; Office of Juvenile Offense

The City believes this crime is preventable or can be modified substantially with change in ordinances and policy of the Alexandria ABC.

Can we *indirectly* modify behavior for this activity. This is longer term issue and much harder to modify, but:

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA DISCUSSES WEEKEND VIOLENCE MAY 10-14, 2023

1. Youth offender coordination and early childhood interventions.
2. Illegal gun tracking and removal.

* * * * *

On Saturday, May 13, 2023, damage was sustained at a local sporting goods store, where firearms are sold. Due to owner preventive measures, the contents of the store did not sustain immediately known theft.

On Sunday, May 14, 2023, damage was sustained in similar fashion to another sporting goods store, where firearms are sold. Due to owner preventive measures, the contents of the store did not sustain immediately known theft.

Investigations are pending.

Can we *directly* modify behavior for this activity? While it is hard to prevent the damage to a window, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) goes a long way. These owners did just that. While having glass frontage, bars prevented further entry, or slowed its possibility down.

The sporting goods store sustaining damage on Sunday also sustained a vehicle torpedoing into the store to gain access several months ago. The store commenced CPTED fixes by placing bollards in front of the store.

ACTIONS:

1. (May 14, 2023) The Administration is formulating a grant assistance fund to “harden” at-risk establishments for security attacks. The public purpose is to protect rights of responsible gun owners continuing in activity that is protected from attempts to access guns illegally for illegal purposes.
2. Property crime designated officers shall initiate any serious, or public security threatening property crime investigations. No crime will be excused because of manpower shortages.

Can we *indirectly* modify behavior for this activity. This is longer term issue and much harder to modify, but:

1. Illegal gun tracking and removal.
2. Referral tracking to Office of Gun Policy; Office of Juvenile Offense.
3. Hardening of high-risk, attractive nuisance business operations.

* * * * *

On May 12, 2023, Jeremyah Smith was arrested, *after* a March 24, 2023 situation in which the Alexandria Police Department assisted Houston Police Department with serving an arrest warrant for homicide on Jeremyah Smith, in Alexandria. During the March arrest, Smith was found to be in possession of an automatic firearm. Houston Police Department extradited Smith back to Houston where he later bonded out on the homicide charge and returned to Alexandria. The day Smith returned to Alexandria, the Alexandria Police Department Detectives obtained a warrant for Smith’s arrest and were able to effect the arrest on May 12, 2023. Smith was booked into the Rapides Parish Sheriff’s Office for Handling/Possession of a Machine Gun, Obstruction of Justice, and Resisting an Officer.

ACTIONS:

1. Illegal gun tracking and removal.
2. Referral tracking to Office of Gun Policy.
3. Track violent offenders through the system.

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA DISCUSSES WEEKEND VIOLENCE MAY 10-14, 2023

* * * * *

Contact (City of Alexandria): Michael Caffery—318.449.5000 or
APD, Robert Distefano

If anyone has any information about this incident or any other type of crime in the Alexandria area, please contact the Alexandria Police Detective Division at the phone number (318) 441-6416, or APD Dispatch (318) 441-6559.