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TOWN SECRETARY
Gayle Kirby

Dear neighbor:

As many of you know, our officers were involved in an incident on June 4th in which they were forced to shoot a career criminal and wanted felon who escaped from their patrol vehicle. The purpose of our letter is to share with you information concerning this event and to explain the thorough and detailed process that is being followed to review every detail of this incident and the events leading up to it.

The Events

On the evening of June 4th, a Highland Park resident noticed that an individual on a motorcycle was following her vehicle and giving other indications that he might be planning to target her as a crime victim. Our resident contacted 911 and provided a description of the individual and motorcycle he was riding. Her instincts were correct. The motorcycle was later confirmed stolen. The man riding it was armed and was a wanted felon with a criminal record spanning more than a decade.

Our officers took immediate action to see if the suspicious vehicle and its rider were still in our community. They found the motorcycle in the shopping center at 3000 Mockingbird Lane. After a violent struggle, officers took the suspect into custody. As widely reported in the news, the suspect was shot and killed when he escaped from the patrol vehicle and pointed a gun at one of our officers.

The Investigation

In order to remove any appearance of possible bias and to provide complete transparency, our department requested that the Dallas County Sheriff's Office conduct an independent investigation of this incident and the events leading up to it. The Sheriff's Office has assigned a team of highly experienced investigators to the case who are conducting a thorough investigation with the help of other law enforcement agencies.

When their work is completed, the information will be reviewed by the Dallas County District Attorney's office and ultimately presented to a Dallas County Grand Jury for review. This process typically takes a number of months. A Grand Jury review of this type of situation is routine and not an indication of wrongdoing by our officers or department.

The Sheriff's Office has specifically requested that our department not release dash-cam video or other evidence until the case can be presented to the Grand Jury. This is a law enforcement best practice that assures that Grand Jurors are seeing the evidence for the first time in a courtroom setting, and maintains the integrity of the investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation, we will release all available information for public review.

While this investigation is not complete, we can share that Sheriff's investigators have confirmed that accounts of the shooting from the officers as well as eye-witnesses at the scene are consistent. There is no question that the suspect was an armed felon who was in the process of committing a number of new crimes when he was confronted by our officers. Investigators are examining whether this individual committed other crimes that day or had known associates.

Our Officers

We appreciate the fact that many residents have asked about the welfare of our officers who were involved in this case. We want to share with you what we and their colleagues at HPDPS have already told these officers in person, "Thanks to your proactive efforts and an alert citizen, you have taken a dangerous criminal off the streets of our community." There is absolutely no doubt in our mind that this individual was in our community to commit a violent crime, and that he would have done so had he not been apprehended. You should also know that following the shooting, officers immediately rendered aid and administered CPR to the suspect until the ambulance arrived.

While we will not be able to discuss the issue during the investigation, we will ultimately be able to share how the suspect was able to conceal a weapon during the initial search and affect an escape from the patrol vehicle. We will also be able to share what best practices we can learn and implement from this incident.

Finally, this incident is a reminder of how important it is to be aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious activity to 911. When the investigations are concluded and the Grand Jury has done its work, the public will have the opportunity to learn more about this case. We look forward to the day when we can provide that information.

On behalf of the men and women of the Highland Park Department of Public Safety, thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Joel T. Williams, III
Mayor



Chris Vinson
Director of Public Safety