

A Letter to the Public

Kelvin M. Oliver, Chair, Public Safety Committee

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At a recent Olympia Fields Village Board meeting, Village President Sterling Burke made a point to clarify the facts regarding the number of carjackings that has taken place in the village. Trustee Desiree Watkins, candidate for Village President, has been falsely reporting during her campaign stumps that there has been upwards of 15 of these carjackings. At this meeting Watkins reported she has taken it upon herself to speak with the management of the Speedway at the corner of Vollmer and Crawford and that they reported to her there has been a carjacking every other day!

The latest victim, an Olympia Fields, resident left the Fuller Car Wash on Lincoln Hwy in Matteson only to get to his driveway on Cumnock, leaving his vehicle running, went to the front door of his home. When he returned to his vehicle a guy was there, flashing a revolver hidden under his coat. Watkins asserted during the Board meeting she met with the victim.

Though President Burke, with collaboration of Acting Chief Scott Morgan, stated for the record there has only been 3 carjackings; one at the Shell Station at Lincoln Hwy and Western, and two at the Speedway on Vollmer and Crawford, all in 2020; and now the latest on Cumnock makes a total of four; Watkins continued her assertion people were coming to her to report these incidents and she was being “proactive.”

I went on the record saying I was angry with what Watkins was saying and the manner she was inserting herself with absolute disregard for protocols and processes in place. Instead of speaking with the Village President, Chief of Police, Village Administrator and/or Public Safety Chair, Watkins independently sought the services of a businessman in Harvey, who also has ownership of a

Security Firm in Harvey, and coincidentally, the latest victim of the carjacking used to work in Harvey! Watkins is a proponent for having this Security Firm from Harvey provide a 2-hour window for women and elderly to get their gas in our village!

As the Public Safety Chair, I am not just angry, but insulted! **Watkins has indicated the Village of Olympia Fields is unsafe and that Police are unable to protect its citizenry, that the Burke Administration is inept, and that she alone must save the day.**

I want to set the record straight, carjackings has become a major issue not just in the Chicagoland area but in the south suburbs as well. One carjacking is too many, however, the number of such incidents in our village is fewer than most in the suburbs. Several initiatives are underway to ameliorate these types of crimes, including DWAIN, a program with similar strategy as the AMBER alert, named after the retired Chicago Fire Department Lieutenant, Dwain Williams, killed in a carjacking in Morgan Park. According to Mitchell Davis, President of National Organization of Black Law Enforcement, as well as, the President of Illinois Chief of Police Association, a new task force aimed specifically at these criminal offenses has been created by the State's Attorney's Office.

Meanwhile, the Police Department is doing its due diligence of investigating the latest carjacking, and the village is investigating the potential liability issues of having an outside security firm provide security at our gas stations.

Being a public servant of this village is still an honorable act and carries fiduciary responsibilities as well. Most of us have aspired to earn your respect and allegiance not as politicians but public servants. I aspire to do right by you, to honor the position you have entrusted me with; as your Village TRUSTEE!