

I'd like to focus today's column on two issues of great important to residents of HRM.

The first involves public safety, always a priority with myself and Council.

Unfortunately, there have been a number of homicides in metro this year, several of them occurring just recently. Reassuringly, however, half have been speedily solved and the rest are under intense investigation with more arrests anticipated.

As disturbing as these shootings are, we must not lose sight of the fact that these are not random acts of violence - invariably, evidence suggests that victims and assailants were involved in criminal activity and knew one another. To put it another way - law-abiding citizens were *not* the targets.

These recent events are a major concern for everyone, not least for me, Council and the Police Chief. Police continue to review their response to the violence to determine what else they can do, or do differently. In addition, two days ago, in company with high-ranking police officials, I met with the Provincial Minister of Justice to discuss the situation.

Let me share with you just a few of the positive ways crime is being fought in HRM:

- Recent legislation permits the authorities to seize property, including money, believed to be the proceeds of criminal activity. This will hit crime where it hurts – in the pocketbook;
- Crimestoppers (1-800-222-TIPS (8477) continues to help police fight and solve crimes of all kinds. The calls, which can be made anonymously, are not

monitored and cannot be traced. This is a vital service because the police cannot do it alone.

- HRM's Youth Advocacy Program is helping more than 60 local young people avoid being drawn into gang life. This important pro-active effort (<http://www.halifax.ca/YouthAdvocateProgram/index.html> or 490-4309) also offers support to the families of the youngsters involved.

Let me conclude by assuring you that HRM remains a law-abiding community where the vast majority of residents are safe.

□□□□

On your behalf, I recently appeared before the Province's Law Amendments Committee to urge the Dexter Government to honour a 2007 agreement relieving residents of the annual burden of funding Provincial services directly through their property taxes.

The province is backing out of the agreement, leaving HRM to face \$45 million more in unexpected costs over the next four years - costs which will mean higher taxes.

Council and I need your support to convince the Province to honour the agreement. A video has been uploaded to the HRM You Tube channel

[www.halifax.ca/adealisadeal/index.html](http://www.halifax.ca/adealisadeal/index.html), and we are building a resource of information about A Deal is a Deal on the [Halifax.ca](http://Halifax.ca) website. We are also using an online petition and Facebook to ignite a conversation and motivate you to contact the Premier and your MLA. You can help by using your own social media channels, your contact lists and your websites to highlight the campaign for fair taxation.

Mr. Premier, a deal is a deal!

*Reach me at [kellyp@halifax.ca](mailto:kellyp@halifax.ca) or [www.peterkelly.ca](http://www.peterkelly.ca) or by phoning 490-4010. You're also invited to join me on my Twitter and Facebook pages.*