

DURHAM



CITY OF DURHAM

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CITY OF MEDICINE

To: Mr. Thomas Bonfield, City Manager
From: Jose L. Lopez, Sr., Chief of Police
Date: February 12, 2014
RE: Work Session/Wanda Boone/Pill Drop Boxes

This memorandum is being sent in regards to the February 20, 2014 Work Session citizen concern submitted by Ms. Wanda Boone. Ms. Boone is offering to provide Pill Drop Boxes for the police substations that do not current have a drop box in place.

Placing pill drop boxes in the District Substations is very challenging due to the strict guidelines required by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Since the boxes have the possibility of containing controlled substances, they must be affixed to a permanent structure like a floor or wall. All our District Substations are currently located in buildings leased by the city and we would need to negotiate with the leaseholders to get permission to permanently mount the boxes to the floor as required by the DEA. The cost of mounting the boxes as well as repairing any damage when the box is removed is incurred by the Police Department.

Another requirement for installing the drop boxes is that they be monitored 24 hours a day by staff or a camera system. Installing a camera system to monitor each box is not cost efficient and the Substation's public access areas are not manned 24 hours a day. This requires us to install an extra lock on the drop box door to deny access during the times the Substation is not manned.

The original goal of the Durham Police Department was to have a drop box located at Police Headquarters, as well as one in our North Side Operation area (District 2 Substation) and one in our South Side operation area (District 3 Substation). Pill Drop Boxes have been set up in these locations as planned. The process for installing the two District drop boxes took approximately one year to complete.

All the boxes are currently checked twice a week by two Special Operations Division Investigators. The contents of each drop box is weighed, packaged and stored in a secure location until they can be incinerated by our property custodians. Over the last four months our records indicate that the drop box at Headquarter, which has 24/7 access, contains approximately ten times more than the two District locations. It is my opinion that the addition of two more drop boxes would not be beneficial to the Department due to the cost of outfitting the boxes, securing them and the time it

would add to the SOD Investigator's workload. In the event that a decision is made by the department to add additional Pill Drop Boxes we can secure them at no cost to the city from DEA through the HIDTA program.

This matter was brought to me by Ms. Boone mid 2013 during which time I explained the process and advised her that we would not need funding to purchase Pill Drop Boxes.