

Councillors urge sensitivity in discussing police-involved shooting

Council members are urging the community to tone down the rhetoric in discussing an October 30 altercation between York Regional Police and a 17-year-old Aurora resident which left the youth dead.

On October 30, just after 7.45 p.m., York Regional Police were called to reports of a break-and-enter in progress on Downey Circle in the northwest quadrant of Bayview Avenue and St. John's Sideroad.

Soon after officers arrived at the scene from York Regional Police, there was an exchange of gunfire between a 17-year-old male and four police officers. The male was struck multiple times and pronounced deceased at the scene. One Officer suffered minor injuries and was taken to hospital for treatment, said Monica Hudon, a spokesperson for Ontario's Special Investigations Unit (SIU), which examines cases of injury and death involving police officers.

In a statement following the altercation, York Regional Police Chief Jim MacSween said it was a tragic event, a sentiment shared throughout the community.

As speculation continues regarding the circumstances surrounding the death of Mikail Rashid, members of Aurora Council have urged members of the public to be more mindful in commenting on the case.

We've had a tragedy just a few days ago in Ward 1 and, of course, we're all waiting for the investigation of the shooting and the incident that happened there, but there has been a lot of discussion, a lot of difficult discussions that have seen on social media, it's almost anti-social media, said Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese at last week's Committee of the Whole meeting, an unusual instance of a police case being discussed at the Council table.

I would just like to make the comment that this young person was a son, he was probably a grandson, he was a neighbour, Councillor Weese continued. He had friends that are missing him and it's a tragedy and I would just like to make a comment that all of our residents should be cautious about some of the hateful rhetoric I have heard, some of the racist comments, and I just had to bring it up at this Council because it is something that has to stop. I don't know how we stop it, but if it is an appeal from us I hope that our residents can be a little more sensitive to individuals in this community.

Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo echoed these comments, adding, I couldn't agree more.

While there is nobody around that wants any harm to any police officers, or the public, but if that 17-year-old did do something wrong, I always look at it as a failure of our community that they're put in that position to do something so grave and we can't ignore that because it is ignoring the problem, said Councillor Gallo. Thank you, Councillor Weese, for bringing that up and I share your views.

As the SIU has invoked its mandate to examine the case, York Regional Police are not expected to comment further on the circumstances.

Anyone with information on the case is asked to contact the SIU at 1-800-787-8529 or by visiting siu.on.ca.

By Brock Weir