

# Columbus Council President Calls For Police Reforms

Courtesy of 90.5 WCBE

By JIM LETIZIA, ASSOCIATED PRESS & OHIO PUBLIC RADIO

A Cincinnati police officer escaped injury when his helmet was struck by a bullet during a police brutality protest early Sunday while in Columbus a fire considered suspicious destroyed a nearly completed apartment building.

The fire at the four-story Residences at Topiary Park burned for hours, causing part of the roof and several floors to collapse. An attempt was made to set fire to another apartment building under construction next door. Police deployed pepper spray against protestors at the Statehouse last night after they say they were pelted by water bottles. Columbus City Council President Shannon Hardin tweeted that he, Congresswoman Joyce Beatty, and Franklin County Commissioner Kevin Boyce were hit with pepper spray or mace during Saturday's protest downtown. Beatty spoke with several media outlets Sunday, including Jo Ingles at Ohio Public Radio:

*Beatty says she went to the protest outside the Statehouse Saturday morning to lend her voice to the fight against racism and injustice. She said most of the protestors were calm but when a scuffle broke out next to where she was standing, a police officer used pepper spray. "I learned pepper spray is not one direction." Beatty suggests officers deploy bullhorns to make their orders heard over loud crowds but should allow people to safely express themselves. "People are hurting and we cannot and what I think has been proven is unnecessary and excessive force does not work." The president of the Fraternal Order of Police, Keith Farrell, issued a statement defending actions taken by Columbus Police and*

*blamed Mayor Andrew Ginther for tying the hands of police in situations involving out of control protestors.*

But Council President Hardin says they were at the peaceful protest and a few people got out of hand. Hardin issued an official statement says he's seen instances of police violence, and calling for several police reforms, including creation of a citizen review board and implementation of a series of recommendations issued last year in the Matrix Report. The Columbus Urban League is calling for a national economic protest by asking people not to go to work today.

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has called out the Ohio National Guard and asked the highway patrol to help enforce laws in Columbus and Cleveland, which are under 10 p.m. curfews amid protests over the death of George Floyd. DeWine says the vast majority of protesters wanted "simply to be heard" but their voices "are sadly being drowned out by a smaller group of violent individuals."

Police say a protest in Dayton Sunday included no violence. Peaceful gatherings were also reported in Springfield and Piqua. Organizers are planning a community vigil tonight at Springfield City Hall in memory of George Floyd. Community leaders will share their thoughts on Floyd's death, followed by a moment of silence in his memory.