



Promoting Safety in Our Community

Contact: Karen Taylor
Phone: (573) 864-9710

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 14, 2009

Keep Columbia Safe Kicks Off Surveillance Camera Petition Drive

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Keep Columbia Safe today kicked off a petition drive to place an initiative on the April 2010 ballot authorizing the Columbia police chief to deploy or move downtown safety cameras for the purpose of enhancing public safety.

Karen and Adam Taylor of Keep Columbia Safe made the announcement this morning at a press conference held at the same parking garage where Adam was brutally attacked and beaten by a group of seven teenagers in June. About 150 people crowded the entrance of the city-owned garage at Tenth and Cherry streets to hear the announcement.

Karen Taylor said the organization's goal is to collect 2,579 signatures of registered Columbia voters before Oct. 31 to ensure the initiative appears on the April 2010 ballot.

"The outpouring of public concern following the June attack downtown has been remarkable," she said. "People are outraged that the city council dismissed an appeal to hear the public on this important issue. The result of that ill-advised decision resulted in this effort to place the question of camera use downtown before voters on the April ballot."

In April 2009, the Columbia City Council voted to remove existing mobile video cameras from downtown. The June attack on Adam Taylor was captured by a city-owned video surveillance system installed in the Tenth and Cherry garage. Within six hours of seeing the video, the Columbia Police Department had arrested three of the attackers, and two more have since turned themselves in.

At the July 20 city council meeting, attack victim Adam Taylor and his family made a formal request that the council hear public comment at a future meeting and reconsider the camera proposal. The council voted 3-4 to deny that request, with Councilpersons Hoppe, Skala, Sturtz and Wade voting against.

Keep Columbia Safe was formed in response to the council's refusal to give citizens an opportunity to voice their support for the use of city-owned video cameras downtown as a tool to aid law enforcement.

The group's Web site has become a clearinghouse for information about crime and safety issues, and how residents can support effective law enforcement in our community.

Déjà Vu Comedy Club is hosting a fundraiser for the organization on Friday, Oct. 2 at 7 p.m., with comedian Tammy Pescatelli performing.

For more information about the organization, visit www.keepcolumbiasafe.com