

Tenant policy

The Brooklyn Center City Council tabled discussion on a tenant protection ordinance.

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Playoff time

Osseo/Fridley senior gymnast Mandy Carlson finishes in the top 10 at the state tournament.

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Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022



(AP PHOTO/NICOLE NERI)

Daunte Wright's parents, Aubrey Wright and Katie Wright, who also sometimes uses the name Katie Bryant, react after former Brooklyn Center Police Officer Kim Potter was sentenced to two years in prison, Friday, Feb. 18.

2 year sentence

Ex-officer Potter found guilty of first-degree manslaughter in Wright shooting

By KEVIN MILLER
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Former Brooklyn Center Police Office Kim Potter received

a two-year sentence Feb. 18 for the fatal shooting of Daunte Wright.

She will serve 16 months of that sentence in prison, and with good behavior, the remaining 8 months on supervised release.

Potter was found guilty of first- and second-degree manslaughter after fatally shooting Wright in

Brooklyn Center during a traffic stop last April.

Under Minnesota statute, Potter was sentenced on the most serious charge, first-degree manslaughter. The sentence is a substantial downward departure from the sentencing guidelines.

Prosecutors were requesting an 86-month prison sentence for Potter, while her attorneys

argued that she should serve a lighter sentence or probation.

Hennepin County District Court Judge Regina Chu, who called the case "one of the saddest" she ever adjudicated, argued that because Potter does not represent a danger to the public, a prison sentence would only serve to punish her.

The unintentional nature of the crime

and the chaotic nature of the incident made it less serious than most manslaughter cases, she said. "This is a cop who made a tragic mistake," Chu said. "There rightfully should be some accountability."

Chu said her decision should not be seen as "(diminishing) Daunte Wright's life.

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BC approves development agreement for Opportunity Site project

By KEVIN MILLER
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The Brooklyn Center City Council approved a development agreement Feb. 14 for the first construction project within the long-planned Opportunity Site redevelopment area.

The city owns approximately 35 acres of land within the larger 80-acre Opportunity Site parcel, which is bounded by Shingle Creek Parkway on the west, Bass Lake Road and Highway 100 on the south and southeast, and Summit Drive on the east and north.

The latest proposal is to build out approximately five new urban blocks of development on the city-owned parcels at the northeast corner of Shingle Creek Parkway and Bass Lake Road.

The proposal includes six buildings of multi-family housing, an event center, childcare facilities, mental healthcare suites, barber shop space, commercial space,

a park, and an entrepreneur incubator space.

"This project that's before you this evening is one that has made an enormous effort to address as many of the community desires and things that they've heard as I believe is possible," said Meg Beekman, community development director.

The project, proposed by Alatus LLC, Project for Pride in Living, and Resurrecting World Faith Ministries, includes 744 housing units across multiple buildings.

Among the housing development buildings are 289 market-rate units, a 205 mixed-income units, and 250 affordable-rate units.

Mixed-income units have at least half of all total units restricted to renters earning less than 80% of area median income, while the affordable units would be restricted to those

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(SCREENSHOT)

Kim Potter speaks to the family of Daunte Wright before being sentenced to two years in prison.

Potter

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His life mattered.”

She asked those who disagree with the sentencing to empathize with Potter and her situation. “Of all the jobs in public service, police officers have the most difficult one,” Chu said.

Potter’s actions are in contrast with those of Derek Chauvin in the death of George Floyd and Mohammed Noor in the death of Justine Damond, Chu said.

“Officer Kimberly Potter was trying to do the right thing,” she said. “She never intended to hurt anyone. Her conduct cries out for a sentence significantly below the guidelines.”

Members of Wright’s family offered statements remembering loved one who died at the age of 20.

“I was so proud to be his father,” said Arbuey Wright. “He was my son, he was my prince. Daunte was my reason to do better.”

Katie Wright, Daunte’s mother, said Potter did not appear to be remorseful.

“I refer to her as ‘defendant’ because I will not give her the respect of calling her by her name,” she said. “She referred to Daunte over and over again as ‘the driver,’ as if killing him wasn’t enough to dehumanize him. She never once said his name, and for that I’ll never be able to forgive you. ... She never once looked as us passing through the hallway every day.”

Potter’s attorney spoke of Potter’s law enforcement history, reading letters and cards from her supporters across the nation, including other first responders.

“She has enormous

community support,” said attorney Paul Engh. “Since she has been in prison, you can see three boxes of cards.”

Potter offered a short, tearful statement apologizing to the Wright family and the city of Brooklyn Center prior to her sentencing.

“I am so sorry that I hurt you so badly – my heart is broke, devastated for all of you,” she said. “Earlier when you said that I didn’t look at you during the trial, I don’t believe I had a right to. I didn’t even have a right to be in the same room with you.”

Potter will have credit for 58 days already served in prison.

Reactions

Following Potter’s sentencing, Wright’s family spoke to reporters outside the courthouse.

“Today, the justice system murdered (Daunte) all over again,” Katie Wright said. “Once again we are standing here to say we’re very disappointed in the outcome.”

Arbuey Wright called the sentencing a “slap on the wrist.” “I feel cheated, I feel hurt, I’m very upset,” he said. “They were so tied up into her feelings and what’s going on with her that they forgot about my son being killed.”

Attorney Ben Crump, who is representing the family, pointed to racial discrepancies in sentencing, saying that there are people of color serving longer sentences for selling marijuana than Potter will serve for killing Wright.

Attorney General Keith Ellison did not comment on the decision in person, but released a written statement.

“I accept (Chu’s) judgment,” he said. “I urge

everyone to accept her judgment. I don’t ask you to agree with her decision, which takes nothing away from the truth of the jury’s verdict. I know it is hurtful to loved ones of Daunte Wright.

“I ask that we remember the beauty of Daunte Wright, to keep his memory in our hearts, and to know that no number of years in prison could ever capture the wonder of this young man’s life. There is no cause for celebration: No one has won. We all have lost, none more than Daunte Wright and the people who love him.”

Brian Peters, president of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association, reacted favorably to Chu’s decision.

“While we disagreed with the trial verdict, we respect the court and jury’s role and appreciate the significant downward departure in sentencing,” he said. “We are thankful for Judge Chu’s thoughtful approach in her stated reason, as she recognized Ms. Potter’s law enforcement service and that she made a tragic mistake.”

In a written statement, Brooklyn Center Mayor Mike Elliott said that many people in the Brooklyn Center community were disappointed by Chu’s decision.

“In sentencing former officer Kim Potter to less than 1/3rd of the requested sentence, it has failed, in the eyes of many in our community, to deliver true accountability,” he said. “The requested sentence of 7 years by the State falls well within the State Sentencing Guidelines of 6 to 8½ years for this conviction. Daunte Wright will still be gone when Kim Potter is released. He is gone forever.”

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Lenten Solemn Suppers
Wednesdays, March 9 - April 6 at 5:00pm
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