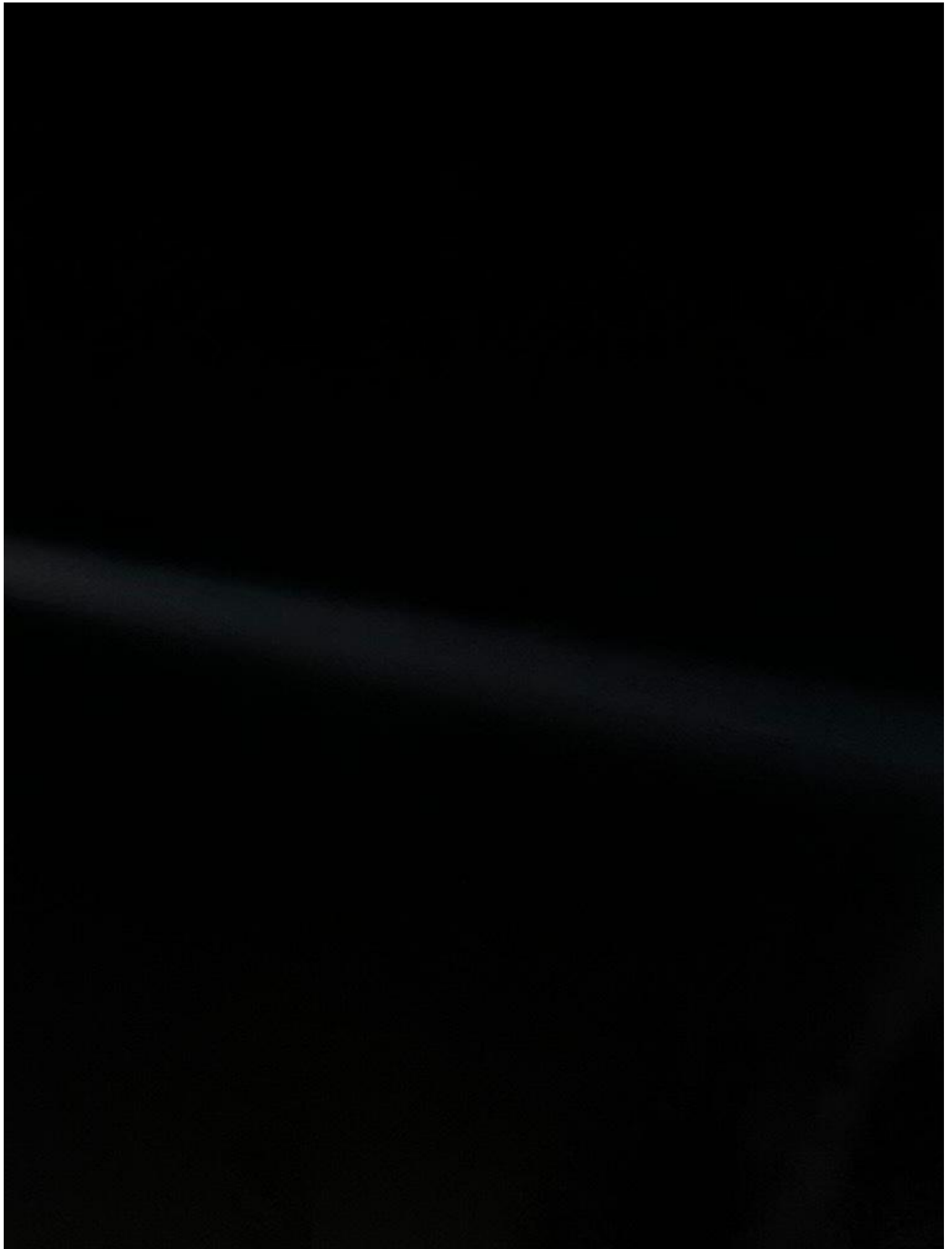


Alderwoman Says Community Support Strong For 13-Year-Old Killed In Alton Shooting

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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ALTON - Fourth Ward Alderwoman Rosetta Brown said at the Alton City Council meeting this week that there's been an "impressive" outpouring of community support for the family of Ra'niya Steward, the 13-year-old victim of a fatal shooting in Alton [earlier this month](#).

"The community support for Ra'niya Steward was quite impressive and the family really, really thank you all," Brown said. "As the Steward family navigates the unimaginable pain of losing their beloved Ra'niya, the outpouring of support from the community becomes a source of strength.

"From financial assistance to emotional support, Alton residents rallied around the family, demonstrating that even in the face of darkness, there is a glimmer of humanity that can shine through."

She added that the tragic story of Steward's death "serves as a reminder of the consequences of senseless violence in our communities."

"It sparks a collective call to action, urging leaders, community organizers, and residents alike to address the root causes of such incidents and work towards building a society where children can grow up without the constant threat of violence hanging over their heads."

Steward will be laid to rest this Saturday, March 2, 2024. Brown asked the public to "please keep the family and our community in your prayers."

[On Feb. 3, 2024](#), Steward was critically injured in a drive-by shooting on Highland Avenue and remained in critical condition until [Feb. 14, 2024](#), when she died from her injuries. Five total individuals were charged in connection with the shooting, and their charges were [upgraded from attempted first-degree murder to first-degree murder](#) following her death. Petitions filed in Madison County court to deny their pretrial release confirm Steward was not the intended target of the shooting.

The community gathered for a [candlelight vigil](#) on Feb. 8, 2024, which was organized by Brown and concerned citizen Missy Johnson. During the event, Mayor David Goins, Alton Police Chief Jarrett Ford and others spoke and offered prayers and condolences to the family.

Leon Smallwood, president of the Alton Branch of the NAACP, later [issued a statement](#) on the shooting offering suggestions to address community violence. Tori Porter,

president of the Alton Branch of the NAACP Youth Council issued [her own statement](#), adding that she personally knew Steward and the shooting “hits home” for her.

A full recording of the Feb. 28, 2024, Alton City Council meeting featuring Brown’s statement in full is available at the top of this story, on the [Riverbender.com Facebook page](#), or on [Riverbender.com/video](#).