



Rochester Hills Agenda Report

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File Number: 2004-0032

File Number: 2004-0032	File Type: Ordinance	Status: Held in Council
Version: 6	Reference:	Controlling Body: City Council Regular Meeting
Requester: Public Safety Committee	Cost:	Introduced: 01/27/2004
File Name: False Alarm Ordinance	Final Action:	

Title: Discussion Regarding False Alarm Ordinance

Notes: 10/05/05 - CC Passed resolution authorizing Staran to examine the ord and come back with a report (RES0328-2005).

Code Sections:

Indexes: OCSD, Safety, Ordinance

Sponsors:

Attachments: 0032 Agenda Summary.pdf, Proposed Amendments - Chapter 42, False Alarms.pdf, 100505 Agenda Summary.pdf, 0032 Referral Notice.pdf, Sterling Heights False Alarm Info.pdf, False Alarm info.pdf, 033104 Agenda Summary.pdf, 020204 PS Minutes.pdf, 032604 Master Report.pdf, 040204 Memo Capt. Smith.pdf, 091405 Resolution.pdf, 100505 Proposed Resolution.pdf

Agenda Date:

Agenda Number:

Enactment Date:

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History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	Public Safety Committee	02/02/2004	Recommended for Approval	City Council Work Session			Pass
Verbose Action: Whereas, significant problems are caused in Rochester Hills by a large number of Police responses to false alarm systems. These false alarms cause man power problems, costs, liability issues and greater harm by reducing the credibility of all alarms.							
Whereas, other communities have instituted programs involving alarm registration and a scale of fines for repeat false alarms.							
Therefore, be it resolved, that the Rochester Hills City Council Public Safety Committee recommends that City Council invite Captain Bob Smith and Deputy Dan Clark to a future City Council Work Session to present both the problems and proposed solutions.							
Notes: Captain Smith introduced Deputy Dan Clark explaining that Mr. Clark had previously worked for the City of Troy Police Department where he implemented and administered a program which significantly reduced the number of false alarm calls.							
Mr. Clark, noting that nearly ninety-nine percent (99%) of alarm calls to police departments are false, explained the program used in Troy as well as many other municipalities throughout the United States. The program, as he described it, uses the following techniques:							

- The City ordinance is written to require that all homeowners and businesses with monitored alarm systems register these systems with the City and pay an annual registration fee.
- The ordinance clarifies that the City and its Police Department are under no obligation to respond to alarms, especially in the case of repeated falls alarms.
- The ordinance defines a fine structure to be implemented in the case of repeated false alarms. For example, a \$100 fine for the third and fourth false alarm, \$200 for the fifth and sixth false alarm, \$500 for every false alarm thereafter.
- A sworn officer must should be assigned to this program to add authority and weight to the implementation of the program.
- A clerk will may be needed to build and maintain a data base of alarm system registrants.
- A properly maintained data base will also function as documentation to be presented in court were litigation brought by a homeowner or business in the event of the police not responding to an appropriate alarm.
- The program, after approximately five (5) years of consistent implementation, will yield significantly fewer false alarms.

Mr. Clark stressed that the program is not designed to "pay for itself" through fines and registration fees, but rather to reduce false alarm calls to the police department, thus freeing officers to respond to more pressing duties.

Following in-depth discussion of the program, Committee members reached a consensus to move a resolution to have a presentation of this program made before City Council at a future Work Session.

Aye: Duistermars, Raschke, Eble and Formanczyk
Absent: Robbins

2 Public Safety Committee 03/15/2004 Approved Pass

Verbose Action: Resolved that the Public Safety Committee request the Mayor to allow the OCSD Rochester Hills Sub Station Commander the ability to continue to investigate and research the False Alarm Program in order to provide the necessary information for the City Council Work Session of March 31, 2004.

Aye: Duistermars, Raschke, Robbins, Eble and Formanczyk

2 Public Safety Committee 03/17/2004 Follow-Up

Notes: *Email Mayor copy of Resolution 3/16/04 - skg*

3 City Council Work Session 03/31/2004 Discussed

Notes: Mr. Dan Clark, 7608 Sweetbriar, West Bloomfield, identified himself as the former False Alarm Officer for the City of Troy Police Department. He described in detail the program he implemented in Troy to contend with excessive false alarms which result in a waste of public safety officer's time and resources. The program, as he described it, uses the following techniques:

- The City ordinance is written to require that all homeowners and businesses with monitored alarm systems register these systems with the City and pay an annual registration fee.
- The ordinance clarifies that the City and its Police Department are under no obligation to respond to alarms, especially in the case of repeated falls alarms.
- The ordinance defines a fine structure to be implemented in the case of repeated false alarms. For example, a \$100 fine for the third and fourth false alarm, \$200 for the fifth and sixth false alarm, \$500 for every false alarm thereafter.
- A sworn officer should be assigned to this program to add authority and weight to the implementation of the program.
- A clerk may be needed to build and maintain a data base of alarm system registrants.
- A properly maintained data base will also function as documentation to be presented in court were litigation brought by a homeowner or business in the event of the police not responding to an appropriate alarm.
- The program, after approximately five (5) years of consistent implementation, will yield significantly fewer false alarms.

Mr. Clark noted that the average amount of time law enforcement officers spend answering false alarms is thirty (30) minutes and approximately 60% of all police calls are the result of false alarms.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Lee Zendel, 1575 Dutton Road, noting that he sat in on the false alarm presentation at the Public Safety Committee meeting, voiced his support for the system, but suggested that the registration fee be increased as well as the fines resulting from non-compliance.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Mr. Clark, addressing specific questions from Council members, made the following observations:

- * The intention of the program is not to generate revenues to offset the salaries of additional officers, but rather to reduce the occurrences of false alarms to the extent that the current roster of police officers are free to respond to legitimate calls.
- * The program is most effective in communities that maintain a high level of diligence to the program's procedures.
- * Rochester Hills' current false alarm problem substantiates the implementation of this type of program.

The consensus of City Council was to return this issue to the Public Safety Committee for further examination and to consider issues of customization specific to the Rochester Hills community.

- 3 Public Safety Committee 04/12/2004 Approved Pass

Notes: *The Committee discussed the presentation by Deputy Clark at the City Council Work Session on March 31, 2004 with the following comments:*

- * *Deputy Clark gave a nice presentation under the circumstances of the controversy of the NET Program .*
- * *The False Alarm Program would be "revenue positive" and offset some revenue-sharing issues that began in 2003 relative to the OCSD.*
- * *The City Council would like the Public Safety Committee to continue to study the False Alarm Program because it is an innovative way to generate revenue.*
- * *The Committee consensus was for Chairperson Duistermars to communicate to Mayor Somerville that the current study is at the planning phase only; not at the hiring phase.*

The Committee recessed from 8:04 PM to 8:06 PM.

Aye: Duistermars, Raschke, Eble and Formanczyk
Absent: Robbins

- 4 Public Safety Committee 02/07/2005 Discussed

Notes: *Mr. Zendel informed the Committee that the City of Troy's budget reflects their False Alarm Program revenues at \$200,000 up from \$170,000 for fines and registration fees.*

The Committee held a brief discussion and noted the Committee members are in support of a False Alarm Program. Capt. Smith noted that the Mayor has strongly indicated to him that she is not interested in pursuing a False Alarm Program. Mr. Zendel strongly felt it should be rediscussed.

- * *It was suggested that Mr. Zendel make a one-on-one appointment with the Mayor to "re-open" the discussion of a False Alarm Program.*

- 4 Public Safety Committee 04/04/2005 Discussed

Notes: *The Committee discussed a False Alarm Ordinance and made the following points:*

- * *There was a presentation made at a City Council Work Session on March 31, 2004 by Mr. Dan Clark, former False Alarm Officer for the City of Troy.*

* An ordinance would also require accurate record keeping for complete "due process" as well as working with citizens and businesses to educate them, etc. It is very likely that within three (3) years, a False Alarm Ordinance program would bring in surplus funds which would not only offset administrative costs, but reduce false alarm calls and free up police resources for other needed services.

* There could be a separate line-item in the budget for financial tracking purposes.

* There are "boiler-plate" programs being used that are successful and self-funding.

* The ordinance could contain a fine schedule that increases if false alarms are repeated at the same address.

* In 2004, seventeen percent (17%) of the call load at Rochester Hills sub station was alarms. Statically, over 99% of alarms nationally are false alarms.

* As more homes are built, the number of alarm calls will grow. Alarm companies simply want to sell alarms.

Mr. Lee Zendel, 1575 Dutton Road, commented that the City of Farmington Hills has budgeted \$90,000 as false alarm fees in the 2006 budget.

The Committee consensus was to continue this discussion at the next Public Safety Committee meeting.

4 Public Safety Committee 06/06/2005 Discussed

Notes: The Committee briefly discussed the False Alarm ordinance and made the following points:

* At the April Public Safety Committee meeting, Mayor Somerville indicated her support of a False Alarm ordinance that can be upheld.

* In order to achieve maximum results, it is very important to follow a proven, successful model.

* The City of Sterling Heights has recently implemented a False Alarm Ordinance.

4 Public Safety Committee 07/11/2005 Recommended for City Council Approval Regular Meeting Pass

Notes: Chairperson Raschke briefly recapped the False Alarm discussion from 2004 and asked for a resolution to move it forward to City Council for discussion.

Aye: Barnett, Raschke, Robbins and Eble

Absent: Elliott

6 City Council Regular Meeting 10/05/2005 Adopted by Resolution Pass

Notes: **Ms. Raschke** indicated that the Public Safety Committee had discussed the matter of excessive false alarms in the City and had determined that a review of the City's current false alarm ordinance was recommended.

Mr. Staran explained that he had met with Fire Chief Ron Crowell, Captain Bob Smith of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department and Mr. Ed Anzek, Director of Planning/Development to discuss this matter. He described the process as a "good, productive meeting" and that they have a "good running start" to begin revising the ordinance.

Mr. Barnett requested that Mr. Staran's changes be brought back for an informal review prior to Council being asked to take action.

Aye: Hill, Barnett, Dalton, Duistermars, Holder, Raschke and Robbins

6 Public Safety Committee 04/03/2006 Discussed

Notes: *Captain Smith provided an update which included the following:*

** The False Alarm ordinance officer is in place and is working on educating himself with the ordinance.*

** The draft ordinance has been reviewed by the City Attorney and is ready for review by members of Council and the Administration, particularly regarding registration fees and the appeal process, etc. It was suggested to model the false alarm fees after the fire fees.*

** The ordinance data bank may be built upon Oakland County's data bank.*

** The ordinance will be implemented in phases to include a public education and information campaign for City residents.*

** The City Attorney along with Capt. Smith will provide an update to City Council at a future meeting.*

Text of Legislative File 2004-0032

..Title

Discussion Regarding False Alarm Ordinance

..Body

Resolved that the Rochester Hills City Council directs the City Attorney to work with Administrative Staff to review the current False Alarm Ordinance and provide a revised ordinance taking into consideration the National Model and ordinances from other communities as they apply to the City of Rochester Hills; and

Be It Further Resoled that the City Attorney is requested to provide a report at a future City Council meeting.