

**LODI CITY COUNCIL
SHIRTSLEEVE SESSION
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET
TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2013**

A. Roll Call by City Clerk

An Informal Informational Meeting ("Shirtsleeve" Session) of the Lodi City Council was held Tuesday, April 2, 2013, commencing at 7:00 a.m.

Present: Council Member Hansen, Council Member Johnson, Mayor Pro Tempore Katzakian, and Mayor Nakanishi

Absent: Council Member Mounce

Also Present: City Manager Bartlam, City Attorney Schwabauer, and City Clerk Johl

B. Topic(s)

B-1 Presentation and Discussion Regarding the Alarm Program and Ordinance (PD)

Police Chief Mark Helms and Management Analyst Jeanie Biskup provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the City of Lodi alarm program. Specific topics of discussion included the alarm program overview, alarm calls, false alarms, false alarm costs, current permits and fees, comparison with other cities, challenges, and recommendations regarding updating the ordinance and fees.

In response to Council Member Hansen, Ms. Biskup stated the one-time residential alarm permit fee is \$25 due at the time of installation although there is no recourse currently for alarms that are installed without the Police Department's knowledge. Council Member Hansen suggested the notification requirement be placed on the alarm companies through the ordinance.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Biskup stated currently the department is not notified if and when ownership of the residence changes although this could also be addressed if the notification requirement was placed on the alarm companies.

In response to Council Member Hansen, Ms. Biskup confirmed the officer will clear the call once the residence is secured regardless of whether personal contact has been made through the listed phone numbers for response.

In response to Mayor Nakanishi, Ms. Biskup stated a monitored alarm is tracked by a private company that generally contacts the residence first while an unmonitored alarm relies solely on neighbors and passersby to notice that the alarm has been set off and to call the police.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Katzakian, Ms. Biskup confirmed that the Police Department no longer receives direct alarm calls that are automatically triggered when the alarm is set off.

In response to Council Member Hansen, Ms. Biskup confirmed that generally all alarms, whether monitored or unmonitored, have an auto reset, which silences the alarm after 15 minutes.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Biskup confirmed that access to the property is generally not an issue so long as the alarm can be remotely reset by the alarm company or through an automatic reset.

In response to Mayor Nakanishi, Ms. Biskup stated a failure to respond could include no response from the contact numbers or a refusal to go to the site.

In response to Council Member Hansen, Ms. Biskup stated multiple false alarms in a short amount of time due to equipment failure will generate a large invoice immediately, the resident generally contacts the department upon receipt of the invoice, and staff works with the resident and company to mitigate the fines and fees based on proof of the failure and correction of the problem.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Biskup stated the private alarm company industry has expanded since the alarm ordinance was first adopted as has the data capacity. Ms. Biskup stated monitoring companies provide a first response prior to the police being called and currently 50% of all known alarms appear to be monitored.

In response to Mayor Nakanishi, Chief Helms stated verifications vary greatly and examples include a first level verification of monitoring to a second or third level of verification including additional independent factors such as third party visuals of broken glass, crime in progress, etc. Chief Helms stated he believed the first level of verification for monitoring was appropriate for the Lodi community. A brief discussion ensued between Council Member Hansen and Chief Helms regarding the variety of alarm systems available in the current market from multiple vendors.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Biskup stated based on her experience she is not aware of any situation involving inaudible alarms because they would likely not serve as an effective deterrent.

In response to Council Member Hansen, Ms. Biskup stated that the current electronic alarm permitting program is not properly communicating with the Computer Aided Dispatch program and that there is a need to update the alarm billing and tracking program.

In response to Council Member Hansen, Chief Helms and Ms. Biskup confirmed that the goal is to set an across the board fee for false alarm deterrence with some sort of cost recovery feature rather than charge for specific periods of time on call outs.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Biskup stated the City of Roseville has gone to a collection service type of alarm monitoring and that it has not noticed a reduction in false alarms but it has noticed an increase in citizen complaints.

In response to Council Member Hansen, City Manager Bartlam stated the two primary options available to the City Council are to purchase an independent electronic alarm billing and tracking program as outlined in Option #1, for which resources are presently available, or incorporate the alarm billing and tracking into the City's financial system replacement as outlined in Option #2, which may be a couple of years down the road.

In response to Mayor Nakanishi, Ms. Biskup stated every false alarm triggers a letter, which is designed to serve as an alarm education piece to the resident. Ms. Biskup stated other education resources such as "Behind the Badge" have also been utilized to teach the residents about proper alarm permitting and use.

In response to Council Member Hansen, City Attorney Schwabauer stated unpaid fines for false alarms could be prosecuted as a municipal code violation if it is included in the ordinance as such.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Biskup stated currently they are averaging 85% collection on annual invoices and unpaid invoices go to collections.

In response to Council Member Hansen, Ms. Biskup stated based on her personal experience

she believes that an incremental fine increase per false alarm does have an impact and encourages compliance.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Biskup stated a new electronic alarm billing and tracking program will allow for an annual, bi-annual, or other time-based renewal process so that changes in ownership and alarm systems could be updated in a timely manner.

In response to Mayor Nakanishi, Chief Helms confirmed that staff will engage in a community-wide education program with the implementation of a revised alarm ordinance to ensure that residents are aware of how to properly permit and utilize their alarms so as to limit false alarms.

Ed Miller spoke in support of the proposed ordinance amendments and encouraged strong enforcement of violators to encourage permitting compliance and false alarm deterrence.

C. Comments by Public on Non-Agenda Items

None.

D. Adjournment

No action was taken by the City Council. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 a.m.

ATTEST:

Randi Johl
City Clerk