

RESOLUTION NO. 20141211-108

WHEREAS, the City of Austin seeks to enhance safety for all of its citizens through the effective use of public safety resources and collaboration with residents and private businesses; and

WHEREAS, burglar alarms systems provide a valuable tool for deterrence and early warning, and Austin has over 52,000 registered systems within the City limits; and

WHEREAS, police service response to burglar alarms constitute 5.2% of total dispatches in 2011 and was a top ten reason for dispatch in nine out of ten sectors; and

WHEREAS, in 2012 there were 31,760 burglar alarm calls of which 28,500 were false and 37% of false alarms came from unpermitted systems; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Police Department joined the False Alarm Reduction Association which is an organization made up of government and public safety agency employees that are committed to reducing false alarms and sharing best practices; and

WHEREAS, a July 2012 report on the City of Austin's patrol utilization by the Police Executive Research Forum suggested that the high number of burglar alarm dispatches warrants a re-examination of the city's alarm ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the City Council passed resolution 20140320-047 seeking to address issues with false alarms in the community and at city-owned facilities; and

WHEREAS, on August 21st, 2014 a memo to council by the Austin Police Department responded with the following recommendations:

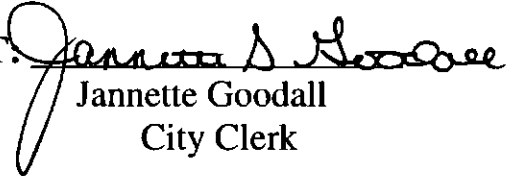
- Revise the current ordinance to require that citizens secure an alarm permit before an alarm company can activate the system
- Work with the Government Relations Team to change state law in order to allow a municipality to charge the security company that activates an unpermitted alarm system rather than charging the alarm customer
- Revise the issues a hearing officer can rule on in the case of a false alarm on an unpermitted account
- Consider requiring alarm companies to make at least one attempt to contact the property before activating a call to 911
- Require the office of real estate to consider the security needs of a department as a part of their facility search criteria both in terms of the physical structure of the building, existing security infrastructure and the cost of installing or updating security requirements if the facility's alarm system is inadequate
- Work with the Government Relations Team to advocate for reducing the number of free false alarms down from three to two under state law
- Work with the Government Relations Team to advocate for a change in state law that will provide municipalities with the ability to charge more realistic alarm fees in order to recover funds expended as a result of responding to false alarms; **NOW THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

Approve a resolution directing the City Manager to implement city staff recommendations to reduce the occurrence of false alarms and return with ordinance revisions for council approval within 90 days.

ADOPTED: December 11, 2014

ATTEST:


Jannette Goodall
City Clerk