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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Billy Grogan, Chief of Police
Thru: Warren Hutmacher, City Manager
Date: December 10, 2012
Subject: **Alarm Ordinance**

ITEM DESCRIPTION

Currently, the City of Dunwoody does not have an alarm ordinance which regulates the registration of residential and commercial alarms as well as assessing fines for excessive false alarms.

BACKGROUND

The alarm ordinance was presented to the Council on several occasions in August. After some discussion, the Council asked staff for additional information prior to making a decision about the structure of the ordinance before final consideration.

Questions

#1 – Are there cities that do not have the no response paragraph in their ordinance and if there are, what has been their experience with the ordinance?

I conducted additional research and spoke to a number of individuals in the industry including Glen Mowrey, a retired Deputy Chief with the Charlotte PD and a law enforcement liaison with the Security Alarm Industry Coalition (SAIC). Mr. Mowrey travels around the country and assists departments with implementing their false alarm ordinances. According to Mr. Mowrey, most cities have the no response built into their ordinance. The cities that do not have this provision see a much smaller reduction in false alarms.

#2 – If the City of Dunwoody false alarm ordinance does not include the no response paragraph, will this fact negatively affect a third party vendor's interest in contracting with the City of Dunwoody to manage our false alarm program?

I spoke to Glen Mowrey as well as a third party vendor. Both indicated that the absence of this paragraph should not impact a company's willingness to manage our false alarm program.

#3 – Have there been any unintended consequences as a result of the adoption of a false alarm ordinance similar to the one proposed by the City of Dunwoody including the no response paragraph?

I have not been able to identify any unintended consequences, specifically where someone was injured, as a result of being placed on the no response list.



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RECOMMENDED ACTION

At this time, staff needs direction from the City Council in regards to the provisions in question in the proposed alarm ordinance. Staff still recommends the City Council approve the alarm ordinance as previously submitted, the contracting with a private company to manage the program and the adoption of the registration, fine and fee schedule. In light of the City Council's concerns, staff recommends the City Council consider extending the time period that fine payments are due from 30 days to 60 or 90 days. This extension would give the alarm user multiple notifications about the fine and an extended period of time for payment. The City Council might also consider adding a considerable late fee if the fine is not paid on time which might encourage timely payments as well as authorizing the filing of liens on properties for those unpaid fines exceeding certain thresholds.