



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 19-772, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-5.

CC - Introduction of an Ordinance Amending Culver City Municipal Code Chapter 11.04, "Alarm Systems," to Clarify the Provisions Related to Local Alarms Which are not Monitored by a Remote Monitoring Facility.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2019

Contact Person/Dept: Lt. Leon Lopez/Police Department

Phone Number: 310-253-6251

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☐

Public Hearing: ☐ **Action Item:** ☒ **Attachments:** ☒

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☐

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (01/23/19);

Department Approval: Scott Bixby, Chief of Police (01/07/19)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Council Introduce an Ordinance amending Culver City Municipal Code Chapter 11.04 "Alarm Systems" to clarify the provisions related to "Local Alarms" which are not monitored by a remote monitoring facility (Attachment 1).

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The purpose of alarm regulations are to encourage alarm system users and alarm companies to properly use and maintain the operational effectiveness of alarm systems, and to eliminate the occurrence of false alarms. One of the goals of these regulations is to reduce or eliminate the occurrence of false alarms, which may unnecessarily divert law enforcement from responding to criminal activity and burden the City's limited law enforcement resources. In 2016, after the Culver City Police Department (CCPD) conducted a comprehensive review of alarm system administration, industry regulations and other cities' alarm regulations, the City Council adopted the "Alarm Systems" ordinance, codified in Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Chapter 11.04 ("Alarm Ordinance").

The main focus of the Alarm Ordinance is “alarm systems”, which are audible or silent alarms located at a residence or business and are monitored by an alarm company. The alarm company notifies CCPD when an alarm is triggered, and CCPD responds. Alarm Systems are defined in CCMC Section 11.04.010, as follows:

“Any single device or assembly of equipment designed to signal the occurrence of an illegal or unauthorized entry or other illegal activity requiring immediate attention and to which law enforcement is requested to respond, but does not include motor vehicle or boat alarms, fire alarms, domestic violence alarms, local alarms or alarms designed to elicit a medical response.”

The definition of Alarm Systems expressly excludes “local alarms”, which are defined in the Alarm Ordinance separately. A local alarm is defined as “[a]n alarm system that emits a signal at an alarm site that is audible or visible from the exterior of a structure and *is not monitored by a remote monitoring facility*, whether installed by an alarm company or user.”

In adopting the Alarm Ordinance, it was the intent to require local alarm users to register with CCPD by obtaining a permit, as reflected in the fee schedule adopted by City Council (Attachment 2). However, the Alarm Ordinance is internally inconsistent, on one hand excluding local alarms from the definition of Alarm Systems, and then using the term alarm systems in the definition of local alarms.

CCPD responds to all audible and silent residential and/or commercial alarms that are initiated by notification from alarm companies, adjacent neighbors, or by a resident who might be on scene or away. The Alarm Ordinance permit process requires that “alarms users” disclose general and emergency contact information, disclose hazards, pets and identify any disabled persons on the property. This information is crucial in determining the type of police response and quickly relieves police personnel when on scene at unlocked or locations that need to be secured.

By excluding “local alarms” from the definition of alarm systems, local alarm users are not required to register for an alarm permit, and consequently are not subject to the reporting standards outlined in the Alarm Ordinance. Police options are limited when responding to local alarms because of the lack of information coupled with the inability to contact responsible persons.

Based on the foregoing, in order to correct the internal inconsistency and to clarify the provisions as they pertain to local alarms, staff recommends the City Council introduce the proposed

Ordinance amending Chapter 11.04, which will remove the “local alarms” exclusion from the definition of alarm systems, thereby making those users subject to the permit requirements and the alarm related fee schedule adopted by the City Council on August 1, 2016. Note that the permit fees pertaining to local alarms are lower (\$10.00) than those pertaining to other alarm systems (\$18.00).

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the introduction of the proposed Ordinance.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2019-01-28 - ATT Proposed Ordinance

MOTION

That the City Council:

Introduce an Ordinance Amending Culver City Municipal Code Chapter 11.04 “Alarm Systems” to clarify the provisions related to Local Alarms which are not monitored by a remote monitoring facility.