

Michael Restivo, 2158 Waukon does not think burglar alarm fees should increase, especially for false alarms. He has had an alarm system for 20 years and only 3 false alarms. Residents should not have to pay for false alarms when the majority are from businesses.

Hello,

I am a St. Paul resident and homeowner. I won't be able to attend the city council meeting on Wednesday, but wanted to comment on the proposed alarm fee increases.

I strongly oppose the proposed increase in the base annual fee for the alarm permit. I think the current fee (\$28 a year) just for having any sort of alarm system is already too high. Increasing it would make a bad policy worse. I'm sure the issues are obvious and have been addressed by others, but to pile on: Increasing the fee creates perverse incentives in that it will encourage people to disable alarm systems or to operate alarm systems. Alarm systems help prevent or minimize the impact of real burglaries, fires, and other incidents occur, which are much more expensive and damaging to the city than false alarms. Residents and businessowners should be encouraged to take sensible steps like installing properly functioning alarm systems, rather than having to pay for it. The city's effort to raise a few trivial dollars will make it worse off in the end. The permit fee increase misses the forest for the trees. The increased fee may also encourage people to operate alarm systems without a permit, in violation of the ordinance, leading to some lost revenue offsetting the increase. Financially penalizing all alarm system users for false alarms by a few alarm users is simply not equitable.

We don't require an onerous fee for a landline telephone just because it *could* be used to make a false call for help. Why should we do so for alarms?

The fee does not distinguish between homeowners and business users. The different cost burdens imposed on the city by the two different kinds of users and the equities involved would justify residential alarm users paying no fee or a reduced fee, as compared to business alarm users. If you do increase the permit fee, please bifurcate it so that it applies only to commercial alarms.

Please do not increase the alarm permit fee. If anything, please consider reducing or eliminating it.

I completely support the proposed increase to the false alarm fees. I believe this part of the revised ordinance can have an incentive effect (encouraging the reduction of false alarms) while also allocating the costs to those that are actually contributing to it. In fact, I would not oppose an even greater increase to the false alarm fees, or the addition of a fee for a second false alarm, if necessary to reduce the permit fee. (I support allowing at least one "free" false alarm each year.)

Thanks,

Brandon Mason
2038 Pinehurst Avenue