

**From:** Kevin Marquardt [<mailto:kevmarg@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2017 12:09 PM  
**To:** Henningson, Samantha (CI-StPaul); #CI-StPaul\_Ward4  
**Subject:** Alarm Permit

Good Morning Samantha:

I received a letter from the St. Paul Department of Safety and Inspections (dated June 23, 2017). The letter states that over the last 3 years, 5,000 false alarms were made to the police from security systems. The letter also states that the annual cost responding to alarms is \$2,618,476. If we divide 5,000 by 3 years, that averages out to 1,666 false alarms/year. If the annual cost to respond to alarms is \$2,618,476 and there are 1,666 false alarms/year, then that averages out to \$1,571 per false alarm. The St. Paul City Council is holding a hearing on this issue, but I want to question the numbers offered in the article. Does it really cost the city \$1,571 for a dispatcher to answer the call from a security company and a police officer to visit a home? **Regardless of whether the answer is yes or no, I think the City Council should question these costs.**

In addition, the letter proposes to more than double the annual cost of a security system alarm from \$28 to \$58. This increase hurts our city residents who pay for a security system and are already struggling to put food on their table and live in lower income / higher crime neighborhoods. An increase in the annual cost may cause those residents to

In addition to questioning the numbers offered in the letter, I would appreciate knowing where the false alarms are occurring (is it in low income neighborhoods?) and whether they are at residential or commercial properties.

Please let Russ know that I hope he **does not** support the proposed annual permit increase. If more money is needed, then let Russ know that I hope he supports the increase cost for false alarms (and not an increase to the annual permit).

Thanks,

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Kevin D. Marquardt

-----Original Message-----

From: bcjirik@comcast.net [<mailto:bcjirik@comcast.net>]  
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 8:35 PM  
To: #CI-StPaul\_Council  
Subject: alarm permit increases

I object to the increase in the base fee for an alarm permit. As a single, 65 year old female living with a daughter with a severe disability, I feel that we need the alarm to maintain our safety. However, as I am on a fixed income and have never had a false alarm, I feel doubling the fee is extreme. I'd rather have the fee for false alarms increased even more to cover the cost rather than have people who have never had one false alarm pay for the cost of those false alarms.

Barbara Jirik

**From:** verify79 [mailto:verify79@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 13, 2017 10:03 PM  
**To:** #CI-StPaul\_Council  
**Subject:** License Fee Schedule

Hello. I am in receipt of a letter dated 6/23/17 regarding an increase in Alarm Fees related to false alarms. While I agree with the increase in fees to encourage personal responsibility for those who consistently trigger false alarms, there are some key elements missing from this document.

- 1) How much fee revenue was generated from the yearly license fees from all citizens?
- 3) Are there any other revenue streams associated with the management of St Paul City Ordinance Section 310.18 (other than the yearly fees and false alarm fees)?
- 4) What was the true deficit to tax payers after factoring in the yearly fees from all citizens? (All fee revenue less all expenses)
- 5) The letter advises the program will still be under funded. If that's true, where is the revenue coming from to cover the continued deficit?
- 6) The letter says there was an average 5000 false alarm police calls totaling an average of \$2.6 million. That's an average of \$524 per false alarm. Is there a comprehensive breakdown of these expenses and has there been any discussion how to drive down costs on the expense side (in addition to finding additional revenue)?
- 7) The increase to all yearly fees is going up by 107%...yet the increase to fees for those who have had their 3rd, 4th, and 5th false alarm are going up by less than that. Why would fees for those who use their systems properly go up at a higher rate than those who don't?

**From:** Terri Thao [mailto:thao0078@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 14, 2017 12:51 PM  
**To:** #CI-StPaul\_Council  
**Subject:** Please Reconsider the Alarm Permit Fee Increase

Dear St. Paul City Council,

My name is Terri Thao and I am a resident of Ward 6 on the East Side. I am writing to ask the City Council to reconsider the doubled increase in the alarm permit fee and the fee schedule after two false alarms. I am sympathetic to the cost that the city has to bear when police respond to a large number of false alarms (which is the cause of the increase) but I would ask that the city think about the impact this fee would have to households who are on limited incomes especially since they may have alarm systems because they live in neighborhoods where they are worried about burglaries.

I also do not understand why the time or cost charged to respond to these false alarms is not already considered part of the regular police duties, which

my property taxes already support. In addition, I ask that the city consider raising fees for the alarm monitoring companies. Lastly, if an increase is warranted, I would ask that it be scaled back or put in increments over the next few years.

Thank you,

Terri Thao

-----Original Message-----

From: Stone, Michael F [mailto:Mike.Stone@ecolab.com]

Sent: Saturday, July 15, 2017 12:35 PM

To: #CI-StPaul\_Council; thestonepack@gmail.com

Subject: Alarm permit false alarms follow up

Hi-

I'm unable to render a decision; therefore, I need more information regarding the costs associated with the false alarms

Will you please send an itemized amount of \$2,618,476 (basically what makes up that figure and how it was derived). In addition, please send the number of total alarm calls in general - the number that was not false- the number is police calls (in general, does not necessarily need to be alarm driven) - and number of those calls that do not lead to charge/ arrest- and the cost associated those calls.

Lastly, where do the funds of \$261,915 go to? Did the police force add more personnel last year? Is that personnel overhead driven (like additional accountants) or operation driven? What's the total cost of police employees (hourly + salary) and was their a merit increase given on that?

Lastly, what was the total amount of dollars paid out in the last 24 months on lawsuits against Saint Paul Police?

Thank you! I will bring the spreadsheet to the hearing on the 19th of the data.

Mike Stone  
(Saint Paul Resident)

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Francesca Stirpe [mailto:fmstirpe@yahoo.com]

**Sent:** Saturday, July 15, 2017 2:45 PM

**To:** #CI-StPaul\_Council

**Subject:** Use of alarm systems

To the City Council:

I do not agree with the proposed increase for home alarm systems. This is a substantial increase. I don't agree with this.

Francesca Stirpe

1655 York Ave.

St. Paul, Mn. 55106

612-799-9256

[fmstirpe@yahoo.com](mailto:fmstirpe@yahoo.com)

-----Original Message-----

From: Kristen [mailto:kristenmhm@me.com]

Sent: Sunday, July 16, 2017 9:54 PM

To: #CI-StPaul\_Council

Cc: Kristen Hirsch Montag

Subject: alarm permit issue

Hello,

We received the letter stating that the city is planning to increase the alarm permit fee for home security alarms due to others having false alarm calls that cost the city money. I do not feel it is appropriate or right to assess all permit holders due to the mistakes of a few. We have never had a false alarm or had our alarm sound unnecessarily and are careful to use it properly, test it regularly and keep up our system while paying for our permit and our monthly monitoring bill. It's unfair for us to have to pay for people who do not hold up their responsibility as we do. Instead, the city should assess those who actually have false alarm calls — they should have to be billed whenever they have an inappropriate or false alarm and cover the costs they're creating directly.

We are law abiding citizens, keep our home up well and pay all our bills, so we should not be penalized for others not doing what they are supposed to. We have an alarm system to protect our home and property from robbery. That should be looked at as a positive thing — we are doing everything we can to keep our home and property safe. We live in an area with increasing crime and hear a lot of sirens around us regularly. It is concerning when we hear about crimes and shootings all around the city, especially in the North End or nearby. Protecting our home should not come at an even higher cost because the city sees it as easier to bill all of us instead of those who create the problems.

We request that the city council NOT raise the permit fee for all users and instead charge the users who do not maintain or properly use their systems. Adding an additional \$30 per year is not fair treatment — we have not cost the city one cent extra by having an alarm system in our home. In fact, we may be saving the city money by doing so and being responsible owners.

Please do not raise the alarm permit fee for all of us! More than doubling the cost is unnecessary, unfair and uncalled for. Assess the costs to those who cause them! Please respond to this and let us know the results of the meeting July 19; we work late and cannot attend in person but we hope our letter will be entered into the record and taken into account.

Sincerely,

Kristen and Paul Montag  
1093 Kent Street  
St. Paul

July 14, 2017

Dear St. Paul City Council Members,

I recently received a notification discussing amendments to St. Paul City Ordinance 310.18 on license fee schedules for Alarm Permits. While I cannot attend your council meeting, I would like to provide feedback on the proposed amendments to increase annual alarm fees, a decision that both puzzles and distresses me. As a long-term resident of Ward 3 and an alarm owner for many years, I have never once cost the city money through a false alarm, yet I have been paying an annual fee of \$28 a year (above and beyond property taxes and other assessments) for what amounts to no services that I have received beyond a sticker for my window that I received the first year I registered.

I sympathize with the budget issues that false alarms cause and I agree that increased fees are warranted when false alarms occur to help close the substantial budget gap. In fact, I believe the fines associated with false alarms should increase and be initiated sooner (e.g. after one false alarm). However, I do not understand the attempt to alleviate some of the false alarm budget deficit on the backs of alarm permit holders solely. For those of us that do not contribute to the false alarm induced budget deficit (by carefully avoiding false alarms), increasing the annual permit fee is unjustifiable, since we are not contributing to that deficit any more than a non-alarm owner. Many city expenses are subsidized by generalized property taxes and fees whether the person paying uses the expense or not. For example, I willingly pay property taxes to subsidize school and other initiatives from which I do not personally benefit (e.g. I have no children). Surely, one can see a similar subsidy coming from all St. Paul residents to offset the false alarm budget costs among the entire city population and not a select few.

More importantly, a study in Rutgers in 2008 found that the presence of alarm systems within a community are actually a crime fighting tool for the entire community, not just the alarm owner (<http://news.rutgers.edu/news-releases/2009/02/rutgers-study-finds-20090205#.WWZO69Pyskg>). Therefore, the monthly fee I personally spend to have a monitored alarm at my residence is potentially *saving* the city money by lowering overall crime

rates. In addition to the link above, I am attaching a pdf of the dissertation from the study. Given the money alarm owners may save the city simply by increasing the presence of alarm systems in the community, it makes no sense to increase the burden they are carrying to own that alarm system by increasing the annual permit fee. In addition, that increased fee could deter people from keeping their alarm systems; I have one neighbor ready to remove her alarm system rather than pay an even bigger annual fee for no services. If enough people do that, according to the Rutgers study, costs to the city could rise as crime rates rise and these could offset potential gains from higher alarm license fees.

I implore you to reconsider placing the budgetary burden of false alarms solely on the shoulders of alarm owners since many of us do not contribute to that deficit and should not be singled out and penalized because some subset of alarm owners is costing the city.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jodi Goldberg

In response to a Notice I received as an Alarm Permit Holder, I would like to comment re: the proposed changes. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the public hearing at 5:30 PM July 19, 2017.

Attached is a PDF outlining my concerns.

*Kate Hebel*

*1301 Fairmount Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105  
651.690.3441*

**KATE HEBEL**  
**1301 Fairmount Avenue**  
**St. Paul, MN 55105**  
**651-690-3441**

To: All members of the St. Paul City Council

Re: St. Paul City Ordinance

Section 310.18 License fee schedule

Section 329.02 Use of alarm systems

Date: July 18, 2017

In response to the notice I received as an Alarm Permit Holder regarding proposed changes. I'm replying as a homeowner who has had a security alarm for more than two decades.

Re: Increase for an Alarm Permit

I don't think it's a wise idea to increase the cost to obtain a permit. We know that break-ins and home robberies are a reality and I think it's a good idea for residents to install security alarms; however, increasing the cost to \$58 is enough of a cost to dissuade St. Paul homeowners from completing the paperwork. Single parents, seniors and low income residents don't have extra money for the necessities, but yet they want and need to feel their home and families are safe and secure. I would hope more residents would consider installing a security/fire alarm. Perhaps the City could implement one cost for residences and one for businesses.

Re: Increase for False Alarms

I do believe that the City should increase the cost for a false alarm. The number of false alarms due to carelessness and negligence by the homeowner/business owner cause an unnecessary burden to the Police Department and more importantly take their time and attention away from "real" crime in other areas of the neighborhoods. I think there needs to be consequences for irresponsibility.

Re: Section 329.02, Subsection (6) re: the Permit to be displayed.

Presently a sticker with the permit number is issued which I applied to the front door window. This paragraph indicates that the "permit shall be physically displayed upon the premises where the alarm system is used, shall be readily visible from the exterior thereof, and shall be available for inspection by the license inspector or by an St. Paul police officer. Am I to understand that the permit issued by the City itself needs to be displayed, rather than a sticker?

I hope you'll consider the cost impact for both: make the alarm permit application reasonable for all, but increase the consequences for irresponsible behavior.

Dear St Paul City Council,

Although it may make sense that taxpayers shouldn't foot the bill for false alarms, we disagree that the alarm permit fee should therefore more than double at once for all alarm license holders. Here's why.

As St. Paul homeowners, we have bent over backwards to deal with our own faulty alarm system so that we could eliminate false alarms, as detailed below. The result is a sacrifice in security for our household while still paying full rates. So please explain why our rate should more than double to pay for others who are irresponsible?

The objective for St. Paul should be to reduce the false alarms. That's what the public hearing should be about. Otherwise, we face endlessly rising fees as home break-ins rise and more homeowners are compelled to install alarm systems, just as we were after a frightening and damaging forced entry.

After two heart-stopping false alarms we learned that a third would cause a penalty fee. Each time the alarm company tried to fix it. In the end we were advised the garage was the glitch so we had to make the difficult decision to remove our garage from our security system. That was the only responsible compromise even though our sense of security is diminished while we are still paying full price. We took responsible action at a cost to us. So we are against the proposal to solve a false alarm issue -- and at the heart of it a crime issue -- with a drastic increase in the permit fee.

A 107% jump that more than doubles the fee at once is unreasonable in any circumstance. But there's no evidence that it will change the behavior of the false alarm culprits. A first step towards a better solution that matches the issue would be to make the alarm companies more responsible as they as the ones PROFITING from the crime. Put the focus back on the alarm companies:

- 1) To test their systems more carefully. If any false alarm is due to the system and not the customer, the alarm company should pay the penalty fee. We have learned from experience that there is a difference in quality among installers (corporate vs. subcontractors for example).
- 2) To educate the customer. Not just with some legal fine print, but to have the installer tell the customer about the cost of false alarms – the penalty fee as well as the cost to the police department and all of us citizens of St. Paul.

Don't penalize responsible citizens who have already paid the criminals, the city and the alarm companies.

Sincerely,

Sarah Walbert and Mark Prpich

**From:** Francesca Stirpe [<mailto:fmstirpe@yahoo.com>]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 15, 2017 2:45 PM  
**To:** #CI-StPaul\_Council  
**Subject:** Use of alarm systems

To the City Council:

I do not agree with the proposed increase for home alarm systems. This is a substantial increase. I don't agree with this.

Francesca Stirpe  
1655 York Ave.  
St. Paul, Mn. 55106

Phone call to Ward 7:

Against raising the fee for alarm permits. The fee will be doubled. They cannot afford more fees in addition to high taxes and right-of-way fees.

Rose Vaught  
Wakefield Ave