

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Fire Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Alarm Ordinance

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Date: October 14, 2016

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

To propose an ordinance to amend the code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 51 Alarms, Chapter 111 Peace and Good Order, and Chapter 167 Fees.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

False and needless fire alarms are having a detrimental impact on our fire service. These code chapters are proposed to be amended in order to include a requirement for registration of fire alarms, to strengthen the ability of the Township to impose penalties for false fire alarms and to provide for Township inspection of fire alarm device installations and operations. These amendments will also allow for imposition of penalties for violations of these provisions.

The amended Alarms ordinance requires registration of fire alarms, requires alarm companies to attempt contact with their client before contacting the emergency dispatch, provides for penalties for contractors or servicers who cause alarms when they should have deactivated the device before starting their work and allows for the Township to order disconnection of faulty alarm devices.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

There is no current policy requiring the registration of fire alarm systems and a lack of adequate provisions to discourage false fire alarms.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

Chapter 51 Alarms is being replaced in its entirety with a newly constructed Alarms ordinance. Chapter 111, Peace and Good Order is being amended in order to prohibit making a false call or request for the services of the Police or Fire Departments. Chapter A167 Fees is being amended in order to provide an updated Schedule of Fees related to alarm systems.

Please note that the most recent version of the Alarms ordinance replaces the term 'affidavit' with 'certification'.

V. Impact On Township Finances:

A very insignificant increase in revenue from the registration of fire alarm systems is expected.

VI. Staff Recommendation:

It is recommended the Board of Commissioners propose to adopt and authorize advertisement of an ordinance authorizing the amendments to the Township Code.