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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Tony Zielinski
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Council Committee Approves “Tripwire” Cameras To Help Fight Graffiti

The Common Council’s Public Safety Committee this morning voted to go forward with spending \$28,000 to buy up to 10 “tripwire” cameras that will be used to help catch graffiti vandals.

Ald. Tony Zielinski, the primary sponsor of the legislation and chair of the Anti-Graffiti Policy Committee, said the money for the cameras will come from the Common Council’s contingent fund. He said the cameras should have an immediate, significant impact on graffiti vandalism in the city.

“These cameras can be mounted strategically in areas that are likely targets or near places that have been hit before, and the images they capture can be sent directly to a computer, a cell phone or a vehicle,” the alderman said.

Most graffiti vandals or “taggers” commit their crimes in the late-night or early morning hours, under the cover of darkness and with no witnesses. The cameras are designed to generate images almost immediately after being triggered by heat or motion detected along a perimeter – hence the term “tripwire” is used when describing them.

The tripwire cameras will make police patrols and stakeouts of graffiti “chill spots” unnecessary, thereby saving personnel hours, he said.

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Committee Approves Camera Funding/ADD ONE

According to Ald. Zielinski, the cameras are well worth the investment. “Last year 5,000 calls came into the anti-graffiti hotline, and the cost of removing graffiti in the city is about \$1.5 million per year (this includes the costs from Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, MPS, railways, county, city, homeowners and business owners),” he said.

“Apprehension of perpetrators is one of the best ways to eliminate graffiti,” Ald. Zielinski said. “Constantly abating graffiti and having the vandal return is not winning the battle to maintain our neighborhoods.”

-30-