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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Bob Donovan
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Private Alarm Companies to Appear Before Public Safety Committee

Renewals Could Hinge on Reported False Alarms, MPD Concerns

The Common Council's Public Safety Committee will take up city license renewals for 12 private alarm companies during its meeting at **10:30 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday, December 10, 2009) in room 301-B at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St.**

In the past, city license renewals for alarm companies were approved automatically, but in recent years, concerns about false alarms and use of Milwaukee police time and resources has triggered hearings where the companies are compelled to appear before the committee to address reports of alleged false alarm violations and other issues.

Illegal alarms are generally ones that generate a 911 emergency call without first being verified by a private responder. These illegal alarms are viewed by Milwaukee police as burdensome because they often generate false alarms that tie up 911 lines that are reserved for actual emergencies. In the past, issues have also been raised about allegations that some alarm company sales reps have promised potential buyers that police will automatically respond to tripped alarms, which is not the case, said Alderman Bob Donovan, chair of the Public Safety Committee.

"These alarm systems are purchased for the safety and security of businesses and property owners – many of them senior citizens – and customers should not be promised, nor should they be paying for, services they aren't receiving," said Alderman Donovan.

The alarm companies' licenses are set to expire at the end of this month.

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