

Resolution re Overton Park expressway OPE-25-15

CIAL APPEAL

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Council Gives Security Guards Regulations On Firearms Use

By THOMAS JORDAN

Regulations approved by the City Council yesterday permit private security guards to discharge firearms only in self-defense or in defense of another person.

The rules, established by Police Chief W. O. Crumby, also prohibit private guards from carrying firearms at sporting, amusement and entertainment events "unless specifically required to protect money." The regulations do permit the use of handcuffs, night sticks and chemical Mace at such events.

Another rule prohibits guards from wearing uniforms "designed in a manner similar to uniforms" worn by representatives of any law enforcement agency in Shelby County.

Under the rules, a private guard may not discharge his firearm except: "In self-defense or defense of another when the aggressor is using force likely to inflict serious bodily injury or death." Guards must complete a firearms training course under the rules.

Councilman Robert James said the resolution approving the rules "clarifies a lot of unclear areas that have existed in the city's dealing with special officers."

Private guards are a "very important part of security in the community," James said. He said there are about 4,000 private security guards in the county.

Steve Cohen, police legal adviser, said private guards only have police power while on the property they are assigned to protect.

"We are not stripping them of their authority," Cohen said. "We're just trying to let the public know what their authority is."

James asked if private guards ever "go beyond their authority."

"Yes they do," replied Memphis police Sgt. Billy Rogers of the special officers bureau. "We have problems with them stopping people on expressways and streets. It's not a big problem, but it's a problem."

In February, a private guard shot a 16-year-old boy during halftime at a basketball game at White Station High School. The boy was shot in the leg.

In other business, the council adopted a resolution calling for reappraisal of property and urging the Shelby County Court to "provide its fair and equitable share of the expense" of reappraisal.

The resolution was sponsored by Councilman Pat Halloran.

A review of property tax assessments

shows that "the property tax assessment rolls are outdated, that home owners are not taxed equally, and that an updating of the entire tax assessment rolls and system is needed," the resolution said.

The city administration also was asked to provide funds in next year's budget to pay its share of reappraisal.

On another matter, the council adopted a resolution asking members of the state congressional delegation to draft a bill exempting the proposed Overton Park expressway from environmental protection regulations and any laws that have blocked the route through the park.

Mrs. Sarah Hines opposed the resolution, saying, "I think it would be a disgrace if you approve this resolution."

Mrs. Hines is a long-time opponent of the proposed route.

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 10-0. Councilman Mike Cody recused himself and Councilmen Fred Davis and Pat Vander Schaaf were absent.

The council also appropriated \$953,033 for the construction of the Mitchell Road

multipurpose community center despite an objection by Mrs. Ernestine Cox, who said some residents of the area would rather have a school in the community than a multipurpose center.

She asked the council to delay the appropriation for the center until the Memphis Board of Education decides whether it will build a comprehensive high school to serve the Westwood and Mitchell High School areas.

The board voted last week to delay the controversial issue two weeks to allow a report to be made on the cost of bringing up the standard of the 10 city schools most in need of improvement.

Mrs. Cox said the location of the center is "the only land in the area" on which to build the school.

In a report to the council, Councilman James said the Runaway House at 2117 Monroe was overcrowded but the counselors there "do about as well as they can."

Mr. and Mrs. Abel Adams of 1136 Finch complained to the council about what they called poor conditions at the house.