Subject
Proposal to amend Spokane Municipal Code to allow electric fences in commercial and industrial zones.

Background
Electric Guard Dog LLC is seeking a Text Amendment to the Spokane City fence code, to allow business owners in commercial and industrial zones to install electric fence security systems. The current code does not permit fences or barriers charged with electricity in residential, commercial, downtown, or industrial zones. In Residential Agricultural (RA) zones, the use is permitted for the containment of livestock only.

The text amendment is to allow the installation of electric fence security systems with the following features:

- Powered by commercial storage batter not to exceed 12 volts DC.
- Battery is charged primarily by a solar panel; can be augmented by commercial trickle charger.
- Electric fences shall have a height of ten feet.
- Electric fences shall be completely surrounded by a non-electrical fence or wall that is not less than six feet.
- Location: Permitted on any non-residential outdoor storage areas.
- Warning Signs: electric fences shall be clearly identified with warning signs at intervals of not less than sixty feet.
- Electric fences shall be governed and regulated under burglar alarm regulations and permitted as such.

The Plan Commission held a workshop on this matter on August 28, 2015 and October 28, 2015. Concerns were raised about allowing electric fences in General Commercial (GC) zones due to close proximity to residential zones and negative aesthetic impact. Commissioners asked staff to explore ways to mitigate negative impacts in GC zones including requiring a conditional use permit and/or applying design standards.

Staff worked with the applicant to draft code language to allow electric fences in Light Industrial (LI), Heavy Industrial (HI), and General Commercial Zones (GC). To address concerns, the applicant provided language to help minimize negative impacts. This includes not allowing electric fences within 150 feet of residential zones.
property, schools, or daycare facilities, unless exterior perimeter fence (the non-electric fence) is covered with a solid covering (e.g. solid mesh, slats, etc.) in industrial zones. In GC zones, all electric fences would be required to have a solid covering. The goal is to prevent further contact with the electric fence. In addition, an indemnification clause was added which states users will hold the City harmless in case of injury, death, or property damage as a result of electric fence use.

Staff does not recommend requiring a Conditional Use Process (CUP) for GC zones as this process is expensive and requires a 120 day minimum review period. Additionally, the current review process for a permit to install an electric fence (if this proposal passes) would require a similar review from Building, Planning, and Fire departments that CUP process triggers. Staff recommends additional screening requirements to mitigate the visual impact of electric fences (see attached code draft for added requirements).

**Impact**

Electric fences are a tool to deter crime. This change would impact all General Commercial, Light Industrial, and Heavy Industrial zones in the City of Spokane (see attached map).

**Funding**

This is a private application. The applicant has paid the application fee required for text amendments.

**Action**

This is a workshop to provide an update to the Plan Commission and introduce additional screening requirements for electric fences. The Plan Commission is being asked to explore the proposed draft and determine if the proposal is ready to go to a hearing.

Attachments:
- Proposed text changes to SMC 17C.120.310 and 17C.130.310
- Affected Zones Map
- Summary of Electric Guard Dog Security System
- YRC Site Plans

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