

AUG 14 2007

MOTION

Technological advances in news media coverage have allowed the public to have nearly instant access to important information. News helicopters, in particular, are able to provide live aerial coverage of events on the ground such as police pursuits. In Los Angeles, these news helicopters must also share crowded air space with helicopters from the Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and other public safety personnel. While public access to information is indeed vital, the safety of peace officers and innocent bystanders at such news scenes must be given the highest priority.

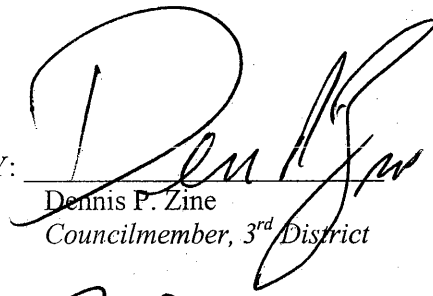
The importance of having clear agreements about news helicopter protocol was tragically underscored by the recent fatal crash of two news helicopters in Phoenix, Arizona. The news helicopters, while covering a police chase in the downtown area, collided mid-air and exploded, killing all four people on board. Reports indicated that the airspace was crowded with five news helicopters and one police helicopter at the time of the crash. Given that similar types of media frenzies are all too common in Los Angeles, the City must do all it can to prevent an accident like this from happening.

In March 2003, a City Council motion was introduced that called for the creation of a Blue Ribbon Task Force to review the public safety concerns raised by saturation news coverage in our skies. Due to inactivity, the Council received and filed that motion in December 2005. The recent events in Phoenix, matched with the unique nature of Los Angeles as a news media capital merit an immediate review of helicopter safety protocol.

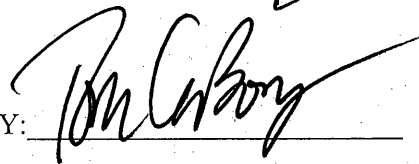
I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council, with the assistance of the office of the Chief Legislative Analyst, create a Helicopter Safety Task Force to review current policies and develop recommendations for further measures with regard to public safety and the interaction of news and law enforcement helicopters. Representatives serving on the Task Force should include but not be limited to the appropriate agencies of: The City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, California League of Cities, Independent Cities Association, State of California, Federal Aviation Administration, local Members of Congress, the Radio and Television News Association of Southern California, and other appropriate entities.

I FURTHER MOVE that such a Helicopter Safety Task Force be in place within 60 days and that the Task Force make its first report to the appropriate participating entities, including the Public Safety Committee, within 120 days of its creation.

PRESENTED BY:


Dennis P. Zine
Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY:



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Ref To: 05-0257