

City puts brakes on crash charges Stow stops collecting fees for police services after residents complain

By Paula Schleis, Beacon Journal staff writer

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Stow Mayor Karen Fritschel has temporarily suspended a new city program that charges at-fault motorists when police are called to a traffic accident.

Fritschel said she has some questions for Cost Recovery Corp., the Columbus-area company that runs the program.

“There are certain elements of it that don't seem to be following what we were told,” Fritschel said Tuesday. “I have some issues,” she said, but declined to elaborate.

City officials admit they've been taking heat from angry residents since an article about the fee was featured in Saturday's Akron Beacon Journal.

The program, implemented in June, first attempts to collect the service fees from the motorist's insurance company.

If insurance doesn't pay -- and most companies don't -- the motorist is billed.

In one recent fender bender, for instance, the cited driver was charged \$209.44 for the use of a police vehicle, \$38.08 for the time of one police officer, and \$28.56 for paperwork. That was in addition to a \$125 fine.

Cost Recovery Corp. President Regina Moore said the company collects for police departments in about a dozen Ohio cities. She said they've been collecting similar service fees for fire departments since 1999.

Stow Council President Ron Gauthier said the idea made sense at the time.

“The majority of crashes that are investigated by the police department are for the benefit of the insurance companies,” he said last week.

On Tuesday, he said he was “leaning the other way.”

“I'm hearing a lot of things from people,” he said, including callers who note that they already pay taxes to the city for such services. “It is changing my mind.”

The issue will be discussed by City Council's Roads and Safety Committee at 7 p.m. Sept. 11 at City Hall, 3760 Darrow Road.

“We need to decide if there are any changes to be made or whether we want to continue it at all,” Fritschel said.

Paula Schleis can be reached at 330-996-3741 or pschleis@thebeaconjournal.com.

