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ACTION CALENDAR
April 29, 2014
(Continued from March 11, 2014)

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: City Manager Referral: Have Non-sworn (civilian) Employees Investigate After-hour Noise Complaints

RECOMMENDATION
Refer to the City Manager to designate non-sworn (civilian) employees to investigate after-hour noise complaints.

BACKGROUND
Noise complaints occur in Berkeley every day. If one were to occur between 9-5, an Environmental Health employee would investigate. However, during the other hours of the day, the public are expected to call the Berkeley Police Department non-emergency number. Police officers are often busy with crimes that are violent or serious priorities such as homicide, assault, robbery, breaking-and-entering, theft, etc., which are given a higher priority than noise complaints.

One possible solution is to add a non-sworn (civilian) employee to investigate these noise complaints. This could be for either 8 or 16 hours that the Environmental Health employee is not on duty. The employee would have a lower pay rate than a sworn officer, meaning that it would be cheaper to have them investigate than having a police officer investigate. The community would benefit since there would be an employee dedicated specifically to noise complaints for longer hours than currently available.

City Auditor's Police Staffing Audit of 4/30/2002:
"A number of reports over the years have recommended that more positions in the Berkeley Police Department be civilianized…Since a significant number of these tasks do not require peace officer powers, it is appropriate to examine the rationale traditionally used to justify the use of peace officers in administrative and clerical positions."

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
Additional cost of a civilian staff position and potential opportunity cost savings to BPD by having police officers not spend so much time on noise complaints.

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