

Ann Arbor City Council Regular Session: January 5, 2026
Email Redactions List Pursuant to Council Resolution R-09-386

Sent Time	TO	From	CC	Redactions	Reason for Redaction
7:16PM	City Council All	Jeff Jefferson		Personal Information	Privacy

From: [Jeff Jefferson](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: 1/5/2026 Agenda Item CA-10
Date: Monday, January 5, 2026 7:16:58 PM

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Dear City Council members:

I'm writing to question the expenditure in item CA-10. This \$18K is for removing an estimated 600 "Neighborhood Watch" signs. The resolution says this is the only funding needed to implement this action. \$18K/600 sign locations works out to \$30 per location. I know how easy it is to remove these signs, they are held on the sign post with drive rivets, which require only a sharp, targeted blow to the rivet post to remove. So it doesn't take long. That leaves us with an empty post. In my informal survey of signs in my area, I haven't found a single Neighborhood Watch sign that is on a shared post. Does this \$30/location include removal of the sign post itself? Or are you planning on leaving 600 empty posts throughout our city, perhaps in anticipation of signs promoting some other virtue? Just curious, because \$30/location seems too small a sum to also remove the sign post and fill the resulting hole, but since in soil easements they are driven in without bases, perhaps this will cover it.

Now, as to the purpose of this removal. You said in the previous resolution, essentially, that these signs were no longer needed because the program the AAPD ran in support of the Neighborhood Watch groups no longer exists. You also said that you want to get back to community-based policing, but made no attempt to revive or create an alternative to the program. You further said that these signs, and the citizen groups they represent, are somehow potentially or inherently racist, and a threat to certain segments of society. So which is it? If the citizen groups no longer exist, there is no racist threat. Why not leave up the signs as a friendly, innocuous reminder to potential thieves and malcontents that the neighborhood is organized and stands in solidarity against crime? Removal of these signs only serves to increase the possibility of criminal behavior, which, whether you chose to acknowledge it or not, is happening. My neighbors regularly have their cars rifled or broken into. I called the police just last month to report footprints in the fresh snow where someone was clearly looking in the windows of my neighbors house. I didn't think for one second about the race of the window peeper, only of the safety of my new neighbors, who were pretty freaked out about it. People in my neighborhood want to and do watch out for each other, in groups or individually, organized or not. I hope that is true for the rest of the city, in which case you have again shown how out of touch you are with the community you purport to serve. Who asked for these signs to come down?

I'm reminded of the Mayor's opposition to EPA intervention in the Gelman Plume cleanup. He said he was afraid being named a Superfund site would hurt property values. Is that what this is all about? Are you afraid the presence of Neighborhood Watch signs gives the perception that there is crime in the city, and thereby has a downward effect on property values? If that's the case, this action works against your oft-stated goals of creating a more affordable Ann Arbor.

As you can see, none of this makes sense. I'm going to go out on a limb here and suggest the removal of Neighborhood Watch signs is just another way to give the appearance that you are doing something, without actually doing anything, and possibly making our community less safe. An "actively anti-racist" virtue signal, if you will.

To conclude: I spent the last few weeks of the year travelling in South America. In Ecuador every small city, or every neighborhood in the big cities like Quito and Santa Domingo, has a Neighborhood Watch program, with large signs in prominent locations advertising as such. I have attached an image of one such sign to this email. The translation is roughly:

Neighborhood Surveillance Protected Area

Neighbors united against crime.

Thieves caught will be executed.

I was told by a resident that these signs are very effective. Some years ago a persistent thief was caught, beaten with clubs, dragged to the city center and set on fire. In this barrio they only had to do it once for crime to drop dramatically.

I suggest that having signs is better than having vigilante actions, but you're taking that option away from us. Please attempt to explain why.

Sincerely,

Concerned resident of Ann Arbor.