

NOTICE OF MOTION**Request Police to Cancel Purchase of Tasers****Moved by: Councillor Walker****Seconded by: Councillor Jenkins****SUMMARY:**

There is public discussion on the police use of shock and stun guns, Tasers, in response to Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair's recent request that 3,000 officers be armed with these electroshock guns at a cost of approximately \$8 million.

Tasers (Thomas A. Swift Electric Rifle – TASER International) are hand-held weapons that deliver a 50,000 volt jolt of electricity through a pair of hooked wires propelled by compressed air from up to 10.6 metres away. The jolt stuns the target by causing an uncontrollable contraction of the muscle tissue. The target is immobilised and falls to the ground – regardless of pain tolerance or mental focus.

The safety of these stun guns continues to be an important question. As many as 20 people in Canada and 290 in the United States have died after being shocked by a Taser. In October 2007, RCMP officers used a Taser on a Polish immigrant, Robert Dziekanski, in Vancouver International Airport; the officers used the Taser within 25 seconds of their arrival on the scene, instead of talking to Mr. Dziekanski, who died shortly after being hit with a Taser. In October 2007, Toronto Police used a Taser on a drunken man and the Taser hit him in one eye and in the leg, sending the electroshock through his body and probably damaging his eye beyond repair. Further, a recent Radio-Canada report has found that approximately 20 percent of the time Montreal police officers use a Taser it is used incorrectly.

The safety-testing of Tasers has been called into question also. Some medical evidence has found that the Taser produces latent effects upon the human heart that results in irregular, spastic heart beats and possible cardiac arrest. Because of recent independent testing of the effects of Tasers, Taser International is distancing itself from their in-house tests on pigs carried-out years ago and is stating that testing on pigs cannot be considered conclusive. Now, Taser International is stating that human testing needs to be done; they are carrying-out these tests on humans in Police forces and on the streets across North America.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That City Council request the Police Services Board to refrain from purchasing any Taser or any other electroshock gun until such time as there has been full public consultation on their acquisition and an endorsement for their use from the Canadian Medical Association.

March 3, 2008

According to Chapter 27, Council Procedures:

Notice given	(√)
Fiscal Impact Statement provided	
Should have Fiscal Impact Statement prior to debate Requires two-thirds to waive requirement if Council wishes to debate	*
Should be referred to Executive Committee Requires two-thirds vote to consider at this meeting	(√)
Motion Recommendations are Urgent	

* Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer to advise.