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# Lino Lakes joins Hugo in banning targeted residential protests

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Lino Lakes is about to join Hugo in banning targeted residential protests, after an August demonstration outside the Hugo home of Minneapolis police union president Bob Kroll.

The Lino Lakes City Council on Monday unanimously passed the first reading of a residential picketing ordinance similar to one Hugo approved in September that bans targeted protests in residential neighborhoods.

Council members are expected to take a final vote on the ordinance after a second reading on Nov. 23, said City Clerk Julianne Bartell.

The council action is in response to summer protests outside Kroll's home in neighboring Hugo. A [Black Lives Matter protest on Aug. 15](#) drew a crowd of more than 100 people calling on Kroll and his wife, WCCO reporter Liz Collin, to be fired from their jobs.

Hugo City Administrator Bryan Bear noted that during the rally DFL legislative candidate John Thompson made "inflammatory comments" about burning down Hugo. Videos of the event show Thompson shouting expletives and pounding on piñatas depicting

Kroll and Collin.

[Thompson apologized for his behavior and Washington County Attorney Pete Orput and Sheriff Dan Starry didn't file charges.](#)

[Despite widespread criticism](#), Thompson was elected last week to the District 67A House seat.

There was another protest this summer at Hugo's Lions Park, which is nestled in a residential area. But City Attorney Dave Snyder said such a gathering wouldn't violate the ordinance because public parks are reasonable sites for protests.

Targeted protests at private homes limit the ability for residents to escape, cause emotional distress and obstruct public right-of-ways, Bear said at the September meeting when the City Council unanimously passed the ordinance.

Now Lino Lakes has decided to follow suit. Violators would face a misdemeanor charge if they engage in targeted residential picketing, which includes marching, standing on or patrolling a single residential property without consent of the occupants.

John Swenson, Lino Lakes public safety director, said the ordinance was developed with the feedback of residents who were "fearful that could happen in their neighborhoods and limit their ability to move about their neighborhood and feel safe in their own homes."

Swenson said there is "firm legal ground" for the ordinance, citing a case from the 1990s that involved 20 protesters outside the White Bear Township home of Thomas Webber, executive director of Planned Parenthood Minnesota. The state Court of Appeals upheld a township ordinance that restricted targeted residential picketing.

"The state's interest in protecting the well-being, tranquillity, and privacy of the home is certainly the highest order in a free and civilized society," the court stated.

[Woodbury City Council banned targeted picketing in 2009](#), following animal rights protests outside the homes of 3M executives.

No protests took place in Lino Lakes this summer, but Swenson said city leaders felt they could craft an ordinance that strikes a balance between free speech and privacy rights. "This is about us seeing issues that have occurred in our neighboring communities and being proactive about making sure we have things that balance everyone's rights equally," he said.

Nekima Levy Armstrong, a civil rights attorney and activist who attended the Hugo protest, said the ordinances are overreactions and hypocritical. While government acts swiftly to limit freedom of speech, she said, it refuses to swiftly hold police officers accountable. She doesn't think the ordinances will prevent nonviolent, peaceful protesters from showing up at rallies.

"People like Bob Kroll take issue with a few hours of an inconvenient protest when we're expected to tolerate his abusive behavior for years," she said. "If Hugo loves Bob Kroll so much, then they should hire him for their police department and he should be fired from the Minneapolis Police Department."