2 who falsely claimed rape may have to pay city’s bill

Brighton – City officials say a teenage girl and a woman who falsely claimed they were beaten and raped by Latino men should repay the city for police overtime hours.

The city needs to send a message that falsely reporting a crime of this magnitude will not be tolerated, said Mayor pro tem Dick Hodge.

“This sent a great wave of fear through this community,” Hodge said. “You cannot terrorize a community like that and expect to get away with it.”

The city attorney is preparing to file a lawsuit against the woman and the teen. Mayor Jan Pawlowski said police officials are calculating how much overtime was spent during the investigation.

The 14-year-old girl told police she was attacked by three Latino men April 10, while she was selling newspaper subscriptions at the Sugar Creek subdivision.

Five days later, a 34-year-old woman – identified in police reports at Dawn Delay – told police she was raped and beaten by two Hispanic men and a white man not far from where the first attack allegedly occurred.

Brighton’s Latinos were especially stung by the sometimes harsh attention they received from their neighbors and police, Pawlowski said.

Investigators had to follow up on leads provided by the two supposed victims who said that their attackers were mostly Latino, Pawlowski said.

“This was an injustice done to the Hispanic community,” she said.
The news of the attacks stunned Brighton, and fear gripped neighborhoods. People locked their doors and refused to go out alone.

“People completely changed their lifestyles because of this,” Hodges said.

A reward for the capture of the reported rapists reached $13,000, as the city and local businesses pitched in.

By early August, however, Delay and the girl recanted their claims. Their motives were unclear, police said, and it didn’t appear that they knew each other.

But a report in the Brighton Blade newspaper indicates the 14-year-old enjoyed the attention, while Delay had fought with her husband hours before her alleged rape.

City Councilman Elias Huerta said he understood why police focused on Latinos during their investigation of the attacks.

“They were hoping to find the culprits and rightfully so,” Huerta said.

Investigators agreed not to charge Delay and the teen to get the true story from each of them.

Still, Huerta says, if they can’t be charged with a crime, they should at least repay the city for their actions.

“People should not point fingers at certain groups for the heck of it,” Huerta said. “It could be some other group next time.”

*Staff writer Monte Whaley can be reached at 720-929-0907 or mwhaley@denverpost.com.*

**Monte Whaley**

Monte Whaley is a Palisade native who covers education and other interesting topics for The Denver Post.

https://www.denverpost.com/2006/10/10/2-who-falsely-claimed-rape-may-have-to-pay-citlys-bill/