

Skateboard Issue Darts out in Pine Lake

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DATE: July 21, 1988

PUBLICATION: The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution

EDITION: The Atlanta Journal Constitution

SECTION: EXTRA

PAGE: A/10

Pine Lake is considering an ordinance that would restrict the use of coasting devices and/or skateboards on public property. Citizens cite safety as the major concern. The smooth, hilly streets of **Pine Lake** are nearly irresistible to the skateboarders, but the city is considering dampening their enthusiasm with an ordinance that would restrict the use of coasting devices on public property.

According to some adults, the skateboards exposes them to potentially serious accidents. Councilor Charlotte Neil, who introduced the proposal at that city's July Council meeting, cited numerous complaints from motorists who said they had experienced near-miss incidents involving youngsters on skateboards. Although no serious accidents, with the exception of some scraped knees and elbows, have been reported, **Pine Lake** Police Chief Sam Schlesinger said that the situation has gotten to the point where safety rules were just not being observed by young people on skateboards. "Motorists have complained that kids won't get out of their way. One scooter ran into the side of a car - so far, no one's been seriously hurt but it's just real unsafe for children to play on the streets."

Officer Schlesinger said that on several occasions he had stopped young skateboarders to tell them that they were violating safety rules and warned them that if he saw them skateboarding on the street again, he would issue them a warning citation. "That's just to notify the parents that their children are acting unsafely it's not a ticket. Once the ordinance is in place, there probably will be some kind of fine. "A first draft of the ordinance, which would be fashioned after the one the city of Conyers recently began to enforce, is scheduled for the Council's September meeting. According to Mayor Myra Singer, the ordinance would prohibit the use of any coasting device, such as scooters [with or without breaks], roller skates and skateboards on city streets. Bicycles would not be restricted by the ordinance.

According to Ms. Singer, if **Pine Lake** established a designated skating area, the city's insurance would skyrocket and, if anything were to happen to a skater, the city could be held liable. "Right now, it's better just to take them off the streets. If they really want to ride their skateboards, they can go to the school playground or the tennis courts."

A few of the city's teenage skateboarders know very well what they want and they are going to try to convince their parents to support them at the September Council meeting when the first draft of the ordinance is due. Preston Hudson, 13, and Steven Johnson, 14, two young skateboarders who attended the council meeting, said they were going to try to start a pro-skateboarding petition.