

If Bird scooters disappear, it's clear who is at fault

LOCAL EDITORIAL

By The Norman Transcript Editorial Board

The sudden introduction of Bird electronic scooters in Norman generated an emotional response.

Many Normanites fell in love with the easy-to-use, speedy and fun scooters, while others expressed concerns about safety, the lack of a regulatory system and scooters blocking sidewalk access.

In response, the city of Norman asked Bird to voluntarily remove the scooters and go through proper channels to legally operate in our community. The company refused. Since last week, the city has impounded dozens of scooters, but Bird has distributed more.

Norman isn't alone in wrestling with the issues

this popular but often unregulated product. And it's not the city's fault that it wasn't prepared for the descent of hundreds of Birds on city streets. No company gets to just set up shop in public spaces without a basic regulatory framework, without at least a permit.

Bird could have talked with Norman before introducing their scooters and figured out this process beforehand. But the company chose not to.

There's a clear-cut beginning of the process: file a revokable permit that is then sent to the city council. But the permit has not yet been filed.

So rather than paint Norman staff as some kind of anti-fun coalition, the object of your frustration should be Bird, who dumped product in public spaces and has operated without city approval for weeks.

We're hopeful Bird continues

to operate in Norman — the city is following a similar procedure as Oklahoma City, which now has scooters from both Bird and Lime — but, if it doesn't, Bird only has itself to blame.