

Citizens Committee to Review Alcoholic Beverage Laws

Thursday, March 8, 2011, 5:00pm

City Council Chambers

MEETING MINUTES

I. WELCOME

Mayor Cohen opened by explaining that the City Council appointed a 15-member Citizens' Committee to Review Alcoholic Beverage Laws (CCRABL) Committee in January 2010 to review a range of alcoholic beverage laws. The Chair of the CCRABL did an outstanding job with guiding the Committee through the process. The Committee developed 48 recommendations and the purpose of this presentation is to report on these recommendations. He noted that the City collectively has decided to move forward on several of these recommendations; are in the process of implementing several of the recommendations; and decided not to move forward on some of the recommendations. He recognized Dr. Nash for working with the Committee through the process and ensuring that these recommendations are followed up on.

II. INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMITTEE

Introductions of the Committee members were made.

Commissioners present:

Whitney Chellis, **Chair**
Charles Grayston
Valerie Miller
Chris Fox

Denise Worthen
Vince Quinlan
Sean O'Neill

Vic Pascoe
Brian Cahalan
Jerry Hardesty

Staff present:

Mayor Josh Cohen
Jacqui Rouse

Karen Hardwick

Dr. Sally Nash

Alderman present:

Alderman Kirby

Alderman Israel

III. PUBLIC HEARING

Dr. Nash reiterated that CCRABL was created last January to review the alcoholic beverage laws in the City. CCRABL gave a presentation to City Council in July 2010 and City Staff have met regularly since that presentation to develop the 48 recommendations identified in its report. Of the 48 recommendations, 14 have been implemented; 24 are currently in the process of implementation; and 10 lacked support for implementation. She briefly identified the schedule of review noting that the recommendations were forwarded to the City departments and staff in September 2010 for comment. There was a work session held to present staff's comments to City Council and the standing Council Committees for review. Lastly, the recommendations were presented to the City Department Heads for discussion and to determine which of the recommendations could be implemented. She pointed out the recommendations implemented to date include #6, #17, #18, #25, #26, #27, #30, #30, #32, #36, #37, #38, #39, #40 and #45. She briefly discussed the recommendations that are still in the process and the recommendations that lack support. She concluded by identifying the next steps in the process and the floor was turned over to the audience for questions. Some of the questions raised are noted below.

1. Mr. Cahalan stated his observations are that ABCB does not want the power that CCRABL would like to give them and this gives the impression that ABCB does not want to regulate the 2:00am licenses. He also expressed concern that the recommendation to lower the license fees which are higher than the County did not pass. Mayor Cohen responded that the City has

reviewed the services that it provides relating to alcohol establishments and the costs are approximately \$400,000 that the City nets each year in fees. This information can be provided for review. A member of the public asked why a portion of the property taxes are not used for these costs. Mayor Cohen continued that the fees the City collects overall correspond more or less to the costs that it takes the City to service the various liquor establishments. Mr. Cahalan believes that the property taxes should pay for some type of public facility restroom.

2. Ms. Worthen expressed concern regarding the City indicating that specific recommendations have been implemented specifically recommendation #6 that states the City promulgate the message that bad behavior will not be tolerated in Annapolis through signage, public relations campaign and other media channels. She requested evidence that this recommendation has been implemented. Mayor Cohen referred to a meeting held with Chief Pristoop last year where he informed all license holders that the Police Department would be more aggressive with enforcement. Ms. Worthen stated that the message should have been gotten out to the public. Dr. Nash responded that it was staff's opinion that increasing the APD's involvement in the enforcement would help with getting the message out to the public. Mayor Cohen added that the administration will take an additional look at this issue.
3. Alderman Kirby stated that he has been in establishments that promptly display those signs so the message is getting out. Mayor Cohen reiterated that Administration will take a second look at this issue to determine what it can do to get the message out. Dr. Nash reminded the audience that some of the recommendations were meant to be completed by the various liquor establishments.
4. Mr. Fox commented that the City needs to support its businesses by streamlining the 2:00am liquor license process. Mayor Cohen agreed to discuss the feasibility of holding an extra set of hearings with the ACB and staff. He noted that he is aware in some instances that the Board members as well as staff went out of their way to accommodate certain hearings.
5. A member of the public raised concern that there are no public restroom facilities available and suggested that the Harbormaster building restrooms be made available. Mayor Cohen responded that the City is reviewing alternatives to provide public restroom facilities. This member suggested that the City find the money to keep its residents safe. Ms. Chellis commented that Economic Development draws visitors to town and the 2:00am licenses are approved but the City is not providing the foundation for these efforts to be successful. She stated that this foundation needs to be built upon. She commented that the reason downtown is losing business to Parole is because Parole is clean, convenient, available parking and safe. These are all items that are perceived to not be available in the City.
6. Ms. Zeno commented that the money saved in the short-term by not having clean and safe public restroom facilities open; will quickly result in a decline in City revenues because of the downtown deterioration and no access to restrooms.
7. Ms. Kennedy noted that the residents, license holders and businesses are all in this together. She asked if there is a point person on the hospitality side that would be available to the public. Mr. Jerry Hardesty agreed to be the point person.

IV. CLOSING

Mayor Cohen concluded by agreeing to follow up with providing the compilation of the costs of providing public restrooms and Dr. Nash was asked to provide a response to Mr. Quinlan's question regarding which Committee has which recommendations. There will be another meeting scheduled for follow up.

Alderman Israel suggested that alcohol license fees be placed in a special fund instead of the general fund. Mayor Cohen agreed to look into this suggestion.

Mayor Cohen commented that he hopes that the CCRABL Committee feels that the City and City Council has taken their recommendations seriously. He hopes that this presentation shows that the City is reporting back to the Committee in appreciation for the time invested in putting together this recommendation report.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10pm.

Tami Hook, Recorder