

District opposes liquor license for hall

BY MARIE CHESTNEY
STAFF WRITER
A billiards hall on the Livonia side of Eight Mile Road now has two strikes against it in its quest to serve liquor to pool-playing customers.

The first comes from the Clarenceville School District, which recently asked the City of Livonia not to let the hall serve alcoholic beverages.

The second comes from the planning commission, which by a 5-2 vote recommended that the Livonia City Council deny waiver use for a Class C liquor license for the House of Billiards, 28139 Eight Mile. The request now goes before the council, with a public hearing to be held in March.

Residents of Angling, St. Francis, Long and Reseller lined up either for or against the license at a Dec. 16 meeting of the planning commission.

Billiards hall owner Kelly Schein of Ferndale St. presented petitions containing 69 signatures from residents who support the license.

Karen Connolly of Angling presented petitions from 16 area residents who oppose the license.

This is the second time the billiards hall has sought a license to serve liquor. The city denied its first request in 1989.

At that time, Clarenceville schools not only opposed the liquor license but the actual establishment of a billiards hall in the

■ The district opposes the liquor license because the hall is "too close to residents" and because "youngsters walk to and from school" along Eight Mile, said Superintendent David Kamish.

shopping center between Grand River and Angling roads.

The hall is in the Clarenceville School District but is not close to a school.

Pedestrian route

The district opposes the liquor license because the hall is "too close to residents" and because "youngsters walk to and from school" along Eight Mile, said Superintendent David Kamish.

"They've managed three years without a license," Kamish said. Roy Rorty, spokesman for his daughter, owner Kelly Schein, said the hall is barely limping along financially because it can't serve beer or wine to customers, all of whom are 17 or older unless accompanied by parent or guardian.

"We're just breaking even," Ray said. "There's not that much money to be made in pool. We rent a table for \$5.50 an hour for two. No one makes money in this business without being able to sell beer and wine, unless they work long hours and are open all the time."

"Our investors are willing to improve this place, but the people

will not invest money if they can't have a license."

Plans upgrading

If waiver use for the license is granted, Schein plans to upgrade the furnishings and expand the billiards hall into a vacant store next door in the shopping center. Schein leases the billiards hall and would lease the extra space.

The planning commission recommended denying waiver use approval for the liquor license because the billiards hall is within 1,000 feet of a nearby restaurant which has a liquor license, El Nibble Nook, and because the issuance of such a license is "incompatible to and not in harmony" with the area.

However, two commissioners said they were against serving liquor at any sporting event.

Said commissioner William LaPine: "I don't like it at ball games. I don't like it at football games. I don't like it at pool halls. I don't like it anywhere. I think if you are in the business of sports, you are in there to do a sport, not to see how much alcohol you can drink, and that is what happens. It just compounds the situation and before you know it we have problems."

Added commissioner Bronda Fandrei: "I think we have gone

overboard with alcohol at any kind of sporting event and I would like to see the day when there isn't any alcohol served."

Commissioners Ray Tent and James McCann recommended support for the license. While "as much of a drinker myself," Tent said he supported the license because of the good reputation and record set by the billiards hall in the last four years and because of the large number of residents who signed petitions in support of the license.

"I feel while alcohol can cause a problem at sporting events, I look at the bowling alleys," Tent said. "Bowling alleys serve beer and they have a sporting event. I would say if we follow that pattern, then we should eliminate all the beer in the bowling alleys as well."

If the city approves the license, it would be transferred from a Class B hotel-resort license now held in escrow in Emmett County. Schein would buy the license.

Once transferred, it would become a resort Class C license in Livonia.

"It is a Class B resort hotel license that is movable within the state so that we do not affect the reserve license that the city of Livonia holds for bigger projects," said Al McCoy, Schein's attorney.

If it gets the license, McCoy said the billiards hall will only serve beer and wine. A Class C license allows the owner to serve liquor as well as beer and wine.

While the hall has not had police or ordinance problems in the

past, commissioner Robert Alankas said that might not be true in the future if it got the license.

"I think it is because you haven't had any beer or wine in the past," Alankas said. "When I was younger I used to go to these places and when there is beer and wine and you start playing pool things can get out of hand. It is a thing where tempers can flare up and you can have problems when you are drinking."

More drunken drivers?

Some residents who signed her petitions opposing the license did so because they fear it will generate more drunken drivers, Connolly said.

Deering resident Mark Jacobson said he feared beer and wine at the billiards hall would become a magnet for persons visiting a nearby unemployment office.

"I don't see any reason why someone needs to drink alcohol to have fun playing pool," Jacobson said.

Plymouth Road resident Ralph Horowitz said he backed the license because it would allow the owner to make a profit.

"Mr. LaPine is correct in saying it (the hall) can use a lot of improvements. One way to get a place improved is to give the person an opportunity to make a dollar. In today's market, I think he needs this license."

If she doesn't get the license, Ray said his daughter would put the business up for sale. "The addition will not happen without the license."

ON THE AGENDA

Below are highlights from the agendas of meetings this week. All meetings are open to the public.

Farmington Hills City Council
Farmington Hills City Hall
7:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 11

- Agenda items include:
 - Remarks by outgoing mayor Jon Grant.
 - Formal passing of the gavel and installation ceremony for incoming mayor Nancy Bates.
 - Presentation of employee awards.

- Recommendations regarding proceeding with ice arena needs/feasibility study.
- Consideration of adoption of resolution in support of the Farmington School District's decision to consolidate elections.

Farmington Public Schools
Lewis Schulman Center
8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12

- Agenda items include:
 - Fifth grade environmental education program presentation.
 - Awarding of bids for integrated communication system and asbestos abatement at Power Middle School.

- Election workers for Feb. 2 millage election.
- Several gifts to schools.

NOTE: Board of education will meet in its closed session at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12, regarding negotiations. At 6:45 p.m., the district's Curriculum Committee will meet regarding the music curriculum.

CLARIFICATION

An article in the Dec. 31 Farmington Observer incorrectly stated that Judge Fred Harris of the 47th District Court contributed to

John McDonald's campaign in the recent Farmington-area judicial election. In fact, Judge Harris made no contributions.



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HOLLICKING RENAISSANCE FOR KIDS AGED 5 TO 8
Fractured Fairy Tales with Kelly Blades and Sean Harmon
Saturday, Jan. 16, 11 a.m. (SIGN UP AT INFORMATION)

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