

DuPage County Liquor Commissioner Meeting
March 22, 2016

In attendance: Dan Cronin, DuPage County Liquor Commissioner; Paul Hinds, Secretary for the DuPage County Liquor Commissioner; Kathy King – DuPage County Clerk's office; Patrick Collins - State's Attorney's Office; Claire Dragovich – DuPage County Sheriff's Office; Jim Stran – Building and Zoning Department; Paul Hoss – Building and Zoning Department; Sheryl Markay – County Board Office; Joan Olson, - County Board Office; Kevin Dixon – DuPage County Health Department; Paul Fichtner – County Board member.

In attendance (public): Matt Schirmer – Uncle Paulie's; Amy Anderson – Cantigny; Cindy Scardina – Green Valley Golf Range; Joe Parlatore – 7-11; Rick Robbins – Bensenville Park District; Michael Benard – Wheaton Park District; Scott Azinger – Butterfield County Club; Bruce Gielow – Wheaton VFW; Guy Morgano – The Pride Stores; Richard McMahon – Buchanan Energy; Irene Bahr – Buchanan Energy.

The meeting was called to order by Liquor Commissioner Cronin who made the following remarks:

Welcome to the DuPage County Liquor Commissioner meeting. Thank you for taking time to participate in this forum. You are a valuable partner for our local economy and I feel it important to have an open dialog today regarding the county's liquor ordinance.

As Liquor Commissioner, it is my responsibility to approve liquor licenses to the 55 establishments located in unincorporated DuPage County and ensure that the liquor ordinance is upheld. Periodically, I like to take the opportunity and check in with the public to make sure that the rules not only protects the public and conforms to state law, but that it also helps you as a small business owner to remain competitive.

That is why I began holding these meetings with license holders even though it is not required that I do this. I believe meeting with you all, here in this room, helps me better understand your needs and helps you better understand the process and responsibilities of the Liquor Commissioner. We began meeting together four years ago, and I hope you find these meetings as productive as I do.

Before I open the meeting up for public comment on any issues or thoughts you may have, I want to thank the businesses, owners, and organization representatives who are in attendance today. I value your opinion and want to know of the concerns you may have.

The Liquor Commissioner opened the floor for public comment. The following liquor license holders spoke:

Bruce Gielow of Wheaton VFW Post 2164 stated that the VFW needs video gaming to increase their revenues.

Liquor Commissioner Cronin stated that if you all recall, the topic of video gaming was discussed in depth at last year's meeting. Many of you expressed an interest in having video gaming in your establishments. It is an issue of remaining competitive with other establishments located in municipalities who allow it.

Last year I explained the process of changing the County Code, which is what would need to happen in this case. In order to make any changes to the County Code, the County Board would need to be involved. A majority vote of County Board members would be required to change it. Therefore, it is important to make sure the 18 members of the County Board hear and know of your interest in allowing video gaming in unincorporated DuPage.

After hearing your concerns last year, I recommended that you share your thoughts with the County Board to amend the County Code. Even though very few license holders followed through with this recommendation, I still believe this is the best way you can inform the County Board of your thoughts and needs.

The following liquor license holders spoke in favor of allowing video gaming:

Rick Robbins of Bensenville Park District – White Pines Golf Course

Michael Benard of Arrowhead Golf Course

Joe Parlatore of Willowbrook 7-11 store asked if video gaming is allowed in places that sell packaged liquor.

Attorney Irene Bahr, representing Buchanan Energy, a potential liquor license holder, requested that the County Board amend Section 3-50 of the DuPage County Liquor Ordinance. She stated that the DuPage County Liquor Ordinance is stricter than the State Statute when it comes to the Location Restrictions.

3-50: - LOCATION RESTRICTIONS.

No license shall be issued for the sale at retail of any alcoholic liquor within one hundred (100) feet of the real property of any church, primary or secondary school, hospital, home for the aged or indigent persons or for veterans, their wives or children, or any military or naval station; provided that this prohibition shall not apply to hotels offering restaurant service, or to restaurants where the sale of alcoholic liquor is not the principal business so exempted shall have been established for such purpose prior to the effective date hereof.

Liquor Commissioner Cronin explained the process of changing the County Code and suggested that she contact her County Board Members and the others on the County Board to let them know of her desire to change Section 3-50 of the County Liquor Code to match the States.

Liquor Commissioner Cronin thanked those who shared their thoughts. If you have any further opinions on the issues pertaining to the Liquor Ordinance and Liquor Commissioner, please send them to Kim Brondyke, who is my Executive Assistant. I promise to carefully consider all of the information gathered here today.

As you already know, we are approaching April which is the time of year when renewal applications are sent to you from the County Clerk's office.

As I have done in the past, I have invited representatives from the County agencies responsible for portions of the renewal process including the County Clerk's Office, the Sheriff's Office, the Health Department and Regulatory Services.

A representative of each agency is here today if any of you have questions for them.

Before I conclude this meeting, I have a couple more housekeeping items I would like to mention. First, recently, some license holders have been submitting your liquor license renewal applications after the Clerk's deadline. This has led to major delays in getting you the license you need. As some of you discovered last year, the County was not given enough time to process the license application. This led to some of you not being able to conduct business for a brief period in time.

I asked staff to find out how other counties and municipalities discourage late applications, and they discovered numerous entities fine applications submitted after the due date. While I would not implement a system of fines for this year, I would strongly consider this for the future if this issue persists. So please turn in your applications by the date the Clerk's office sets. This will help the County ensure we get you your 2016-2017 licenses in a timely manner to allow you to continue to operate your business without a delay.

Finally, if you are interested in keeping up with news from the County, I would encourage you to follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Just search "DuPage County Board" and you will find us.

This concludes the Liquor Commissioner meeting. Thanks again to everyone who participated today. Please remember that renewal applications will be distributed on April 15 and will need to be returned by May 16.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Hinds
Secretary