



News Article

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Beer license changes bring good news to sandwich lovers

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COEUR d'ALENE - Sandwich, pickle, chips and beer.

A change in the city's beer license regulations could make it possible for deli-style restaurants to sell beer and wine with their lunchtime fare.

The amendment would erase the restriction that requires eating establishments to have a type one commercial hood in order to be eligible for a beer license in the city, meaning more smaller sized restaurants like delis and sandwich shops will be able to add beer and wine to their menus.

"We're looking at changing the way the city defines restaurant essentially," said Warren Wilson, deputy attorney.

The City Council will vote on a proposed amendment change during its meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the Community Room at the Coeur d'Alene Public Library.

Currently, the city requires restaurants have type one commercial hoods above their kitchen grills in order to offer onsite alcohol consumption within 600 feet of a residential neighborhood. The change would erase that wording and make "limited service" eating establishments like delis eligible to apply for beer licenses, so long as the stores close by 9 p.m.

"More and more of these delis are cropping up," said Susan Weathers, city clerk. "How do you accommodate them?"

The roughly \$20,000 hoods are required in larger restaurants to collect smoke and act as a fire suppressant. The city used the hoods as a means to differentiate between restaurants and bars when issuing alcohol licenses.

Restaurants are issued licenses because alcohol is an incidental sale of the establishment, whereas bars are primarily pourers and are subject to different requirements.

But lost in the loophole were cold cut locals like delis, which didn't require a type one commercial license or hood to serve sandwiches.

The change would let lunchtime diners complement those cold cuts with a couple of cold ones.

"I think it's fair for the shop owners," said Vince Caruso, franchise owner for Caruso's Deli. "Hopefully the council will see that and approve the change."

Caruso approached the city about amending the ordinance in January after he wanted to add alcohol to his Coeur d'Alene store menu — as his Post Falls and Hayden stores do.

"It's a great addition to what we have going on," he said. "It's not like we're trying to create a pub-type atmosphere."

Cities can distribute an unlimited number of beer licenses within the city, and municipalities are free to establish guidelines with which they choose to issue those licenses.

The proposed amendment comes two months after the council agreed to extend the downtown alcohol consumption boundary exemption that allowed Bakery by the Lake to sell wine across from McEuen Field.

Caption:

Devin Heilman serves beer from the tap Tuesday at Caruso's Deli in Hayden, an amenity not allowed in the Caruso's Deli in Coeur d'Alene. Under current regulations in Coeur d'Alene, deli-style restaurants require a type one commercial hood in order to obtain a beer license.