

To: Common Council Organizational Committee (CCOC)  
From: Alcohol Policy Coordinator Katherine Plominski  
Date: November 2, 2009  
Re: Requested memo regarding proposed special committee

This memo was drafted in response to a request by members of CCOC at the October 6, 2009 meeting. It details current and upcoming initiatives regarding the coordination of alcohol licensing and enforcement.

## **I. Ongoing Initiatives**

There are a number of ongoing initiatives directed at increasing coordination amongst various stakeholders and agencies involved in administering, regulating, and policing licensed establishments. The Alcohol Policy Coordinator position was created in 2005, in part, to focus on these efforts and identify areas of improvement.

### **A. Agency Collaboration Team**

Starting in 2008, the Alcohol Policy Coordinator began convening monthly “Agency Collaboration Team” meetings. Departments that regularly participate in these meetings include Planning/Zoning, Madison Police, Building Inspection, City Attorney’s Office, Fire Dept, Health Dept, Risk Management, etc. Each department representative provides relevant updates and identifies cross-agency issues and gaps. Most recently, the Agency Collaboration Team identified 12 downtown licensed establishments that did not have posted capacities for separate floors, areas, or rooms as required by the International Fire Code. After identifying the issue, the Agency Collaboration Team coordinated an action plan to establish the requisite capacities. The group continues to meet monthly.

### **B. Alcohol Policy Workgroup**

Starting in 2009, the Alcohol Policy Coordinator began convening quarterly Alcohol Policy Workgroup meetings. Departments that regularly participate in these meetings include the Mayor’s Office, Madison Police, Clerk’s Office, and City Attorney’s Office. Each department representative provides relevant updates and identifies opportunities for improvements in alcohol policy. Most recently, the Alcohol Policy Workgroup worked collectively to identify additional violations for inclusion in the progressive discipline system including “Failure to Maintain Status as a Restaurant” and “Procuring Alcohol from Other than a Licensed Wholesaler.” The group continues to meet quarterly.

## **II. Opportunities for Improvement**

We continue to identify opportunities aimed at improving our alcohol licensing and enforcement systems. Part of this analysis includes researching effective systems in place throughout the country. One broad opportunity involves further streamlining the efforts of city agencies that address alcohol license issues to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources in several agencies including Building Inspection, Fire Dept, Madison Police, Attorney, Planning/Zoning, Clerk, Public Health Dept, etc.

Wisconsin is relatively unique in its approach to alcohol licensure, as we have a “local control” system that leaves much of the day-to-day authority with municipalities while

the state maintains control over some significant policy issues. Examples of these policies include, but are not limited to: the requirements to become a licensee; training requirements for bartenders; annual fee structures for all alcohol licenses; and limitations on a municipality's authority to impose certain types of conditions on a license. As we research best practices in other states, we notice that many of the proven effective systems in alcohol licensing, enforcement and education involve the establishment of separate offices that handle these rather unique issues. The "one-stop-shop" model increases coordination and efficiency and is used at the municipal and statewide level throughout the country. Examples of this model include Montgomery County, Maryland's Office of Alcohol Licensure, Regulation and Education and Kansas' Division of Alcohol Beverage Control.