

**From:** [Nicholas Davies](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#)  
**Subject:** 87798 - Saunaday entertainment license  
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Dear alders,

I encourage you to remove this item from the consent agenda and either grant Saunaday's application for an entertainment license, or to re-refer to ALRC to work out any necessary details.

While the Marquette Neighborhood Association's letter was attached to item 87794 and not item 87798, the letter expresses MNA's support of both of the licenses. I worry that this may have been missed.

The city has a real scarcity of entertainment venues. These venues run on thin margins (affecting performers as well), leading to frequent turnover. In recent years, this economic squeeze has led to a lot of closures, market consolidation, and prioritizing the kind of national-level touring acts that represent a surer bet with higher returns. The city's own music scene has not been empowered to grow in proportion with the city's population growth over the last couple decades.

This has a limiting effect on the ability for musicians (and related professions--studio engineers, producers, live sound engineers, other live performers) to make a home and a career here in the long term. And that affects Madison's local production of innovative and diverse music and performing arts.

Much like missing middle housing, smaller-scale venues are crucial to bringing the arts to more of the city. Spaces like Saunaday can be valuable for singer-songwriters, electronic artists, ambient musicians, and anyone else whose performance isn't suited for a high-capacity venue.

As a result, I encourage the council to err on the side of approving entertainment licenses in cases like this, where there's community and neighborhood support. This is something tangible that the city can do to support the arts without requiring any of the city budget.

Thank you,

Nick Davies  
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