

MEMO

Date: January 19, 2011

To: Members of the Alcohol License Review Commission

From: Susan Schmitz/Downtown Madison, Inc.

Re: Alcohol License Density Ordinance (ALDO)

Good evening members of the Alcohol License Review Commission. This memo is to address item #17 on your agenda tonight. See below DMI's approved suggested changes to the ALDO. At the current time, we would suggest that there be a six month extension to the sunset. We think this would assist with the many changes that will be taking place with the ALRC; the new Alcohol Policy Coordinator (Mark Woulf), new ALRC members and the new Council members who will begin their work in April. We think it is extremely important to get ALDO right. As we see the downtown becoming more and more active as an entertainment district, we do not want to discourage the well-run and well-thought out businesses that want to locate in our central district and add to the vibrancy with establishments that do not focus on high capacity vertical drinking. Just within the last year, we have seen restaurants/pubs opening that have brought great life to the district—this life has created an atmosphere where people of all ages are enjoying our downtown—the streets are lit-up and there are people around—all leading to a safer downtown Madison. Thank you to the sub-committee for all of your work.

DMI supports the following modifications be included in any new Alcohol License Density Ordinance (ALDO)

November 16, 2010

- Extend the 365 day limit for granting of licenses to locations previously holding licenses. Exclude short-term “interim” businesses such as campaign headquarters from qualifying as “intervening businesses.”

Re: The 365 day limit doesn't give property owners enough time to find good tenants and responsible operators. This is counter to the best interests of the city and community.

- Allow more flexibility for license applications for entertainment establishments, and employ a holistic definition of exceptional circumstances

Re: The current 25% alcohol limit for “exceptional circumstances” blocks entertainment businesses that are could be economically and socially beneficial to downtown from being established or even considered.

- Allow capacity increases where appropriate:
 - if permitted by code change or fire marshal
 - after probationary period (license condition) is satisfactorily completed
 - physical improvements, rehab or changes in bathrooms, etc.
 - for expansion into neighboring space as approved at discretion of ALRC
 - if a sidewalk café is approved

Re: The current ALDO prevents expansion and retention of good businesses and responsible operators. Allowing existing businesses and known operators with good track records to expand is a good choice for helping to control alcohol-related problems.

- Change Annual Review process to allow for data collection that can be used to benchmark progress and inform policy changes.
- Keep a sunset provision that is no more than 3 years.