

**VILLAGE OF WINNEBAGO LIQUOR COMMISSION**  
**JANUARY 25, 2018, MEETING MINUTES**

The Village of Winnebago Liquor Commission met on January 25, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. at the Village of Winnebago Office. Present were the following: Village Liquor Commission Members Stan Maligranda, Jim O'Rourke, and Kelli Jeffers. Guests present were Village Liquor Commissioner Franklin J. Eubank, Jr., Village Attorney Mary J. Gaziano, Jim Lenon, Mike McKinnon, Michelle Princer, Tom McDonald, Carrie Hunter, Mike Weerda, and Jeremy Graham.

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Chairman Stan Maligranda.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT. Inquiry was made if anyone on the Commission had any conflict of interest in reference to being an owner of a liquor establishment, or any other interest in a liquor establishment. All replied in the negative.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. No changes to the Agenda were requested so a motion was made by Jim O'Rourke to approve the Agenda, Kelli Jeffers seconded the motion, the motion carried, and the Agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES. The Minutes from the August 17, 2017, Liquor Commission meeting were approved upon the motion of Kelli Jeffers, second by Jim O'Rourke, and unanimous approval.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

SPEAKER No. 1: Tom McDonald

Mr. McDonald would like the service of alcohol allowed in downtown Winnebago and video gaming allowed in the Village. Mr. McDonald explained that he grew up in Winnebago, graduating from Winnebago High School in 2004, and went on to be a fireman in Schaumburg, after graduating with a Bachelor's degree from Eastern University. Mr. McDonald currently owns Uptown Lanes Bar & Grill in Byron, and his wife is a school teacher. He indicated his business is very involved in the community.

Mr. McDonald feels that Winnebago is losing money to surrounding communities since there is nowhere to go after a game to have a burger and a beer. By not allowing liquor in certain parts of town, and by not allowing video gaming anywhere in the Village, he feels that the Village is losing sales tax revenue, gaming revenue, and liquor license fees. Mr. McDonald indicated he has a perfect place for a sports bar in downtown Winnebago, but he cannot open a business there at this time due to liquor restrictions.

SPEAKER No. 2: Mike Weerda

Mr. Weerda gave the same presentation as he did at a prior General Board Meeting supporting his concern for the need of economic development of the whole Village, not just Winnebago Corners. He believes the Village's 70/30 food to alcohol requirements are too strict, that alcohol should be allowed to be served Village-wide, and that video gaming should be allowed. Mr. Weerda indicated he had checked with other

small communities such as Pecatonica, Ridott, and German Valley, and none have as strict food to alcohol percentage requirements as the Village of Winnebago. He does not believe more police officers would be necessary if the requirements were lessened and gaming were allowed, as other municipalities have liquor and gaming with an equal, or fewer, number of police officers than does Winnebago.

Mr. Weerda indicated he has no intention of owning a bar, but believes Winnebago needs to be brought out of the dark ages and more money should be brought into Winnebago by allowing the above activities.

**SPEAKER No. 3: Mike McKinnon**

Mr. McKinnon indicated he has 3 daughters ages 22-25, and they always leave Winnebago to socialize with their friends if they want to have an alcoholic drink because it is not allowed in the Village. Mr. McKinnon also mentioned he that there is no opportunity to go to a local sports bar to watch a game. Lastly, Mr. McKinnon indicated it has been rumored that Dos Amigos in Byron was interested in exploring opportunities in Winnebago, but that effort would be hampered with Winnebago being dry south of McNair.

**LOCAL REFERENDUM PROCEDURE.**

Attorney Gaziano distributed a handout she had prepared entitled "Highlights from Illinois Liquor Control Act (235 ILCS 5/9-1, etc.) in Reference to Local Referendum" and the same was discussed. This handout outlined the procedure to place a liquor referendum question on the ballot for the voters.

**ALCOHOL TO LIQUOR 70/30 REQUIREMENT.**

Frank Eubank asked Michelle Princer of Toni's who was present if she would like the 70/30 split requirement changed. Michelle indicated she is not really interested in having people sit at her establishment drinking a couple of beers until 2:00 a.m., and believes in order to have a successful business in a small town, a proprietor has to have good food, with the establishment being deemed a destination. Frank Eubank stated that residential growth also needs to be explored because more rooftops are needed to bring in more businesses.

Jim O'Rourke opined that he does not believe a 70/30 split is realistic, and could see a 50/50 split as being more reasonable.

The Commission encouraged open discussion from the audience on this topic at this particular meeting. Tom McDonald stated in Byron where he has his sports bar, there are no percentage requirements. He also indicated he is looking at the old post office building in Winnebago as a possible place for a sports bar, which is located 130 feet from a preschool. In order for him to operate at that location, liquor would have to be allowed to be served in downtown Winnebago and the Village's liquor ordinance would need to be amended to meet the state's requirement for a liquor establishment to be at least 100 feet from a school vs. the Village's stricter 200 foot requirement.

Mike Weerda stated he would like to see no percentage restrictions.

Michelle Princer reminded everyone there is currently a limit of 7 liquor licenses allowed to be issued in the Village, and discussion was had about how that could or would factor in to expansion of liquor opportunities in the Village.

It was decided that at the next meeting there would be further discussion about food to liquor percentages. Mike Weerda will e-mail Attorney Gaziano information about percentage requirements in other areas he obtained by speaking to liquor establishments in other small communities.

**SCHOOL DISTANCE REQUIREMENTS.**

Attorney Gaziano is to check into more specifics of the 100 foot distance from school requirement, as well as any exemptions.

**VIDEO GAMING.**

Jim Lenon of Road Ranger indicated Road Ranger has a total of 24 gaming sites in Illinois, and there have not been any issues. There is interest by Road Ranger in expanding gaming, and Frank Eubank said he would be willing to talk about the issue of gaming at a truck stop. It was also decided that there will be more discussion about video gaming at the next Liquor Commission Meeting, as well as about updating the Village's Liquor Ordinance.

**NEW BUSINESS.**

Next meeting of the Liquor Commission set for Thursday, February 22, 2018, at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further new business or matters to discuss in Executive Session, Jim O'Rourke made a motion to adjourn, the same was seconded by Kelli Jeffers, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

UNAPPROVED

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Mary J. Gaziano, Village Attorney

Minutes approved by Village Liquor Commission  
on \_\_\_\_\_.