



Washington Police Department

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Public Safety Committee Agenda Communication

Meeting Date: May 18, 2020

Prepared By: Chief Michael D. McCoy and Deputy Chief Jeff Stevens

Agenda Item: Proposed Liquor Code Amendment to Allow Alcohol at a Movie Theatre

Explanation: The AMC CLASSIC Sunnyland 10 Theatre holds a longstanding anchor position in the Washington Plaza. AMC is negotiating a new lease with the property owner and both AMC and the owner would like to incorporate potential liquor sales to theatre patrons. The property owner, Ray Poe, believes the increased revenue potential increases the chance of a lease renewal and AMC staying in Washington.

Nothing in the Liquor Code would prevent a movie theatre from obtaining a liquor license. Current Class A or Class D licenses would allow sales and consumption on the premises without limiting sales or consumption in relation to the timing of a particular movie showing. Those license fees range from \$1,000 - \$1,250 annually.

AMC operates over 300 theatres across the country with alcohol service under its branded MacGuffins® Bar theme, including some in Illinois. Bar service in movie theatres is increasingly common in the U.S.

Area theatres with alcohol service have not generated significant amounts of additional police calls. Bloomington, Illinois, for example, has two theatres that have served alcohol for several years. Bloomington had 1 police call at a theatre bar in the past 3 years, that call being for an intoxicated person. Normal started allowing alcohol this year and had 1 call (disorderly conduct) from January 1 – May 13.

Considerations for licensing theatres include drink limits by number or alcohol content, time allowed for consumption (particularly in relation to patrons' tickets), monitoring of auditoriums, limitation of alcohol in auditoriums based on movie rating, and the like. Limitations specific to a movie theatre would require creation of a specific liquor license class, a

common solution to municipality concerns across the country. There is no inherent requirement to restrict alcohol sales in a theatre beyond restrictions in place at any other establishment. A common argument against theatre licensing is the norming of alcohol consumption in a family atmosphere.

Financial Impact: The financial impact to the City is dependent on whether concession sales would be impacted by the addition of alcohol and whether there may be a loss of or interruption to the operation of a theatre in Washington based on the availability of licensing. The City stands to gain a license fee and sales tax, and may potentially see more theatre patrons due to the availability of alcohol sales. Without licensing, patrons may choose theatres in Peoria or other nearby communities that allow such sales.

Action Requested: Determination of whether to move this topic to Committee of the Whole in June, and whether to prepare a draft ordinance or other material prior to that discussion.