

Bar owners request 2 a.m. last call

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 27 January 2011 17:46 -

City council asking for community feedback.

More business is the bottom line for two local bars, and a restaurant owner, who want extended hours to sell alcohol.

Cherry Alger, owner of Pete's Lounge, approached the Gothenburg City Council Jan. 18 to ask that her business be allowed to serve alcohol until 2 a.m. every night.

Passage of a law by Nebraska legislators last year, that went into effect July 1, allows local governments to decide if businesses can serve drinks on their premises until 2 a.m.

City ordinance allows alcohol to be served at bars and restaurants Monday through Thursday from 6 a.m. to 11:45 p.m. and from 4-10 p.m. on Sundays.

Friday hours are from 6 a.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday. On Saturday, alcohol can be served from 6 a.m. until 1 a.m. Sunday.

"Bar and restaurant owners feel we should have the business option to extend hours of sale," Alger said, noting she doesn't plan to do it every night but wants the option.

Both Alger and Steve Walker, owner of Walker's Steakhouse and Lounge, told of pool players who frequent their businesses on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Walker noted that he'd like to accommodate pool players, golfers and others who drink alcohol and bring money into his establishment.

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Once alcohol is cut off, Alger said their establishments still have operating expenses while hosting pool leagues, wedding receptions, college kids on holiday and other groups who often like to stay and visit after last call.

“It would be a better situation with extended hours,” she said.

Walker said he would like the council to allow him to sell alcohol at noon Sunday, instead of 4 p.m., noting that liquor and off-sale beer can be sold elsewhere in town at noon.

“I’m here to look after my customers,” he said, “and people need it on special occasions. I want to help support my business and it’s what people want.”

City administrator Bruce Clymer pointed out that a survey sent to and returned by utility customers showed 57 people favoring extended alcohol-sale hours and 460 against.

Walker wondered if most of the opposition was from the elderly.

Council president Jeff Kennedy said he’d like to hear feedback from constituents, adding that Gothenburg residents are perhaps more conservative than other communities.

“But I also know what it’s like to have a small business,” Kennedy said.

On Sundays, Bar W owner Norm Lambertus said he barely makes enough money to pay wages and cleaning fees.

With extended hours, he said he could at least break even.

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Walker asked whether or not he could bring the council a

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