



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Public Safety Council Committee

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

5:00 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL (ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE) CONFIRMED BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT

Present 7 - Mitch Johnson;David McClain;Chris Moore;Brian Emison;Janice Porter;Chris Gibson and LJ Bryant

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[MIN-24:050](#)

Minutes for the Public Safety Committee meeting on May 21, 2024

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Chris Gibson, seconded by Brian Emison, that this matter be Passed . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 6 - David McClain;Chris Moore;Brian Emison;Janice Porter;Chris Gibson and LJ Bryant

4. NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES TO BE INTRODUCED

[ORD-24:018](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO PLACE VARIOUS TRAFFIC SIGNS AT DESIGNATED LOCATIONS AS DETERMINED BY THE TRAFFIC CONTROL COMMITTEE

Sponsors: Engineering

A motion was made by Chris Moore, seconded by Chris Gibson, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 6 - David McClain;Chris Moore;Brian Emison;Janice Porter;Chris Gibson and LJ Bryant

[ORD-24:021](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH AN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT IN HISTORIC DOWNTOWN JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

Attachments: [Exhibits](#)
[Handout_DJA_Entertainment_District](#)

Councilmember David McClain said, Mr. Chairman, if I may, two questions. Well, one in particular, and I wanted to ask the Chief if he would address it for me. Do you have

any concerns as far as the times? I know right now you have basically the weekend, Thursday Friday Saturday. Any concern there? Do you feel like, this is one of my reservations, should we go to an event only? Does this cause you to have to require more manpower downtown? If so, what kind of strain does that put on you? Police Department Chief Rick Elliot approached the podium and said, as far as security issues for this event, I really don't have the manpower to dedicate it with a normal shift, so any security for this event is going to be offered as paid overtime. To cover security. Councilmember David McClain said, well, I don't mean one event in particular. I mean, if we adopt it... Chief Rick Elliot said, during the district hours, we don't necessarily have to have security for all hours of operations, but in the later evening hours I think we need to have uniformed officers present. Because there's no way to control the people leaving the district carrying alcohol beyond the boundaries of the district. You've got to have somebody there to enforce the rules. As far as the set hours that was what was presented. Kind of mirrors the hours of operations for ABC. Starts at 10. Now, originally ABC hours are 10 to 2, I did object to the 2 o'clock and we shifted it back to 10 o'clock. Councilmember Chris Moore said, thinking that comment Chief, not only did they scale the hours back but they also scaled the days back. That does not include Sunday's sales. Tuesday through Saturday and 10 o'clock is cut off time so. Chief Rick Elliot said, so from the initial conception of the whole idea, as it was presented, and after sitting down with Miss Doss and others. What you see in front of you, it's kind of a general agreement of where we all land on this at this point. Councilmember David McClain said, and how do you feel about it? Let me ask you that. Are you good with it, do you think we should make modifications? Chief Rick Elliot said, I think it's like anything that we do. We can have a start, what we think will suffice and as things go, if there's problems then we come back and address it. If three, six months into this, it's a total nightmare, then I'll come back and say we need to repeal the ordinance. I know other places do this across the state. So, I think what we have tonight is something, again, that we've set down with, committee wise, and kind of came up with a working plan. And other than the fact that we need security there for at least the last half of it is really the only thing that really wasn't written in on the hours of security and who's going to pay for it.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, I would just say that downtown is like a park within itself. I think everybody's downtown is like a park. So, I'd say the administration, I'd like to see them find money for you ASAP for this. I think it's important that we find the money in the beginning to prevent problems before we have problems. So, I hope this is something that we'll find money for as it's implemented. Chief Rick Elliot said, I'm sure they will. I think Mr. Richardson and I discussed this earlier that I think they found some money that we can cover for the remainder of the budget year since we're already in a budget cycle. But as this moves towards the fall and the new budgeting cycle, and everything looks promising like it's going to be a go from here on then we can certainly budget in those security hours into my next year's physical operating budget. The concerns, I'll just bring up some things that were thought about. So we talked about the wristbands and the clear cup container, that takes care of identifying those that are drinking. And if you're not banded and you're walking around drinking alcohol, then your subject to state statutes for being charges with drinking in public. The state statutes that are out there now are still applicable, but if you're banded then you won't face that charge. If you get caught drinking and you're not banded and then there's a provision in this ordinance that the law enforcement officers can come up and take your alcohol away from you and either charge you with drinking in public and/or destroy the alcohol. So we made some provisions in this ordinance to kind of address. We know that sometimes somebody may try to sneak to the car and refill their cup, so the big parking lots, they're out of the entertainment district so they shouldn't be leaving with that cup anyway. If you get caught leaving with the cup, we'll ask them to

discard the cup so they can't refill it and bring it back. So we try to think of everything as much as possible. It's not a 100 percent perfect plan, but it's something that, again, fairly comfortable with at the moment, and it's like you said, anything we do anywhere in the city, our job is just to protect the people that are there. So, that's my goal at the end of the day, is to make sure that any environment that we have throughout the city, that the citizens are protected. We do have a robust camera system downtown, and so everything that is going on is on video. So, if something does happen then we certainly have it recorded.

Chairman Mitch Johnson said, Chief, would you feel any concern with other events that coincide that happens downtown, say the Christmas Parade for instance? A family-oriented thing. Would you feel that we should have some kind of provisions to actually not have things allowed on certain events? Chief Rick Elliot said, I think that would be something to bring up. To have a clause in there for if we had an event like that, that we could suspend the entertainment district for that evening or for certain hours that night. Just because the Christmas Parade is a family environment and the mingling of alcohol in the outdoor venue like that could be problematic, so I think having that provision added to this ordinance would be helpful. City Attorney Carol Duncan said, in anticipation of that possible concern I drafted some language if anybody would like to make a motion. If anybody would like to read my language and consider a motion. Chairman Mitch Johnson said, could you just share with us briefly? City Attorney Carol Duncan said, I basically suggested that in Section 6-55, which is the part that deals with special event permits, because you would still have to get a special event permit for things like BBQ Fest and Local Fest and the Arts Fest, you know things like that, any special event permit that wishes to not have the outside consumption of alcohol during their event can request to opt out of the entertainment district during the hours which their event is scheduled. Should an event opt out, the private clubs within the entertainment district shall not sale cups for the outside consumption during that event.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, personally my thought, we're an uncharted territory, the Chief's already made the point that at any time we can come back and amend this ordinance, whether it be change the hours, change the days, change the stipulations. I think before we start preempting problems that we don't have I think we should give it a test run and let Chief evaluate where we're at and come back and make recommendations. Chairman Mitch Johnson said, well I wouldn't say that I was advocating to make a bunch of changes to look at different events, just something that comes to mind that we need to keep in the back of our heads for the future. Councilmember Chris Moore said, and I can easily see something coming to mind where groups could come and apply for a permit and request no alcohol for a small group and tie up every weekend, so by default we would have a veto on that. I mean, like I say, my thoughts would be, we give it a test run. Chief has kept us safe this far. We let him evaluate it, if he thinks it's causing an issue then we do something different.

Councilmember Janice Porter said, would you anticipate that you would have to reduce coverage in other areas of the city? Chief Rick Elliot said, no ma'am. I am not looking to take on-duty resources to dedicate to the downtown foot patrol. Those will be officers that are off duty that are brought in for that coverage. As the same as we do every day for the pools. We're not taking away from the on-duty staff to provide security to our pools, so there will just be another part of covering our city assets with off duty officers.

City Attorney Carol Ducan said, I believe the proponent for the ordinance actually has a

presentation, if you want to..... Chairman Mitch Johnson said, yeah I think that's where we need to go at this point. I mean, I'm going to open the floor up for proponents. I think Miss Doss is here to speak. Obviously, we want to give everybody some adequate time, but let's start with our proponent here.

Downton Jonesboro Alliance Executive Director Sarah Doss approached the podium and said, Hello City Council men and women of the Public Safety Committee. Thanks for hearing us out tonight. We've been working on this for a while and excited to tell you about it. My name is Sarah Doss, Executive Director of the Downtown Jonesboro Alliance. I'm here today to give you an overview of an ordinance that we've poured hard work into for the past two years. Before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge the group of individuals that I have with me this evening. The group behind me consists of board members, business owners, employees and residents. Ultimately, all enthusiasts and patrons of our downtown. They're joining us to show their support of the ordinance I will present to you tonight. They see the value and the growth that it would bring to our community. If you're one of these individuals I would like to ask you to raise your hand now. Thank you. A.C.A 14-54-1412 states that a city located in a county with an established entities authorized by ABC to sell alcoholic beverages, may by ordinance create a designated entertainment district. Since it was passed into law 26 cities have passed entertainment ordinances with seven of those being in dry counties. Not including Jonesboro, there are currently four other cities in the process of adopting one as well. Jonesboro ranks number five on Arkansas's top 10 cities list, eight of those cities already have existing ordinances. The two cities that do not are Jonesboro and Conway, both of which are in the process of proposing ordinances and are both located in dry counties. With all that being said, I would like to share with you the ordinance we have written on behalf of downtown Jonesboro. This ordinance would allow guest, age 21 or older, to carry alcoholic beverages in approved city cups while wearing a city approved wristband in all public spaces and participating commercial properties within the boundaries of the district from 10am to 10pm Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The boundaries are displayed in the packet in front of you for your reference for the remainder of this presentation. While generating this ordinance, we sought guidance and input from Main Street business owners, the Police Department, our city government, ABC and the DJA Board of Directors. Through this process we believe we have curated the best ordinance to accommodate Jonesboro specifically. As before mentioned, there are required city approved cups that each business will have to use. These cups must be clear, disposable and 16 ounces. They must also bear the Entertainment District logo that is no less than two inches wide and one and a half inches tall. While touching on these requirements with Chief Elliot, like he mentioned, he felt we needed another layer of security in the district. We began reading other cities' ordinances, talking with their mayors and downtown directors, and ultimately decided to implement a wristband system. In addition to the designated container, patrons will have an Entertainment District wristband placed on the wrist proving they have shown their photo identification prior to purchasing their beverage. These clear identifiers will allow the Police Department to more effectively patrol the district. Speaking of clear identifiers, we have diamond shape, road grade, street decals on our sidewalks indicating whether or not you or inside or outside of the district. Depending on the direction you are walking the decals will read, you're now entering the Entertainment District versus you're now exiting the Entertainment District. The Jonesboro Advertising and Promotion Commission has so graciously agreed to purchase these for the district. In addition to these, A&P has also agreed to purchase logo stickers for the doors of the participating business. Each business has the choice of whether or not they want to participate in the district. If they choose to, they will place a logo sticker on their door, which would allow beverages into their business. The businesses that contain liquor licenses will be required to display the rules and

map of the district in their establishment. We firmly believe that this will greatly benefit our downtown economy and boost our foot traffic as well as positively impact our downtown events. The host of any event downtown will have the opportunity to apply to extend the hours of the ordinance through the Jonesboro Police Department and the District Oversight Committee. The hours may be extended until 2am, when the Alcohol Beverage Commission requires all alcohol sales to end. The liability of all alcohol sales will remain on the businesses holding liquor licenses. The City of Jonesboro and the Downtown Jonesboro Alliance will not be assuming any new liabilities. However, there will be additional security provided. Officers in uniform and in streetwear will be patrolling the district. DJA is committed to making downtown well-lit for beautification as well as security. Our most recent installation began today on Main Street and brought us up to around \$80,000 invested in lighting since 2018. DJA and JPD working together, are going to ensure that downtown remains as safe as possible. Lastly, the mayor will be responsible for appointing a seven-member oversight committee to manage the district. This committee will be made up of one member of the City of Jonesboro's governing body, two business owners that are members of DJA, one member of A&P, two citizens living within the district, and one member from an arts and entertainment venue within the district. The executive director of DJA will sit on this committee as a liaison and tie-breaking vote, otherwise will be a non-voting source. This committee will be responsible for distributing information to businesses, approving event requests that will affect the hours of the district and other tasks as needed. They will also have the authority to temporarily suspend or revoke any business that is not abiding by the rules established by the City of Jonesboro in order to preserve the integrity of the district. I will leave you with this. With the support from local and state officials, we are confident that this is the right decision for downtown Jonesboro. DJA exists to bring people and revenue to our downtown businesses, and we feel at this time that this is exactly how to do that. Thank you.

City Attorney Carol Duncan said, I think it's important to note that just like any other committee, Council would have approval over the mayor's suggested appointees to that committee. Chairman Mitch Johnson said, sure, absolutely. Any other proponent like to speak briefly before the committee? Now keep in mind that if this goes through committee tonight it'll come before the council over three readings, so there'll be plenty of time to have support and non-support in the near future. Do I have any opponents that would like to speak very briefly?

James Elwyn Hinds, 508 Ridgecrest, approached the podium and said, is there any reason for doing this other than the fact that the people want to get alcohol out on the streets in Jonesboro? I've yet to hear anything good about this proposal. All of it is centered on what can we do to get alcohol out on the streets. I'm opposed to that. Let me remind you that this is a dry county. We have, I think the last time we voted on whether or not to allow alcohol was 2014. I know we voted that year. I don't think we have since. That was 10 years ago. The vote was nearly two-thirds against allowing the alcohol, and I suspected that if we have a vote, in fact, if you want to do this why not put it to the people to let them decide whether they want alcohol on the streets of Jonesboro. I think you'll find out most of them do not. Next, let me point out something to you and we don't mention this enough. Do you know what a gateway drug is? Now there's a myth and I don't want tied to this because there's not evidence that marijuana is a gateway drug. However, there is overwhelming evidence that alcohol is. Because where alcohol is legal the use of meth and other drugs goes up. When you have less alcohol they go down. That is a proven fact. So, if you're voting for this to get alcohol out there you're also voting to get meth and fentanyl and the whole all of that stuff out there too.

Councilmember David McClain said, I did not see the hours. We talked about the hours but I didn't see the hours in the. Am I missing that? Did I overlook it? City Attorney Carol Duncan said, yes. They're in there. Councilmember David McClain said, where did I overlook it? What section are they in, please? City Attorney Carol Duncan said, it is in 6-50. Just keep reading, it's about halfway down. May exit the licensed premises between the hours of 10am and 10pm Thursday through Saturday.

A motion was made by Chris Moore, seconded by Chris Gibson, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - David McClain;Chris Moore;Brian Emison;Chris Gibson and LJ Bryant

Nay: 1 - Janice Porter

RESOLUTIONS TO BE INTRODUCED

[RES-24:067](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO CONDEMN PROPERTY LOCATED AT: 416 West Forrest Street, Jonesboro, AR 72401; Parcel # 01-144073-28700; OWNER: The Heirs at Law of Leotha Kersey, deceased

Sponsors: Code Enforcement

Attachments: [416 W Forrest Boarding and Securing Affidavit](#)
[416 W Forrest Boarding and Securing Returned Cert Letter](#)
[416 W Forrest Inspection Report](#)
[416 W Forrest Map](#)
[416 W Forrest Notice of Violation Affidavit](#)
[416 W Forrest Notice of Violation Returned Cert Letter](#)
[IMG_1736](#)
[IMG_1738](#)
[IMG_1740](#)
[IMG_1741](#)
[IMG_1743](#)
[IMG_1748](#)
[IMG_1751](#)

A motion was made by Chris Gibson, seconded by Chris Moore, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 6 - David McClain;Chris Moore;Brian Emison;Janice Porter;Chris Gibson and LJ Bryant

5. PENDING ITEMS

6. OTHER BUSINESS

[COM-24:023](#)

VECTOR MOSQUITO CONTROL REPORT FOR THE CITY OF JONESBORO FOR MAY 2024

Attachments: [Jonesboro May](#)

Councilmember David McClain said, Mr. Chair speaking of the mosquito control report, do we know, and Brian I sent ya'll a message, when is our contract up with Vector? When is that coming due? Chief Administrative Officer Brian Richardson approached the podium and said, after our conversation, reviewed it and I believe that will need to be rebid out this fall. It was a six-year contract originally passed in January 2019, so it covered that year so this is year six of that contract.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, I would just say I hope we get some other people from their organization to talk to us other than what they've sent here. Not that they're not nice folks but they don't seem very interested in talking about, I mean, they don't even want more of our money. So, I hope they will be more engaged in the contract piece. Chief Administrative Officer Brian Richardson said, well and also of course after this, for the viewing pleasure for everybody here and at home, ASU's entomologist team is going to come and discuss whether to add on some of their setup. Coming up, I guess, their special presentation at the next council meeting. Following this meeting. You know I think between a combination of treatment and then also better environmental improvements and changes that we make both here in the city and with picking up a lot of debris on the streets through pick-ups and also keeping our waterways as clean as possible. It's a multi-prong attack and I think we definitely need to do all we can on our end to help mitigate mosquitoes the best we can.

Filed

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

8. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Chris Gibson, seconded by Brian Emison, that this meeting be Adjourned. The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 6 - David McClain;Chris Moore;Brian Emison;Janice Porter;Chris Gibson and LJ Bryant