



Report

To: Mayor and City Council
From: William Nelson, Director of Parks and Recreation
Date: October 13, 2011
Subject: Liquor at Private Rentals

Background:

The Rock Island Parks and Recreation Department has worked to identify appropriate ways to allow liquor at approved events on park properties and facilities. As a result, the City has a new "Catering License" that has been very helpful for larger fund raisers and special events, and a "Special Use Permit" that allows local business vendors to support larger rentals and special events as well as the Park and Recreation sponsored concerts. These changes have been successful for the department and those businesses that took advantage of the catering permit.

As the summer progressed, staff found that on several occasions, renters wanted to do something low key in providing liquor, but there was not a vendor willing to provide the service to the event. The primary reason was that there was not enough money in it for the vendor, and in other cases, just no follow through from the vendor. Examples are weddings with a Champaign Toast, or an organizational group party who wished to celebrate the year with beer and wine.

In all of these cases, the rental was by invitation only, the liquor was to be "gifted" or free, and the amount of liquor was not substantial. Unfortunately, staff had to enforce the ordinances as written, even though the renters had done their best to fulfill all the requirements.

Staff began to prepare a recommendation to the Park and Recreation Board that would allow the "gifting" of liquor to a private rental as long as it followed the State of Illinois rules for private events with liquor. The State does not require a liquor permit for a private event that is by invitation only, and the liquor is "gifted" with a value that is approximately \$500.00.

The recommended policy, passed by the Park and Recreation Board would allow private rentals to "gift" liquor to their guests under the following stipulations:

The guests must come by invitation only (not open to the public).

The value of the "gifted liquor" cannot exceed the Illinois State Requirement for a "private event" which is currently \$500.

The renter must purchase Dram Shop Insurance covering them and the City for one million dollars.

The renter must identify the process by which those under 21 are excluded from access to the liquor.

The Park and Recreation Department determines the security needs for the event.

If an event invites the public, or the private event wishes to sell liquor, it falls under the Special Event Permit or the Caterers Permit, and requires State and Local Permits to be obtained.

Report:

To properly make this change, a portion of the Park and Recreation Ordinance would need to be added to. Currently the ordinance reads as follows:

a)No person, in any park or playground in the city, shall:

(7) Sell, consume or be in possession of beer, wine or other intoxicating liquor, or enter or be upon the premises of any park or playground while under the influence of intoxicating liquor. The sale and possession of beer, wine or other intoxicating liquor is permitted if it is purchased from employees of the Rock Island Park and Recreation Department or from a qualified vendor or licensee issued a temporary liquor license, and only in those areas previously so designated by the Rock Island park and recreation board.

We are recommending that the following be added to the above statement.

The Rock Island Park and Recreation Board may also approve the “gifting” of Liquor for private rentals at previously designated park and recreation areas or facilities as stipulated by operational policy. After receiving approval by the Park and Recreation Board, all applications for “gifting” of liquor at a private rental must be received by the liquor commissioner’s office no later than seven (7) days in advance of the scheduled event. Upon approval, an approval letter from the Liquor Commissioner will be sent to the applicant and the police department.”

The State of Illinois does not require a permit for private rentals or functions, and this is how Blackhawk Lodge operates for their weddings and special events. In this case, we would also support the non purchase of a liquor permit for a private rental, but do support the dram shop insurance requirement. There is an additional corkage fee for the purpose of providing liquor at a park facility rental to cover additional garbage and services required as a result of the liquor.

Recommendation:

Staff is requesting that the report be forwarded to the City Attorney to prepare the ordinance for approval by the City Council.