

City reviews ordinance

New legislation would allow the consumption of alcohol on certain city properties

BY JARED YOUNG
Staff Reporter

Kirksville City Council currently is considering an ordinance that would allow the consumption of alcohol on city property, including Kirksville Regional Airport, Rotary Park and North Park.

Current ordinances allow the sale of alcohol on public property in Kirksville's business district. The new ordinance, if passed, would allow the sale and consumption of alcohol at public events at those three new locations.

City Councilmember Todd Kuhns said the ordinance originated from three separate requests. The requests focused on allowing beer and wine to be served at the city-owned airport hanger and the Rotary Park Amphitheater. Another request was for the sale of alcohol at North Park.

"One was the Rotary Club, which wanted to expand the usage of the new amphitheater at Rotary Park," Kuhns said. "The airport association, doing their big airport air festival wanted to have an event for the pilots."

He said the reason for the North Park request was that adult leagues would not host tournaments there because alcohol was not allowed on the premises.

In a study conducted by the community services department, nine of eleven

communities throughout Missouri were found to allow alcohol to be consumed on city property. It was also found that those city municipalities that have passed such ordinances into law have had no negative repercussions.

Kuhns said he supports the proposed ordinance and doesn't think passing it will result in increased alcohol problems.

"I think it's a good idea to expand the usage of our parks," Kuhns said. "I think the ordinance is very responsible. It's very restrictive."

In order for anyone to serve alcohol on city property, an application would have to be submitted at least 60 days in advance of the event, according to the proposed ordinance. The permit holder must have liability insurance for as much as \$1 million per occurrence. Also, the permit holder would be responsible for posting the permit at the event location and meeting with the Kirksville Police Department to review all rules, regulations and conditions associated with such permit, according to the ordinance.

The location of the event would have to have physical boundaries, a certain number of exits and a system to check identification of those entering the event, according to the policy.

Sophomore Meghan Whitaker said she thinks allowing people to consume alcohol on public property would increase the dangers associated with drinking.

"There's a possibility of having young people there," Whitaker said. "I

think that drunk driving and public intoxication would also be a problem."

Whitaker said she understands the reasons people would want to drink at events on public property but thinks the current ordinance should be left alone.

"I don't really have a problem with it," Whitaker said. "If you make an exception for that, there's all these other things you would make exceptions for. To me, having a blanket policy ... is going to be a lot easier."

Randy Smith, president of the Kirksville Airport Association, said the issue of consuming alcohol on public property has been blown out of proportion.

"All we wanted to do was have a local bar owner, who has a liquor license ... to legally sell beer at the airport ... in preparation for our air festival," Smith said. "This was something that the Airport Association thought might be a good idea for one time."

At the time of the air festival, the city already had sold the airport hanger in question to a private owner. Because the hanger was not city property, the Airport Association went ahead with its event, he said.

Smith said the proposed ordinance was not what the Airport Association had in mind.

"As far as the Airport Association is concerned ... it doesn't matter to us whether we serve beer down there or not," Smith said. "It's a moot thing for us. This was a one time permission that we were asking the City Council for."



Amy Gleaves/Index
The North Park baseball fields near Wal-Mart are empty on a cold fall day. Signs warning against alcohol consumption can be seen at the fields in the park.

Council passes grant applications

BY MARGARET HOOPER
Staff Reporter

Kirksville's City Council passed two Community Development Block Grant applications Monday night, which, if approved, will provide funds to identify historic city buildings and to assist in the renovation of the Cochran Building, a historic downtown structure.

Under the first CDBG, the City Council requested \$12,000 in federal support, cash and labor from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Fund to survey for historical buildings or districts within Kirksville's city limits, with the exception of the downtown area, which is covered by the DREAM initiative.

City Manager Mari Macomber said that under the CDBG grant, the city would have no financial commitment but would provide \$2,500 worth of in-kind labor. Macomber said she is excited about the possibility of having someone come identify the historic structures in town.

"Having somebody come in and say, 'That building was this,' or 'This used to house this,' I think will just be great information to have," Macomber said.

The second CDBG passed by City Council requests \$260,000 for the renovation of the Cochran building and states that the developer will contribute \$562,751 and the city will provide \$2,500 worth of in-kind services. Macomber said the grant is part of the downtown revitalization project and falls under the same grant program utilized in the downtown theater renovations.

The Cochran building currently is under contract to Justin Puckett, who plans to buy and renovate the historic structure if the city procures the CDBG grant on his behalf.

"Right now, a very small percentage

of the building has been used for rental space, but it hasn't had any wide-scale usage for many years," Puckett said.

The plans include commercial rental space as well as nine one- and two-bedroom apartments. Puckett said each unit will have a washer and dryer and that he hopes to include additional amenities.

"So long as the budget stays reasonable, we're looking at doing some other high end things like secured entry with video conferencing," Puckett said. "We're hoping to get a rooftop terrace off the top of that and doing some other neat features that you don't find elsewhere."

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Justin Puckett
Cochran building contractor

In addition, Puckett said the commercial space will be flexible depending on what the DREAM study report suggests would serve the downtown area best or according to the needs of a specific renter.

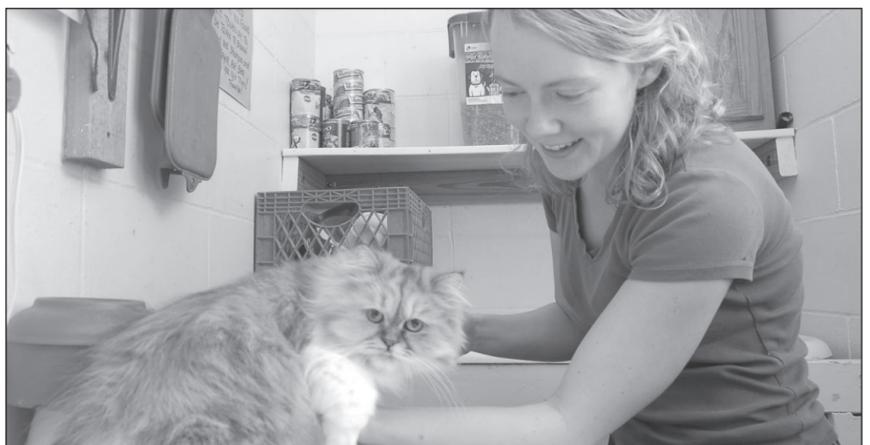
"We don't have many we'll-remodel-to-suit downtown, but this is going to fall into this category," Puckett said. "If somebody new had an idea and wanted to use the space, we would definitely take that into consideration as we did the remodel."

If everything goes smoothly, Puckett said construction would begin in the spring. He hopes to have the upstairs apartments ready in August, and a building-wide opening the following December.

"Our downtown has a huge amount of potential, and we're really starting to see some of those things come into fruition," Puckett said.

Senior Keely Lamka said she thinks the restoration of the Cochran building downtown and other similar projects will benefit the University and bring students and the Kirksville community closer.

"Students coming here to Kirksville basically see a dilapidated town," Lamka said. "With the renovations, students would take more pride in the city."



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Kirksville resident Maggie Rebers, volunteer at the Adair County Humane Society, brushes a cat as part of her work. Her main motivation for volunteering is she loves animals and doing something worthwhile.

Economic crisis affects shelter

BY BLAISE HART-SCHMIDT
Staff Reporter

A tiny black kitten gnawed its delicate teeth at the bars of a cage while batting its paws at people walking by.

The cat is a current resident of the Adair County Humane Society, a privately run animal shelter that takes in stray and homeless animals, caring for and placing more than 2,500 animals in homes per year.

Humane Society Manager Missy Decker said the shelter is short on money and is struggling to afford food and vaccines for the animals. She said the economy is to blame.

"This year, heat is even going to be a hard time for us as much as propane went up," Decker said. "People can't afford to leave a \$10 donation when they come and bring a stray in anymore. People used to bring in bags of dog food by every once in awhile, and we don't see them quite as often."

In addition to a shortage of funds, the Humane Society also has had between a 35- and 40-percent increase in the number of animals taken in since the beginning of the summer, Decker said.

"Normally we accommodate about 80 animals — right now

we're running about 130 on average," Decker said. "We're seeing an increase in owner turnout as opposed to stray animals. We've got a lot of owners coming in going, 'I can't afford things for my children right now. I can't afford vaccines for my dog.'"

Decker said the non-profit shelter takes in animals from several different sources.

"We take in the animals from the City of Kirksville from the animal control officer if they pick up," Decker said. "If the sheriff's department happens to pick up a vicious animal we take in those also. We take in any strays, owner turn-ins, we take puppies that have been left in the country."

The Humane Society relies on money from adoption fees and donation, and receives a monthly stipend from the City of Kirksville for \$2,000, as well as help maintaining its land.

"They mow out here for us," Decker said. "We had a drain problem, they came and helped us with it. They're actually doing a little extra landscaping. ... They've put up fencing out here for us too."

Three members of the Kirksville City Council visited the Humane Society last week.

"I was very impressed," Kirksville Mayor Martha Rowe said. "They're doing a very good job with what they're doing there. They're doing a very good job of stretching the dollars they have."

Rowe also said she hopes the county and city contributions can increase. The Council will have budget negotiations next week.

Senior Danielle Fuller has adopted several cats from the Adair County Humane Society, including two she adopted about six months ago. Fuller said she appreciates the work the Humane Society does.

"Some of the times I've gone up there they have the kitten and puppy room closed because they go ahead and treat the animals and give them shots and things," Fuller said. "It's kind of an inconvenience if you wanted to adopt that day but at least they take very good care of their animals."

University residence halls have collected socks and T-shirts for the shelter to be used as chew toys for the animals. Relying on donations, the shelter's wish list includes blankets, rags, canned dog and cat food, cleaning supplies, garbage bags and animal grooming supplies.

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