MINUTES OF THE BLOOMINGTON
LIQUOR COMMISSION

March 26, 2013

The Bloomington Liquor Commissioner Stephen Stockton called the Public Hearing to discuss a BASSET training ordinance. Present at the hearing were Liquor Commissioners Steve Stockton, Marabeth Clapp, Steve Petersen, Mark Gibson and Jim Jordan; George Boyle, Asst. Corporation Counsel and Tracey Covert, City Clerk.

Commissioner Stockton opened the liquor hearing at 5:05 p.m. He cited the topic: required training for liquor license holders. BASSET training had become a hot topic statewide. The Town of Normal had looked at this issue and appeared to be waiting for the City to take action. A proposal had been drafted late in 2012 which included training for all employees to be completed within ninety (90) days. He referred to the Illinois Liquor Control Commission's, (ILCC), web site. There was a listing of all municipalities that required training. The City's most recent proposal had been made available. It required that the manager plus one (1) certified person on duty be on the premises during business hours. It did not require that all employees be trained. He cited the issue of employee turnover. He added that in certain establishments during their busiest business hours, more than one (1) trained person must be present. He added that the number of employees present would determine the number of BASSET trained/certified employees who must be on duty. The bar owners determined the staff levels based upon business traffic.

George Boyle, Asst. Corporation Counsel, addressed the Commission. He noted that the proposed ordinance included sanctions, (fine, suspension and/or revocation). The proposed ordinance would take effect on July 1, 2013 which would provide lead time.

Commissioner Stockton stated that the City would take BASSET training seriously and enforcement was a part of it. The manager's certification must be filed with the City Clerk's Office. The certificates for the other employees must be kept on file at the premises.

Commissioner Clapp noted the spirit of the proposed ordinance. She added that the license holders would have the opportunity to go beyond. A certified manager would have the opportunity to train the business' other employees. BASSET was a valuable program.

Commissioner Stockton stated that currently there were licensed establishments where all of the employees were BASSET certified.

Commissioner Petersen questioned the purpose of BASSET training. He cited the issues of awareness, over serving and underage sales.

Commissioner Stockton responded affirmatively. He added that mistakes happen. He did not believe that underage sales were at an epidemic level. The number one concern at this time was over serving.

Commissioner Petersen noted the role of the doorman. Identification was checked. After that it appeared that it was okay to present at the establishment. He believed that BASSET training would address over serving.

Commissioner Stockton cited the critical locations within the establishments: at the door and the bar. In addition, students begin drinking prior to coming Downtown. BASSET training covers identification checks, over serving and handling issues/problems.

Commissioner Gibson addressed the proposed ordinance. He addressed enforcement. He cited the following: certificate displayed, produced on demand and filed with the City Clerk. He believed that the administration/verification process needed to be simplified. All license holders would be required to complete BASSET training. He questioned off premise consumption. He also questioned the burden and estimated cost for the license holders.

Commissioner Stockton informed the Commission that he had spoken with Heartland Community College, (HCC), potential certified trainer.

Austin Grammer, HCC's Customized Training Coordinator, addressed the Commission. He had worked with Liz Hamilton, Chestnut Health Systems, about a year ago. HCC would be an ILCC licensed trainer soon. HCC offered two (2) opportunities for BASSETT training. He cited the Community Education Catalogue which listed BASSETT training. The course was open enrollment at a cost of $39 per person. Currently, this class was offered once a quarter. The other option was on site BASSET training. A BASSET approved trainer would come on site at a cost of $25 per person, limited to twenty-five (25) individuals per session. The class was four (4) hours. There was a fifty (50) point multiple choice test. If mandated, HCC would meet the demand.

Commissioner Petersen questioned refresher courses. Mr. Grammer noted that under the ILCC only one (1) training course was required at this time. ILCC was taking feedback at this time regarding refresher courses, certification expiration, etc.

Commissioner Petersen questioned on line training. Mr. Grammer noted that HCC only offered live classes. He added that there were other training providers. He cited the TIPS, (Training for Intervention Procedures by Servers of Alcohol), program. He believed that this course was available on line. There were a number of on line BASSET providers. To become a BASSET certified trainer, there was a $250 cost. He noted that larger corporations have become certified in order to bring BASSET training in house.

Commissioner Petersen questioned insurance incentives. Mr. Grammer could not comment on same.

Commissioner Jordan questioned training guidelines. He also questioned if the same information was presented regardless of location. Mr. Grammer responded affirmatively. All course criteria would be fulfilled. HCC utilized the STEP, (Safety Training to Encourage Profitable Service), program. A course must be BASSET certified by the ILCC to claim same. The curriculum must be approved by the ILCC.

Commissioner Stockton noted that there was no ILCC certified on line BASSET training at this time.

Commissioner Petersen questioned the date and time of the next BASSET class at HCC. Mr. Grammer stated Monday, June 10, 2013 in the evening. HCC could host seventy (70) enrollees. The goal was to have twenty-five to thirty (25 - 30) as a maximum. HCC has three (3) trainers: one (1) is a State Police Sgt. and two (2) were Normal Police Officers.

Mr. Boyle questioned if HCC would be able to provide additional classes prior to July 1, 2013. Mr. Grammer responded affirmatively. He restated that HCC had three (3) trainers.

Commissioner Petersen requested a copy of the class syllabus.

Mr. Grammer noted that the course started with an alcohol IQ test. Students, (i.e. servers), were often heard saying "I didn't know that". Alcohol was a controlled substance. The goal was to lessen liability for the establishment and server. There were a variety of ways to slow the rate of alcohol consumption, (i.e. offering food and non alcoholic beverages). Another goal was to prevent extreme intoxication. Role playing was also a part of the class. He cited the City's draft ordinance which would require that a number of people be trained. He added that the ILCC recommended that all servers be BASSET trained. He noted that Paul Grazer, US Cellular Coliseum, participated in HCC's on site training for all of this establishment's staff. BASSETT training for all alcohol servers could be considered as part of the ordinance.

Commissioner Stockton noted certificate filing.

Commissioner Gibson questioned active enforcement. Commissioner Stockton cited police audits and spot checks. He hoped that there was limited turnover in managers.

Dennis Fries, 2103 Leland, addressed the Commission. He represented the Knight of Columbus, located at 1706 Dunn Dr. Generally, there was only one (1) bartender on duty. He believed that all of the Knights employees would have to be trained.

Commissioner Stockton noted that the draft ordinance would allow three (3) months to complete the training.

Mr. Boyle added that sixty (60) days had been allotted for managers. No time frame was specified for employees. He had seen ordinances which stated thirty to ninety (30 - 90) days from date of employment.

Mr. Fries stated that the Knights' current bartenders had been employed at the club for the past six to eight (6 - 8) months or longer. Generally, the Club has five (5) employees/bartenders. There was no full time manager. The Club had found it too expensive.

Commissioner Jordan hoped that a manager was always present. He questioned if the cost could be shared between the employer and employee. He noted that concerns had been raised regarding cost.

Tracey Covert, City Clerk, informed the Commission that the ILCC had offered the City a one (1) time free training.

Mr. Fries addressed the idea of cost sharing with employees. This training would be an investment in their job. An employee was also fined for a liquor violation.

Commissioner Stockton acknowledged that the time line would have to be based upon class availability.

Mr. Fries noted that the manager must be certified. Commissioner Stockton stated one or the other.

Mr. Boyle added that at the location there must be one (1) person on duty who is BASSET certified. The draft ordinance required that one (1) manager be BASSET certified per licensee and that the certificate be filed with the City Clerk's Office.

Commissioner Stockton noted that the Knights of Columbus was a club. He questioned who was responsible for the Club's well being.

Roger Longman, 1706 RT Dunn Dr., addressed the Commission. He also was with the Knights. He cited the turnover in club officers. The burden fell on the club officers. The Knights was a non for profit organization.

Commissioner Petersen questioned employee turnover. Mr. Fries restated that the majority of the current bartenders had been with the Club for six (6) months to a year.

Mr. Grammer restated that HCC would provide BASSET approved training class. HCC offered three (3) training providers. He added that liquor distributors might offer this training at no cost. There were other BASSET certified community colleges. There were other certified trainers in Central Illinois. Mr. Grammer added that the proposed ordinance should state "all training should state ILCC approved training".

Commissioner Stockton noted that the language contain in the draft ordinance was used to provide future flexibility.

Commissioner Petersen stated that the cost/time appeared to be minimal. He questioned if discount pricing was available. Mr. Grammer informed the Commission that the ILCC hosted free training in Normal during the summer 2012. HCC participated in same.

Jeff Fritzen, 114 Anthony Dr., Normal, addressed the Commission. He currently served on the Town Council and the BNCCC, (Bloomington Normal Community Campus Committee). He had attended the ILCC's college summit. He cited the ILCC's Winter Newsletter which contained a BASSET article. He read from the article which stated that BASSET training was a good investment. It provided a framework/foundation. Normal's ordinance failed in his opinion because it called for all employees to be BASSET certified. The BNCCC had enlisted various partners in the community. He expressed his interest in responsible server training. He expressed his hope that the Town would adopt the City's ordinance. He had spoken with Normal's license holders.

He noted that Tyler Holloway, owner/operator of Maggie Miley's located at 126 E. Beaufort St., Normal, had informed him that his insurance provider would provide server training. Pub II located at 102 N. Linden St., Normal, planned to pull together with other license holders to reduce the cost of the training. STEPS training was originally provided through grant funding. The program was not sustainable. The BNCCC approached HCC. He believed that if the City required BASSET training that HCC could handle the volume. He read from comment cards from past server training classes.

Server training addressed community health and safety. He acknowledged that this training was a cost of during business. In 2012, there had been over 500 alcohol related emergency room visits and 325 of these involved individuals from eighteen to twenty-two (18 - 22) years of age. This was a community health issue. Over service was a large and difficult issue. The BNCCC believed that anyone who served the customer should be trained.

Phil Boulds, 1 Palm Ct., addressed the Commission. He was the owner/operator of Mugsy's located at 1310 N. Main St. He was not against education. He believed that some license holders needed more training than others. Bartenders and managers should be trained. He believed that license holders would be given an insurance discount if their employees were BASSET certified. He added that those with an "R", Restaurant, liquor license were required hold a food handlers license. This license required food handlers classes. He had had difficulty attending these classes. He requested that the Commission consider the time line. He also believed that some establishments did not need the training.

He informed the Commission that he had owned/operated Mugsy's for twenty-five (25) years. He cited his record. He had done a good job. He questioned how to insure that the people would use the education. He requested a ninety (90) day time line.

Commissioner Stockton acknowledged the challenge of class time. In the future, BASSET training might be available on line.

Cindy Anet, 15638 Crestwicke Dr., addressed the Commission. She owned/operated Rosie's located at 106 E. Front St. She noted that in Colorado an individual needed to be certified in order to be hired as an alcohol server. She believed that the cost should be placed upon the employee. In order for an individual to be hired as an alcohol server, he/she must be BASSET certified.

Commissioner Stockton stated that BASSET certification would make an individual more marketable. BASSET training would be a way of regulating people in general.

Mr. Fritzen noted that some Illinois communities require employees to complete BASSET training prior to commencement of employment.

Commissioner Stockton noted that the City would continue to accept feedback regarding this topic until April 1, 2013.

Commissioner Gibson cited the limited number of license holders who were present at this hearing. The Commission needed to hear the license holders concerns/questions. He wanted to know the impact upon their businesses.

Commissioner Stockton noted the mailing to all license holders. Ms. Covert added that the Public Hearing packet was placed on the City's web site. Commissioner Gibson believed that more input would be better. He believed that spring break was also this week.

Commissioner Stockton stated that this item would appear on the Liquor Commission's April 9, 2013 meeting agenda. He added that the Commission had been discussing this item for the past six (6) months.

Ms. Covert offered to call the ILCC and inquire about the free BASSET training.

Commissioner Stockton thanked those present for coming to the Public Hearing. He believed that BASSET training would be beneficial and practical.

There being no further business before the Commission, the hearing adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully,

Tracey Covert, CRM, CMC, RMC
City Clerk