



CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

SUBSTANCE ABUSE ADVISORY COMMISSION

To: Mayor Brian Treece and the Honorable Members of the Columbia City Council
From: Molly Borgmeyer, Chair
Substance Abuse Advisory Commission
Date: October 11, 2017
Re: Memo in regards to the City of Columbia Alcohol Policy

On behalf of the Substance Abuse Advisory Commission (SAAC) for the City of Columbia, I would like to take a moment to provide you with an update on our initiatives as they pertain to the City of Columbia Alcohol Policy. As you know, the SAAC has been tasked with advising the City Council in matters pertaining to substance abuse, as well as promoting and recommending the coordination of programs and policies intended to prevent and reduce the abuse of alcohol and other controlled substances within the community.

Despite actions that have been taken or discussed, alcohol abuse still exists as a very real problem within the city of Columbia, specifically within The District and surrounding areas. The recent Hospitality Zone Assessment that was released following the Downtown CID's invitation to the Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI) to visit the city and 'examine the current and potential evolution of dining, entertainment and nightlife in the city' pointed out in multiple facets that some of the major challenges the city faces are 'incidents of violence, robbery, sexual assault, vandalism, crowd congestion, noise complaints, underage drinking, over-service of patrons, and impairment of both pedestrians and drivers' (*Columbia Hospitality Zone Assessment, RHI Summary, 2015*). A number of these challenges directly speak to the need for a better system regarding alcohol policy and the enforcement of such policies.

Working within the scope of our outlined mission, the SAAC has been investigating the possibilities of implementing policy changes in the following areas:

- **Alternative enforcement structures**
 - In July 2015, the SAAC sent a memo and report to council recommending a schedule of administrative penalties to be adopted for violations of the liquor license standards. Council directed the Law Department to provide a staff report and to date there has been no response provided by the Law Department.
- **Drink specials**
- **Alcohol outlet density**

With regard to drink specials, the SAAC recommends the following best practices be adopted as part of the City code of ordinances pertaining to alcohol:

- Regulation on discount pricing practices, to include:
 - Prohibition on offering or serving any free alcoholic beverage to the general public;
 - Prohibition on providing unlimited alcoholic beverages for a fixed price (to include an entry fee charge);
 - Providing a minimum price of \$2.00 at which any alcoholic beverage may be offered or sold;

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- Prohibition on the reduction of the price of alcoholic beverages (i.e., through the use of discount pricing practices) after 11:00 pm;
 - Requirement that the price of non-intoxicating beverages (such as soft drinks) may not be more expensive than the least expensive alcoholic beverage; and
 - Prohibition on advertising and/or promoting any of the discount pricing practices that are prohibited, whether on or off of the licensed premises (to include social media).
- Regulation on games and contests which involve alcoholic beverages or the awarding of drinks of intoxicating liquor as prizes for consumption at such games or contests on the licensed premises.

The importance of proactive systems to address substance abuse concerns should not be minimized. As a commission with an overarching task of advising the City Council in matters pertaining to substance abuse as well as promoting and recommending the coordination of programs and policies intended to prevent and eliminate the abuse of alcohol and other controlled substances within the community, we ask for your support and dedication in helping us move forward in creating a healthy and vibrant place to live, work, and play.

Should you have questions regarding the above information, I would be more than happy to speak with you and can be reached via email at molly.borgmeyer@gmail.com. Additionally, we would be more than happy to hold a public hearing if needed.

Thank you for your time and for the important work you are doing for the City of Columbia.