



“Class N” Business License Application Process and Code Clean-up

Project

Improve the process by which community members learn about and provide input to support a more timely and equitable City review of Class N Business Licenses applications. Update Licensing Code to be more user friendly for staff and community members.

Background

- City ordinance requires notifications, hearings, and petitions for specific business license types, e.g. alcohol, auto related, health clubs. These requirements unnecessarily increase the time to open a business.
 - Notification Requirements create a 30- or 45-day period for people to object to an application. Any objection results in a hearing; which could take another 30 days.
 - Petition Requirements require individuals to take time to demonstrate support from a percentage of surrounding residents and property owners.
 - Time costs entrepreneur money and impacts people opening businesses in Saint Paul.
- Notification and Petition ordinance language is vague and confusing. For example:
 - Notification language does not stipulate what types of objections warrant a hearing.
 - Petition language allows for a lower percentage of support with vague and not well understood criteria.
- Between September 2018 and September 2019, there were: 94 Notifications; only 22 resulted in a hearing, with 6 adding license conditions (many restating ordinance).
- Throughout the life of a license, the City Council has the same rights, requirements, and abilities to take Adverse License Action. Time of renewal does not provide any additional ability.
- Two community listening sessions were conducted in partnership with District Councils and Business Associations. Conversations covered current process and ideas for improvements.
- A stakeholder workgroup discussed issues and needs as well as brainstormed/researched solutions.
- Saint Paul Licensing Ordinance Chapters contain conflicting and confusing licensing language and processes.

Proposal

- Adopt and implement the following ordinance amendments:
 - Eliminate Class N Licenses Petition requirements.
 - Remove the following license types from the Class N Notification requirement: Pool Hall, Bowling Center, Game Room, Recycling Collection Center/Recycling Processing Center Second-Hand Dealer - Motor Vehicle Parts, Theatres and Movie Theatres.
 - Require Class N License applicants to provide District Councils specifics of their proposed businesses prior to submitting their license application to the City.
 - Reduce current 30–45-day Notification periods (that may trigger Hearing) down to 15-day notification period.
 - Eliminate optional 60-day prior to renewal Public Hearing.
 - Edit Licensing Ordinance Chapters to provide more user-friendly language and layout.
 - Allow amending a Notice of License Violation for violations that occur after the Notice has been sent, but before Hearing.
- Revamp the Class N Notifications’ communications to be positive focused (seek positive comments too).