

MAYOR
Lamar Scroggs

CITY COUNCIL
Sam Evans
Gary Anderson
Martha Collins
Ron McFarland
Montie Robinson, Sr.



CITY MANAGER
Stan Brown

ASST. CITY MANAGER
Patti Doss-Luna

CITY CLERK
Tangee Puckett

NEWS ARTICLE: Gainesville Times on March 14, 2011

Oakwood gives initial OK to expanding alcohol sales

Smaller capacity restaurants would be able to sell drinks

Restaurants with smaller seating areas than ones allowed by some area governments, including Gainesville, may soon be able to sell alcohol in Oakwood.

The Oakwood City Council gave its initial OK to a revised alcoholic beverages section in its city code Monday night, including reducing the minimum seating capacity to 35 from 55 at restaurants where alcohol is served.

“Several of the cities around us have 55. All the ordinances that come out of Gwinnett County have zero,” City Attorney Donnie Hunt told the council.

The seating issue had come up at an earlier council meeting. Hunt said that move prompted him to step up efforts to update the city’s alcohol law.

At that meeting, the council voted 3-2 to lower the number, and “there was some hard feelings about it,” Councilman Gary Anderson said.

Hunt sought consensus on the issue Monday night and got it on the lower number.

“We’ll need the (proposed changes) in some sort of near-finished product when we come back next (time),” he said. “Otherwise, we have to go through an amending process and we don’t want to do that.”

The council’s next meeting is set for April 11 in City Hall, 4035 Walnut Circle.

The revised law also allows brewpubs, or restaurants where beer is made and served, as well as wine tastings and off-premise alcohol sales for catered functions.

“If we’re going to be pursuing some of your nicer sit-down restaurants, I think it’s important we have these provisions ... on the books,” City Manager Stan Brown said.

The law also would allow the sale of alcoholic beverages in city facilities. Most governments approve one license holder, and that person is often one of their employees.

That’s so “they have absolute control of what happens on the premises,” Hunt said. “... The city could shut (the event) down in a heartbeat and run (patrons) all out.”

He added, however, that the provision might be ahead of its time in Oakwood.

“I don’t think we would allow someone to cater in the buildings out here,” Hunt said. “... As long as we have small facilities, this is probably not an issue.”

The attorney also told the council that in putting together the proposed changes, he reviewed “five or six different ordinances that surround us,” including ones in Gainesville and Hall County, and Alpharetta and Roswell in North Fulton County.

“I looked to see what provisions were in theirs that we didn’t have,” Hunt said. “... I basically compared ours against theirs almost section by section.”