

Osborne, Rhonda L.

From: Mastrodicasa, Jeanna
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2011 9:55 AM
To: citycomm
Cc: Jones, Tony R.; Folkers, Paul E.; Osborne, Rhonda L.
Subject: FW: Bar Closing Time Information

FYI as information related to our September Public Safety meeting related to Hospitality Districts.

Also, I have a student (Henry Lewis) who would like to present the results of some of their work related to the use of taxis in hospitality districts at our September meeting.

Jeanna

From: Miller,Eleanor M [emm@ad.ufl.edu]
Sent: Friday, August 12, 2011 5:19 PM
To: Bottcher, Susan W.
Cc: Jeanna Mastrodicasa; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna
Subject: Bar Closing Time Information

Hello Commissioner Bottcher,

It was good to meet you at the recent ABT meeting to discuss campus and community alcohol issues. I wanted to follow up with you regarding the issue of a soft bar closing time. As you are already aware, the 'Rave Ordinance' reviewed whether bars should be allowed to remain open later. This was adopted in 1999 and required Gainesville bars, clubs, and pubs to close at 2:00 a.m. Prior to the passage of the Rave Ordinance, these establishments were allowed to remain open until 4:00 a.m. provided they stopped serving alcohol at 2:00 a.m. This created problems particularly regarding drugs and the rave scene.

The following key points are what we have shared from a high-risk drinking prevention perspective in the past when discussing the arguments against extending bar closing times:

- It takes approximately one hour for a person to metabolize and absorb one alcoholic drink. Variables such as gender, body weight, fatigue, food absorbed before hand, and medication can alter this rate. Consequently, spending an extra hour at the bar may actually increase an individual's BAC as alcohol reaches a peak about one hour after the last drink has been consumed. Further, an intoxicated individual will most likely not have enough time to sober up to be safe to drive.

- While alcohol will not be sold after 2:00am, in all likelihood patrons in non-compliant bars will continue to consume their drink(s) purchased at last call.

- Proponents also argue that extending the closing time will allow people to gradually trickle out of the bars, thus limiting congestion. GPD researched this issue in 2004 and compared notes with Athens, Georgia, which has an extended bar closing time. It turns out that people seem to stay at the bar until closing regardless of the time.

- If alcohol is not available after 2:00am, what will people do at the bar? Some will dance, others will eat, and most will socialize. However, a significant number of already intoxicated patrons may be more likely to experiment with illicit or non-prescribed prescription drugs. An intoxicated person who is no longer able to get alcohol will be tempted (more than usual) to experiment with other drugs. Indeed, ER doctors previously reported that on many occasions prior to the Rave Ordinance, people were passing out at some of the bars from mixing depressants, such as alcohol and GHB.

-During the late nineties, Gainesville attracted various people from all over the state due to the extended bar closing time; as a result there was an increase in drug trafficking and crime. Extending bars hours again may result in a similar outcome.

-Extending bar hours will result in more alcohol related consequences at a time when the campus and community is exploring various prevention initiatives.

-Extending bar hours increases the time and resources GPD has to spend patrolling downtown.

-Research has examined the issue of displacement, where alcohol consumption may be pushed out into the community, and has not found this to be of great concern. Further, local GPD data has not noticed an increase in house parties and noise violations specifically since the enactment of the Underage Prohibition Ordinance.

-Individuals may argue that a bar is a safer place to drink than a non "*supervised*" house party. It is true most sexual assaults don't occur in bars; instead they occur when the victim and perpetrator leave the bar and go to a private residence. In other words bars don't serve as a protective factor for sexual assault-they are the predisposing factor.

The following statistics highlight how the seriousness of high-risk drinking and the associated negative consequences, and how this represents a major public health threat to our society. According to the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs (2009), excessive alcohol use is associated with the following *national trends* specifically among college students ages 18-24:

-Each year, 1,825 college students die of alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes.

-Each year, 599,000 college students are unintentionally injured under the influence of alcohol.

-Each year, 696,000 college students are hit or assaulted by another student who has been drinking.

-Each year, 97,000 college students are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape.

-Each year, 25% of college students report academic consequences of their drinking including missing class, doing poorly on exams, falling behind, and receiving lower grades overall.

I can also provide you with UF alcohol data if you have any questions, as we track several key indicators assessing our high-risk drinking rate and the associated negative consequences among the UF student population. Proponents for extending bar hours argue that the policy proposal will remedy late night downtown congestion. The reality is that the majority of patrons will remain at the bars until they close and then there will still be the issue of people exiting the bars and clubs all at the same time. In summary, the health and economic consequences of extending the bar hours outweigh any theoretical benefits.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this or the President's Community Alcohol Coalition. I am happy to set up a time to meet with you to discuss these issues further. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,
Maureen Miller

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