



“Class N” Business License Application Process

Project

Improve the process by which community members learn about and provide input to support a timelier City review of new Class N Business Licenses applications.

Background

- Current City ordinance contains notification, hearing, and petition requirements for specific business licenses, e.g. on-sale liquor, auto related, parking lots, and health/sports club licenses.
- These requirements unnecessarily increase the time it takes individuals to open a business.
 - o Depending on the type of business license, the notification requirement creates either a 30-day period or a 45-day period for people to object to a license application. If there is an objection, a hearing is held. This can take another 30-45 days.
 - o The Petition requirement entails an individual documenting support from a percentage of surrounding residents and property owners and/or a district council.
- Time costs business owners money and impacts their ability to open a business in Saint Paul.
- Current Notification and Petition ordinance language is vague and confusing. For example:
 - o Notification language does not stipulate what types of objections warrant a hearing.
 - o Petition language allows for a lower percentage of support with vague criteria.
- A very limited number of license application notifications actually result in changes. Between September 1, 2018 and September 1, 2019, there were 94 Class N Application Notifications - 22 resulted in a hearing, with 6 adding license conditions (many simply restating ordinance.)
- 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/needs, and brainstormed/researched solutions.

Proposal

- Adopt and implement the following ordinance amendments:
 - o Eliminate Class N Licenses petition requirements.
 - o Remove the following license types from notification requirement:
 - Hotel/Motel, Currency Exchange, New Motor Vehicle Dealer, Game Room, Parking Lots/Garages, Pool Hall/ Bowling Center, Theaters/Movie Theaters, Motion Picture Drive-in Theaters.
 - o Require Class N License applicants to provide District Councils specifics of their proposed business prior to submitting their license application to the City.
 - o Replace the current 30-day or 45-day notification and Legislative Hearing process with a 15-day notification and Legislative Hearing process.
 - o All new Class N Licenses Applications will be voted on by the City Council.

- Revamp the Class N notifications to not be negative focused.

DRAFT