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Some discuss potential 'BYOB' clubs

BY EMILY HOERNER | JANUARY 18, 2011 7:10 AM

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The next step for Iowa City bar patrons may be hauling their own beer to local clubs.

Though Iowa City City Councilor Mike Wright said the council hasn't yet discussed the possibility of any bring your own beer venues, he said the city attorney has explored the legality and feasibility of the prospect.

Some community members were skeptical about whether a BYOB establishment would succeed in Iowa City with the 21-ordinance in effect.

"I think it'll work depending on the venue," said Tom Lenocho, a former bar manager of One-eyed Jakes. "It'll have to be aimed at music or entertainment. It would need a reason to work."

But in this type of scenario, eh said, owners would have to dedicate significant staff attention to making sure underage patrons aren't drinking.

"It would take a lot of self-policing," he said. "It would put a lot on the staff."

Other regions of Iowa have also considered the possibility of BYOB clubs.

(Daily Iowan video feature)

Video in QuickTime format, [click here for free player download](#)

Cedar Falls City Councilor Nick Taiber said he would encourage a BYOB establishment in the city, which is home to the University of Northern Iowa. There are no such venues at present.

"Here, we have no excessive regulations for businesses to overcome," Taiber said. "I'm encouraged to see this type of movement to serve clientele."

Taiber said whenever the government regulates the city's social aspects, people try to overcome the consequences of those regulations.

Des Moines does have a number of BYOB venues, including [Club AM](#), and Des Moines City Councilor Robert Mahaffey said such establishments haven't posed a problem. He said a BYOB club doesn't draw any more police attention than any other bar or tavern.

"If it had any problems, we would have been aware of it," he said.

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The club's manager declined to discuss his strategies for policing the venue.

The [Partnership for Alcohol safety](#) — a group of UI and city officials, as well as local business owners — discussed the possibility of BYOB establishments in Iowa City during its last meeting in December, said member Mark Ginsberg.

“We talked about putting it on the radar and being aware of all possibilities,” he said.

But he said he doesn't see BYOB as a way around the 21-ordinance for bars.

“If you want to drink and you're under 21, you'll drink,” he said.

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markbu 2 days ago

BYOB clubs are extremely lame. Club AM, Boom Boom Room, granted these clubs only open around 1:30am and close around 5am-ish.

So the city council thinks that a bar is a nuisance? Wait til you have 100 men and 3 women in an after hours style BYOB club. Now don't be shocked in that becomes a regular thunderdome.

2 people liked this.



JohnBull 2 days ago

Why even talk about this? A town as anal-retentive as Iowa City would never allow this. I'm surprised the council hasn't banned smoking city-wide or enacted a curfew for anybody under 26, sending out SWAT teams to clear the town of anybody looking like they're having fun. If the BYOB clubs do open, you can bet the council will find some way to destroy these establishments sooner or later. I think they get a thrill watching some enterprising businessman sink a lot of money into a bar, just to watch him flustered and squirm as they find new regulations to wear him down and send in cops to harass the customers. This is who they are.

5 people liked this.



markbu 2 days ago in reply to JohnBull

Its like investing in a new corporation in Sudan. It can have a solid business plan, but the government isn't stable enough to ensure a good business environment going into the near or distant future. Eventually the government will just change the rules of the game.

3 people liked this.



Iresident 1 day ago

Unfortunately, after watching the video, it feels like the underagers want a place that they an go drink. The last kids comment proves that it would be a hit if "they were lenient". Self policing of this establishment would be of utmost importance, and also clarification of BYOB...it is not bring your own beverage it is Bring Your Own Beer, hard liquor is not allowed. That being said it would be nice for a venue to do this and offer a place for bands, DJs, shows, etc for all ages to be able to enjoy past the hour of ten, especially on Friday and Saturday nights.



Iresident 1 day ago

Also, Mike Wright said that the city council is looking into the legality of BYOB? What legality, Iowa Law says they are legal.

Like Reply



markbu 1 day ago in reply to Icresident

No, they are looking into a way to ban it. . . not if it is or is not legal

1 person liked this. Like Reply

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