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No moratorium on liquor license transfers

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City Council opts to tweak requirements

By Jennie Miller
 C & G Staff Writer

FERNDALE — Worried that businesses might take advantage of ambiguous liquor license transfer requirements, the Ferndale City Council mulled over but decided against a one-year moratorium.

"I don't want to have a downtown that is all bars and restaurants," said City Council member Scott Galloway, whose concern prompted the discussion.

The requirements were set in place just over a year ago, and since then, only one application has come before council.

Galloway was the lone dissenting vote on the proposal to grant a license to the proprietors of Sakana Sushi Lounge in December.

"We don't want to let just anyone come in," he said in regards to the vague requirements. "It's been my concern for some time now that any proprietor who comes up here with a nice presentation (will get the transfer approval). When push comes to shove, we're going to do it."

But a moratorium was not the answer to the council's concerns.

"The last thing I want to do is discourage businesses from even looking our way," said Mayor Pro Tem Michael Lennon. "But having this tweaked a little bit is not a bad idea."

"We need to tighten up the requirements," Galloway agreed.

Council member Craig Covey made a suggestion that Galloway join the committee that reviews such applications, acting as a City Council liaison.

"(Galloway is) the best choice to ask the tough questions before it gets to council," Covey said.

Lennon agreed that it might solve some problems.

"Having Galloway sit down with the committee might be the best idea," he said.

Galloway agreed to serve on the review committee and made several suggestions for the areas of the ordinance that may need tweaking.

The areas of his greatest concern involved crowd control and parking.

"I'm tired of people showing up here and acknowledging the parking problem but not doing anything about it," Galloway said. "Data collection needs to occur."

Other council members agreed, and a change was made which requires a written report on the parking situation, based on data gathered by a qualified expert.

"It's just so we have more concrete plans to fix the problem," Galloway said.

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