

THE GEORGETOWN CURRENT

Glover Park ANC backs retail licenses

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The Glover Park advisory neighborhood commission last week supported ending the area's ban on retail beer-and-wine licenses, as opposition continues on a vote last month to uphold restrictions on restaurant liquor licenses.

On Thursday, the commission voted unanimously to recommend to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to end a moratorium on "Class B" licenses, which allow stores to sell beer and wine, but not liquor, to be consumed off-premises.

The vote may open the way for more grocery stores and corner stores to open in Glover Park, which currently hosts only four Class B businesses, according to the Glover Park Citizens Association.

There was no opposition to that move, but several residents are continuing to criticize the commission's See **Licenses**/Page 5



Bill Petros/Current File Photo

The commission's vote last week advocating an end to a ban on new "Class B" liquor licenses paves the way for more corner stores to open in the area.

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decision to uphold limits on "Class CR" licenses, which allow restaurants to sell beer, wine and spirits to in-house diners.

Last month, the commission, keeping with the tradition of years past, voted to retain the CR moratorium with a slight expansion that would allow two additional licenses.

The commission is weighing in on such matters as the Glover Park moratorium, first established in 1996 to control licenses on around the neighborhood's Wisconsin Avenue strip, comes up for renewal this April.

Resident John Camera has started an online petition, which had gathered 105 signatures as of Monday, to end the CR moratorium. At last week's meeting, Camera asked commissioners why they support more Class B licenses for the area, but not more CR licenses.

Commissioner Brian Cohen said he couldn't think of many adverse effects from Class B licenses. "With unlimited CR licenses, we end up with places with rotten food that keep the bar open late," he said, noting that some CR-licensed restaurants operate more like bars. "That race-to-the-bottom effect doesn't happen with B licenses," he said.

Commissioner Jackie Blumenthal said she and her colleagues hadn't

realized that there were no more B licenses available in the neighborhood. "We've lost a lot of our little convenience stores," she said.

In an interview after the meeting, resident Joe Kildea said he objects to the split approach.

"We think it is hypocritical and ill-informed to remove the Class B but keep the CR moratorium," he said. "Why open the area to bodegas instead of restaurants?"

Several commissioners have expressed concern in the past about bars and restaurants crowding out other types of retail in Glover Park.

Also at last week's meeting, a representative from the city's Office of Planning gave an update on the proposed overhaul of D.C.'s zoning regulations. The detail that caused the most concern was a proposal that would allow small businesses to operate (with many limitations) out of corner row houses.

The proposal would clear the way for, among other things, more corner stores. The Office of Planning views this as a way to make neighborhoods more walkable and seniors better able to age in place.

While the commission backed more liquor licenses for corner and grocery stores in Glover Park, it was torn on the idea of allowing corner stores in row houses. Commissioner Ben Thielen supported the concept, while Cohen and commissioner Charles Fulwood demurred, requesting more study and information.