

BC amends city laws to allow sweepstakes centers

Council approves privilege license fees, including extra tax on some businesses

EMILY WEAVER
Editor

Bessemer City City Council unanimously approved a text amendment to the city's zoning laws at its meeting July 9 that will allow sweepstakes cafes to operate within city limits on a "limited" basis.

The new amendment limits gaming centers to a maximum of 25 machines, sets hours of operation at 6 a.m.-midnight and strictly limits where the facilities can locate.

"No electronic gaming operation may be located within 500 linear feet of the parcel line of a house of worship, daycare center, library, public park, elementary, middle or high school," according to the amendment.

The text addition also prohibits sweepstakes facilities from operating within 1,000 feet of each other.

"It's very limited. It depends on (where)

the first guy (locates). The dominoes will fall from the first permit issued," said city Planning Director Kevin Krouse.

The ordinance requires "open" and "unobstructed access" to facilities during regular hours of operation; prohibits windows or doors from being "covered with signs or coatings to render them opaque"; and, prohibits any "flags, banner signs or flashing lights".

The amendment also bans any gaming center from operating on a site with an ABC license.

City Councilman Joe Will made a motion to accept the amendment, changing the maximum limit on machines from 15 to 20 before Councilman Howard Jones asked for it to be bumped up to 25.

"I've been told it takes 25 machines to make a profit," Jones said. "We have to permit them, if they're legal."

Will asked that the limit on hours of operation in the amendment also be changed from "8 a.m. until 10 p.m." to "6 a.m. until midnight". Will renewed his motion, including the changes in machine limits and hours of operation; and the amendment passed unanimously.

At a public hearing during the June 11th council meeting, Don Johnson of 503 W. Gold Street, Kings Mountain, spoke in favor of a zoning text amendment to regulate electronic gaming operations within the city. He had expressed interest of opening a sweepstakes game center in the Silver Express complex he owns on E. Virginia Avenue.

Electronic gaming operators must pay annual privilege license fees of \$2,500 per business and \$2,500 per machine to operate in Bessemer City.

The city has researched and reviewed the business license fees of other cities to "come

in compliance" and avoid any possible future civil litigation, said City Manager James Inman.

The city council approved a schedule of privilege license fees for businesses operating in the city at its July 9th meeting. The schedule includes an additional tax of \$0.15 per every \$1,000 earned at: adult establishments and cabarets, antique retail shops, barbers and beauty salons, instruction centers (i.e., music, voice, fine arts, etc.), machinery establishments, manufacturing plants, mercantile stores (not otherwise listed), and precious metal dealerships.

The minimum tax to operate a business in Bessemer City is \$50 a year. The maximum tax is set at \$3,000.

The schedule was approved 5-1, with Councilman Dan Boling opposing.

See CHANGE, 7A

Contaminants in BC water supply 'under control'

EMILY WEAVER
Editor

BESSEMER CITY - At Bessemer City's July 9th council meeting, Public Works Director and interim Treatment Plant Director Melinda Beard reported the city has had a higher-than-standard level of contaminants in its water supply, but added there was no need for panic.

"Our water system recently violated a drinking water standard. Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you

should do and what we are doing to correct this situation," she reported to the council in a public notice.

"We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. The test results we received in December for the November, 2011 monitoring show that our system exceeded the standard or maximum contaminant level for total trihalomethanes (TTHMs)," she continued. "The standard for TTHMs is 0.080 milligrams per liter. The annual average level of TTHMs for the last 12 months, Aug. 1 through May 31, was 0.088 milligrams per liter."

Beard told the council that higher levels in November are reflecting in the higher annual average. She added that she has not yet heard back on recent levels.

"Last time we checked, the water is now in compliance," said City Manager James Inman.

The notice informs citizens that they "do not need to use an alternative water supply", but those with specific health concerns should consult their doctor.

"This is not an immediate risk," according to the notice. "However, some people who drink the water containing TTHMs in excess of the

maximum contaminant level over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys or central nervous system and may have an increased risk of getting cancer."

"Due to Bessemer City purchasing more water from Kings Mountain than we are producing, our clearwell storage is not turning the water over quick enough to stop the formation of disinfection by-products, like TTHMs," Beard said, adding that TTHM is a by-product of chlorine. "This along, with the higher than normal temperatures in

November, 2011 has created higher

than normal TTHMs. We are still flushing our system on a regular basis to reduce the amount of chlorine being used, while still maintaining a safe level for disinfection. We have implemented new procedures and hope this will enable us to keep our TTHM levels down and are still researching and implementing different avenues to take to avoid this problem in the future and are confident the problem is under control."

There have been a lot of towns in the state having this problem, Beard added.

AHOY LAND-LUBBERS!



Young reenactors enjoyed a dinner party and costume contest at 238 Cherokee Street (before the city's big Revolutionary 4th) on Tuesday night, July 3. Left to right, around the table, Tayler Walls, 6, winner of the Pirate Costume Contest - Samuel Love, 4, Emilee Love, 13, Heather Love, 12, Lizzie Love, 10, and Jamie Walls, 10.



AT RIGHT, Four-year-old Samuel Love won the Pirate Costume Contest July 3 at 238 Cherokee Street. Reenactor Rob Lewis looks on.



AT LEFT, Heather Love, 12, tops 10-year-old Lizzie Love at a recent costume contest at 238 Cherokee Street.

Photos by EMILY WEAVER



Find Leo with this week's Summer Reading Clue:

My how time flies. Can you believe it is already the 5th week of Summer Reading? Leo is on the move again. He is flying on down to the corner of King St. and Cansler. Maybe looking for some "true values"? Don't forget to thank the nice folks for keeping an eye on our friend Leo the Lightening bug!

HOW TO REACH US

Contact the Herald by coming by the office at 700 E. Gold St.; call 704-739-7496, fax 704-739-0611 or Email emily.kmherald@gmail.com

Kings Mountain Weekend Weather

Thursday July 19	Friday July 20	Saturday July 21	Sunday July 22
Scattered Storms - 89° 50% Chance of precipitation Night time Low 70°	Isolated T-Storms - 86° 30% Chance of precipitation Night time Low 69°	Isolated T-Storms - 84° 30% Chance of precipitation Night time Low 69°	Partly Cloudy - 85° 10% Chance of precipitation Night time Low 69°

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