



**Accountability - Dedication Honesty -
Integrity - Respect**

City Clerk's Office
2500 14th St., Suite 3
Columbus, NE 68601
402-562-4227
columbusne.us

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 9, 2026
TO: Tara Vasicek, City Administrator
FROM: Shuraya Choat, City Clerk
RE: Special Designated License – Administrative Approval Updates

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the changes as presented.

DISCUSSION:

The administrative approval process for special designated liquor licenses was adopted in February of 2010 via Resolution No. R10-11 and the process has worked very well. We have three or four license holders that routinely submit applications annually and qualify for administrative approval (must hold a catering license or be a religious non-profit organization and meet all criteria). The resolution has been reviewed and some changes for the SDL administrative approval process are recommended below:

- Modify the committee members: The committee currently consists of the City Clerk, Police Chief, and City Administrator, who are responsible for reviewing and giving a recommendation. Staff is requesting to replace the City Administrator with the Director of General Services and that each member be permitted a designee to serve in their absence when necessary.
- Remove the following language: “Agent shall prepare a listing to be presented to the City Council of all special designated licenses recommended for approval on a quarterly basis.” This has not been done or requested in quite some time; therefore, I feel it is appropriate to remove it. The Clerk’s Office has a record of all SDL applications which can be requested by council members at any time.
 - The number of applications approved administratively is also included as part of the General Administrative Leadership presentation each quarter.
- Clarifying the language regarding non-routine events:
 - The current criteria states that “applications submitted by a retail licensee for an outdoor beer garden or other special events where music will be present are not considered to be routine and shall be submitted for review by the City Council.” The Clerk's Office recommends revising this language as follows:
 - All applications submitted by a retail licensee for an outdoor beer garden.
 - All applications requesting street or alley closures.
 - All applications for mobile trucks or trailers.

- All applications proposing activities that would exceed the timeframe outlined in city code section § 131.06 - Disturbing the Peace.
- This recommendation stems in part from a recent inquiry from a catering license holder wanting to sell alcohol from a mobile trailer. The Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (NLCC) requires that outdoor events where alcohol is being consumed, must be enclosed by fencing or natural barriers. (natural barriers include tree lines, body of water, railroad tracks and buildings) I have spoken with several larger communities, and while none have encountered a liquor license holder selling alcohol directly from a truck or trailer, there was a general consensus that such requests should be reviewed and approved by the City Council rather than administratively.

The Clerk's Office recommends revising the administrative policy to more clearly define which applications qualify for administrative approval and which must be forwarded to the City Council for consideration. This clarification will promote consistency in the review process and provide clearer guidance to applicants and staff.

FISCAL IMPACT: None

ALTERNATIVE: Do not approve.

SIGNATURE:

By: Shuraya Choat

Approved By: Betsy Eckhardt

Approved By: [Signature]

RESOLUTION NO. R10-11

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA ~~TO APPROVE AMENDING THE~~ CRITERIA FOR APPROVING OR DENYING A SPECIAL DESIGNATED LICENSE ~~BY MODIFYING THE DESIGNATED COMMITTEE MEMBERS, REMOVING QUARTERLY REPORTING, AND CLARIFYING NON-ROUTINE EVENTS; IN ACCORD WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEBRASKA LIQUOR CONTROL ACT, SECTION 53-124.11, R.R.S., 1943. AND TO REPEAL ALL RESOLUTIONS OR PORTIONS THEREOF IN CONFLICT HEREWITH.~~

WHEREAS, the city of Columbus is required to provide a recommendation to the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission for special designated licenses requested in accord with the provisions of Section 53-124.11 of the Nebraska Liquor Control Act, R.R.S., 1943; and,

WHEREAS, that section of the Act provides as follows: “(4) No special designated license provided for by this section shall be issued by the commission without the approval of the local governing body. The local governing body may establish criteria for approving or denying a special designated license. The local governing body may designate an agent to determine whether a special designated license is to be approved or denied. Such agent shall follow criteria established by the local governing body in making his or her determination. The determination of the agent shall be considered the determination of the local governing body unless otherwise provided by the local governing body.”

WHEREAS, to expedite the processing of special designated licenses considered routine by the City Council it is appropriate to establish criteria for review of applications for the licenses in Columbus.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA that the ~~City Council approves the establishment of~~ criteria to be used in the review of special designated licenses in accord with the provisions of the Nebraska Liquor Control Act as follows:

For the purpose of complying with Section 53-124.11, 1943, R.R.S., the City Council of the City of Columbus, Nebraska, hereby establishes the following criteria for the consideration of applications for special designated licenses:

Definition: -“Agent” shall mean a committee consisting of the City Clerk, Police Chief and Director of General Services ~~City Administrator~~ or their designee, all serving on behalf of the City Council.

The City Council hereby designates its Agent to review special designated license application requests considered routine. Agent shall be authorized to review applications for those entities holding catering licenses authorized in Section 53-124.12, 1943, R.R.S., and for those local religious non-profit corporation affiliated events that are held for fund raising efforts.

A catering license holder and religious non-profit corporation requesting a special designated license shall be required to comply with all of the criteria required in the Nebraska Liquor Control Act. Agent shall review the application to ensure compliance and shall be authorized to recommend approval if compliance is demonstrated. Agent shall recommend approval for those events under the control of the catering license holder or religious non-profit corporation for events on its grounds or grounds under its control in accord with the Nebraska Liquor Control Act and shall report the same to the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission. ~~Agent shall prepare a listing to be presented to the City Council of all special designated licenses recommended for approval on a quarterly basis.~~

Special designated license applications ~~that submitted by a retail licensee for an outdoor beer garden or other special events where music will be present~~ are not considered to be routine and shall be submitted for review by the City Council, but are not limited to, the following:

- All applications from a retail licensee for outdoor beer garden.
- All applications requesting street or alley closures.
- All applications for mobile trucks or trailers.
- All applications proposing activities that would exceed the timeframe outlined in the city code section § 131.06 - Disturbing the Peace.

This resolution shall repeal all resolutions or portions thereof in conflict herewith.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCIL MEMBER /s/ Ron Bogus

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 16 DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2010.

/s/ Michael L. Moser
MAYOR

ATTEST:

/s/ Linda L. Walters