



Meeting Date:	September 22, 2025
Submitter:	Daniel Ritter, AICP Community & Economic Development Director
Department:	Community & Economic Development
Agenda Item:	Discussion and Direction on Liquor License Hour Adjustments

Summary:

The City has had restrictive liquor licensing hours that were established as part of previous efforts to curb recurring issues with liquor-related incidents. Most notably, all requirements have been actively enforced, with license holders being held accountable promptly if any problems arise. Over the years, due to the active enforcement of the regulations, serious incidents have been reduced.

However, the issue of liquor license hours continues to be raised by existing businesses, property owners, and brokers who have noted a competitive disadvantage compared to businesses in neighboring communities. Staff has found that existing liquor sales hours being more restrictive is a known hurdle when looking to attract new restaurants and grocery stores to the City. Both new and existing restaurants and grocery stores are typically looking for some flexibility to maximize their revenue when they're investing or reinvesting in a property. In addition to limiting the liquor sales, limited hours also prevent video gaming from occurring when liquor isn't sold, reducing another potential source of revenue.

Two immediate issues with the existing liquor license time limits have been identified. First, current policy limits license hours for Restaurants (Class H) to end at 10 pm on all days of the week. Second, there are further limited hours on Sundays for all liquor licenses that limit liquor service and retail sales from 10 am to midnight (Class H is still required to stop at 10 pm by policy). Based on the staff findings from research of surrounding communities, Crest Hill's liquor license requirements are among the most restrictive in the area. Adjustments are recommended to allow existing restaurants to be more competitive and better attract new businesses, while still maintaining a safe environment for the public and residents.

Restaurant (Class H) Closing Times

As a policy, the Liquor Commissioner has implemented a 10 pm stop time for liquor sales for restaurants on all days of the week. This stop time is not specifically codified but has been consistently required and enforced for many years. However, many restaurants have typical operating hours much later than the 10 pm stop time. For example, many restaurants rely on sports games to bring in additional revenue, which can end close to midnight (including weekdays). Gaming is also required to stop at 10pm at these locations, which may have customers who are more comfortable in a restaurant setting as opposed to a gaming café or tavern.

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Expanding the hours of business for restaurants (Liquor License Class H) will assist existing restaurants and help to attract new ones. Below is a list of some area restaurants with their typical hours that extend beyond 10 pm (although many have a large variety of different licenses and hours, the hours listed are the typical hours). Also listed are neighboring communities and their typical allowable service hours for a restaurant. By comparison, Crest Hill has the most restrictive hours in this category. Having overly restrictive hours will limit the number of restaurants that will invest their time and money to locate in Crest Hill. Additionally, it encourages customers who normally eat and drink in Crest Hill to venture outside the community. Incoming and potential new businesses have mentioned the need for expanded hours as part of initial discussions. Property owners and brokers have regularly brought up this restriction as an issue they hear when leasing property as well.

Restaurant	Typ. Hours
Buffalo Wild Wings	11am – Midnight/1am
Olive Garden	11am – 11pm (F & St)
Miller's Ale House	11am-Midnight
Chili's	11am-11pm
Lazy Dog	11am-Midnight
Sovereign	11am-11pm (F & St)
Barell & Vine	11am – Midnight (F & St)
Hero's West	11am – Midnight (F & St)

Municipality	Typ. Restaurant License Hrs
Crest Hill	M-Sn: 6am-10pm
Romeoville	M-St: 7am-2am; Sn: 9am-2am
Plainfield	M-St: 6am-Mid; Sn: 7am-Mid
Joliet	M-Sn: 6am – 2am
Shorewood	M-F: 6am – 1am; St/Sn: 6am-2am
Lockport	Sn-Th: 6am-1am; F/St: 6am-2am
Naperville	7am – 1am (Outside Downtown)
Homer Glen	M-Th: 6am-1am; F/St: 6am-2am; Sn: 7am – 1am
Lemont	M-St 6am-2am; Sn 10am-2am

**Please note there are a variety of different licenses in each community and the times noted are the general hours for most restaurants in the community. Additional information can be found on each community's municipal code or on the Illinois Liquor Control Commission page at: <https://ilcc.illinois.gov/survey.html>*

Staff is proposing a change that would extend liquor service to midnight for Class H License holders. This still ensures that none of these restaurants become taverns or “clubs” as they need to follow existing code requirements that will be maintained and continue to be actively enforced:

- Minimum floor area for dining and food prep is 75%
- Food must be served at all times when liquor is available
- Outdoor patio area liquor service must cease at 10 pm

The recommendation was coordinated with the Mayor's Office (Liquor Commissioner) and Police Department to ensure there are no public safety issues and existing regulations remain actively enforced.

Recommendation for Discussion: *Staff recommends the policy requiring restaurants with a Class H liquor license (“restaurant license”) be codified and amended to allow liquor service until midnight on all nights of the week (currently 10 pm).*

Limited Sunday Service and Sales Hours (All Licenses)

The current liquor license requirements limit Sunday liquor sale hours from 10 am to midnight for both service and retail sales of liquor. The more restrictive Sunday hours are a traditional policy that reflects certain religious institutional hours. However, many trends have changed over the years, including an increase in the public desire for beer, wine, or breakfast cocktails for brunch, wedding/baby showers, football games, and other events that may happen on Sundays. Additionally, golf courses (and more recently indoor golfing simulators) are open early for regular golfers, leagues, and group outings. Lastly, there are

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early morning sports and events where fans often want to have a drink served with breakfast/brunch or wish to purchase liquor at retail ahead of time for a party/event before the game.

In addition to assisting the Prairie Bluff Public Golf Club and existing businesses, a change will also help to remove a barrier for some new businesses, which include both restaurants and entertainment uses. Many new restaurants include “brunch” as part of their regular menus, and it is particularly popular on Sundays. Examples of expanding national chains with this model are First Watch (<https://firstwatch.com>), Granite City (<https://www.gcfb.com/>), and X-Golf (<https://playxgolf.com/>). Regionally, examples include The Black Sheep (<https://whitesheeporland.com>), Oak + Bean (<https://www.oakandbeanco.com/>), Schaumburg Public House(<https://schaumburgpublichouse.com/>), and Pickle Haus (<https://picklehaus.com/>).

Most surrounding communities have Sunday liquor sales/service hours that are the same as a typical weekday or that only differ by an hour. Additionally, communities that have slightly different Sunday hours usually have less restrictive hours specific to golf courses (which have a different liquor license than most establishments) due to their unique nature. For simplicity and to avoid confusion, staff recommends moving Sunday hours to start at 6 am for all liquor licenses, which will keep the starting time consistent across all days of the week.

This recommendation for changes in Sunday liquor sales hours was coordinated with Mayor's Office (Liquor Commissioner) and the Police Department to ensure there are no public safety concerns, and the regulations will remain actively enforced.

Recommendation for Discussion: *Staff recommends amending Sunday liquor sales to allow liquor service/sales to start at 6 am (instead of 10 am) on Sundays for all liquor licenses, same as all other days of the week.*

Recommended Council Action:

Discuss potential Liquor License hours of operation amendments as noted above and direct the City Attorney to make the proposed changes for consideration on the October 6, 2025, Regular Meeting Agenda for final consideration.

Attachments

- A. Letter of Support Requesting Changes – Lockport Township Park District (Prairie Bluff Public Golf Club)
- B. Letter of Support Requesting Changes – Feathered Fork (New Restaurant Under Lease at 20631 Renwick Rd and expected to open in October 2025)