



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Title: Business License Ordinance

Preferred Agenda: November 24, 2020

Submitted By: Blair Larsen, Community & Economic Development Director

Reviewed By: Ray Towry, City Manager

Type of Action: Resolution ____ Motion __X__ Roll Call ____ Other ____

Relevant Code/Policy:

Towards Council Goal: Vision Statement, Aspiration V: Economically Strong Environment; Goal 4.2: Lead Economic Development Efforts

Attachments: Ordinance Bill No. 12 for 2020

Purpose of this RCA:

The purpose of this RCA is to propose a business license ordinance in order to promote cooperation and the sharing of information with the Business Community.

Background/Context:

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the value of information about local businesses, and the lack of that information in Sweet Home. The various measures taken to combat the virus had and continue to have a devastating toll on local businesses. As the City attempted to help with information and various aid programs, City Staff realized that the lack of reliable information on what businesses existed in Sweet Home and what products and services they offered made it extremely difficult to help businesses through the crisis.

We experienced similar difficulties and challenges during the eclipse in 2017.

The City Council discussed this matter during various meetings and directed staff to move forward with a Business License Ordinance.

The Challenge/Problem:

How does the City gather the information needed to assist businesses and promote cooperation between them and the City?

Stakeholders:

- Sweet Home Residents – Residents appreciate the businesses and services available in the City and have an interest in strong, local businesses that serve their needs and desires.
- Sweet Home Businesses – Local businesses benefit from having a voice in City affairs and having the City as a reliable partner.
- Sweet Home City Council – The City Council is responsible for adopting ordinances and policies that accomplish the City's purposes and goals.

Issues and Financial Impacts:

The only financial impact is publicizing the new requirements and the staff time required to develop and process applications. There are software products that may make this easier for a cost, however Staff recommends using existing software initially, since the Sweet Home business community is not large. We estimate that existing personnel are sufficient to operate this program.

Elements of a Stable Solution:

A stable solution includes the adoption of an ordinance requiring businesses to provide the City with basic information regarding the business.

Options:

1. Do Nothing – The Council could choose to do nothing at this time.
2. Approve Ordinance Bill No. 12 for 2020 as presented – Ordinance pertaining to the Licensing of Businesses within the City.
3. Approve Ordinance Bill No. 12 for 2020 with changes – The Council may choose to revise the ordinance or direct Staff to do so.
4. Direct Staff to Research Other Options – The Council may direct staff to research other ways to promote cooperation and information-sharing with local businesses.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends option 2: Motion to approve Ordinance Bill No. 12 for 2020 as presented.

Update for December 8, 2020:

Based on the discussion at the November 24th Council meeting, staff has updated the draft ordinance to be less regulatory, and more directed toward collecting information. The ordinance now only requires information to be submitted in order to obtain a license, and a license can only be denied if the application is incomplete, the business submits false or fraudulent information, the activity would not comply with City or State laws, or the activity would endanger property or the public's health or safety. The draft has also been changed to indicate that the fee may be increased or decreased on an annual basis by the City Council. Other minor changes were made after consulting with the City Attorney.

Updated Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the ordinance be approved as modified, along with any other changes that Council wishes to make.