

# Council to discuss smoking ban tonight

## Councilmen say they expect to vote on proposed ordinance prohibiting smoking in bars, clubs

By Halley Griffin, Daily News staff writer

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### **IF YOU GO**

- **WHAT:** Moscow City Council will discuss a draft ordinance to prohibit smoking in bars and private clubs
- **WHERE:** City Hall Council Chambers, 206 East Third Street.
- **WHEN:** 7 p.m. today

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The Moscow City Council will discuss a draft ordinance today that would prohibit smoking in bars.

Council members say they expect to vote on some form of the proposed ordinance at the meeting, but can't predict which way the decision will go.

"Some form of the ordinance is going to be voted on (Monday)," Councilman John Weber said. "We've gone through a couple of times in front of the administrative committee, and we've had a lot of input one way or another, so I think that the chances are pretty good that something (will be decided)."

In addition to banning smoking in bars and private clubs, the ordinance would prohibit smoking within 20 feet of an entrance or exit. It also allows the creation of outdoor smoking areas, as well as separate indoor smoking areas.

The ordinance also establishes penalties ranging from \$10 for the first offense to \$50 for the third. Further offenses will be treated as non-jail misdemeanors.

Weber said the council likely will discuss a number of options for the final ordinance.

The proposed ordinance was generated after Northwest River Supply owner Bill Parks addressed the City Council about a potential ban in May.

It also is backed by Katie Whittier, a Moscow resident who has started an online group promoting a smoke-free Moscow.

Parks said Friday he is hopeful the council will choose to stand up for the health of bar workers.

"If you think about it, the only people who aren't protected these days against environmental toxins in the workplace are the people who work in bars," Parks said. "You don't think of it that way. Everybody thinks of it in terms of the patrons, and the people who work in the bars don't have a choice."

But CJ's owner and vocal smoking ban opponent Phil Roderick said his employees do have a choice about whether or not to work for him.

Roderick said he will definitely attend tonight's meeting.

"We've had 20 generations fight for our liberty and freedom and our right to choose and the right to pursue happiness," Roderick said Friday.

"Even Russia allows people to smoke in bars. So does China, so does Argentina, so does Cuba. You have more freedom and individual rights in a communist country than you do here, if you think about it, and that's pretty sad."

Roderick said he would make CJ's nonsmoking if the majority of his customers preferred nonsmoking. He is primarily opposed to the city government acting like a "babysitter" to him or his customers.

At least four council members must vote yes for the ordinance to be enacted.

It would then have to be published before the ban would take effect.

"If the council passes it on Monday night, chances are it could be effective within the next week or so," City Supervisor Gary Riedner said Friday. "Or the council could say, 'We want an effective date of Sept. 1.'"

Councilman Walter Steed said he also anticipates a decision tonight.

"Even if it's a decision to do nothing," he said.

Steed said the decision to allow public comment will be up to Mayor Nancy Chaney, but he expects there will be a comment period.

He said council members have received a large volume of comments from both proponents and opponents of the ban, and he expects a full house tonight.

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