

# Moscow smoking ban tops committee agenda

## Proposed ordinance heads to City Council for review

By Pamela Robel, Daily News staff writer

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### QUICKREAD

- **WHAT HAPPENED:** The Moscow Administrative Committee reviewed a draft ordinance that would ban smoking in bars within Moscow.
- **WHAT IT MEANS:** The proposed ordinance includes a definition of bars and would prohibit smoking within the confines of the building and limit outdoor smoking to a distance of 20 feet from the entrance of any bar in the city.
- **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:** The draft ordinance will go before the City Council for discussion July 20.
- **WHY YOU SHOULD CARE:** Smoking would be banned in bars throughout the city if the ordinance is approved.

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Christine Peterson of Moscow said she would like to see smoking banned in Moscow's bars.

"I am actually encouraged, hearing what's in the draft ordinance," Peterson said. "(The city offers) a great smorgasbord of things to do and (smoking) is really alienating a big group."

Peterson said she had friends in Boise who had seen an increase in bar patronage since certain bars in the city chose to go smoke-free.

Peterson gave her comments to members of the Moscow City Council's Administrative Committee on Monday as council members considered a proposal that would ban smoking inside bars in the city.

Garden Lounge owner Tom Bode said he would be in favor of the ban, if it extended to private clubs as well.

"I would ask you to make sure you extend it and make it for private clubs too," Bode said.

Matthew Mayer of Pullman attended the committee meeting to speak in opposition to the proposed smoking ban.

"I live in Pullman and I come over here a lot because I enjoy the fact that you are allowed to smoke in bars," Mayer said.

Mayer, a nonsmoker, said he would prefer smokers be allowed to smoke indoors in an effort to keep them better supervised than people would be if forced to smoke outdoors.

Associated Students of the University of Idaho President Kelby Wilson said students he spoke with indicated overwhelming support for the ban.

"Three out of four that I talked to were in favor of this ban," Wilson said.

The draft ordinance bans smoking in bars within the city and defines a bar as "any indoor area open to the public operated primarily for the sale and service of alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption and where the service of food is incidental." The draft ordinance also would prohibit smoking within 20 feet of an entrance to a bar. There is no mention of private clubs - such as fraternal organizations - in the draft ordinance.

City Attorney Randy Fife said one of his drafting techniques was to keep draft ordinances as close to a state law as he could.

The Idaho Clean Indoor Air Act allows cities to create ordinances that are more restrictive than state laws.

Councilman Tom Lamar said he saw the ban on smoking as a health issue.

"If you want to smoke, go ahead and smoke, but I don't think you have a right to affect other people with that smoke," Lamar said.

Councilman John Weber suggested allowing bars to construct areas within a bar that confined the smoke to a specific area using floor-to-ceiling walls as well as negative airflow to keep the smoky air flowing outward. The areas would not be serviced by bar employees and would be considered "customers only" areas.

The draft ordinance, in several forms, will be presented to the City Council for discussion during the July 20 meeting.

### **In other business**

- The Public Works and Finance Committee discussed snow removal throughout the city.

"We have a process that has worked well for years and if we'd only had one bad snow year, we wouldn't even be talking about this," Weber said.

Parks and Recreation Department Director Dwight Curtis said the question was whether to plan for the 31-year average snowfall of 46.7 inches or to plan for the extraordinary winters.

The committee decided to send the report back to the snow removal task force for an identification of priorities.

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