

Item 25-0035: Approve ordinance changes to Chapter 12, Article IV, Noise, as identified in the attached document

Common Council

Wed, Feb 19, 2025 7:00PM

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:20:31

On to the Board of Health. This is item 25-0035, approve ordinance changes to Chapter 12, Article 4 Noise as identified in the attached document. We have a motion and a second to approve. And any discussion? Alder Smith.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 1:21:01

Yeah, I asked to separate—thank you. Thank you, Mayor. I asked to pull this for discussion just to give some context for my fellow alderspersons, city officials, and perhaps anyone who's viewing. The most common complaint I received this year from constituents has to do with noise. District Four sits on both sides of College Avenue Bridge, and it isn't the vehicle—vehicular noise one might expect from an artery, rather some of the excessive noise caused by people looking to create a nuisance.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 1:21:34

I heard these complaints, and I spent time thinking about how to lessen the occurrences of this problem. I came to realize one problem in enforcing noise stems from the fact that Appleton's city code on this topic was outdated and hard to enforce. When I talked this over with Director Sepers from the health department, I found that he was willing to work on a thorough update of the code, and I'd like to thank him and Attorney Darren Glad for their help through this process.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 1:22:01

As the memo from Director Spears—Sepers explains, the new ordinance will make easier the enforcement of excessive vehicular noise and lend clarity to the penalty for such noise. I realize that the APD has a lot on their plate in the city, but I trust that this new ordinance language will give officers some tools to reduce this health hazard that many residents experience.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 1:22:23

I'd like to make clear to constituents, I don't see this issue of noise as finished and done. This at the beginning of my efforts to bring down noise levels along College Avenue, and if we can do it here, we can extend those efforts to other parts of the city. I know that come spring, cars with modified mufflers will be banging around on the on College, but I know that both from my discussions with them that both Mayor Woodford and Chief Olson recognize the problem and are working within the parameters of Wisconsin state law to lessen this problem. And I'd like to thank them for that. I'd also like to thank them for the generous time they spent with me answering questions about this problem, and I look forward to working more with Director Sepers to find ways to gather data on this problem and present information to residents in a form that will allow them to understand what the city is doing to solve this problem. Thank you, and I hope that context gives you a little bit of context for where the ordinance update is coming from.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:23:29

Further discussion? We have a motion and a second to approve. Please cast your votes. Thank you, Alder Alfheim. That motion passes 15 to zero. That item has been approved.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:23:49

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Alder Smith for his advocacy and efforts. Has put a lot of time in working on these updates, and very much appreciate his commitment to the issue, and I could just attest for Alder Smith's constituents that he is indeed very passionate about this issue and has been steadfast in his efforts to address it. So, appreciate his work, and we'll take this opportunity with the updated ordinances to do some more public education about our noise ordinances in the city, because I agree there could be greater clarity, and this ordinance update will help with that. So again, thank you to Alder Smith.