

NEWS



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COUNTY BOARD APPROVES ADULT USE ORDINANCES

The Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners approved revisions on April 10, 2012 to the Land Use Ordinance that regulates the location of Sexually Oriented Businesses and a new Public Health Ordinance that regulates activities that occur within a Sexually Oriented Business.

“The updated ordinances better protect residential areas and children from the negative effects of adult establishments while living within the bounds of constitutional protections established by the courts,” stated Crow Wing County Chairman Doug Houge. “We are confident that these amendments will fully withstand judicial scrutiny.”

Setting aside questions of morality or constitutional protections for free speech, research from around the country clearly points to the potential for negative impacts by these types of businesses on surrounding property values; crime rates, especially associated with prostitution; and the risk of transmission of sexually transmitted diseases if not properly regulated for where they can locate, when they can operate, and how the operations must be conducted. An additional concern is also protecting minor children from unwanted or accidental exposure to adult-oriented material, if not properly regulated. According to Environmental Services Supervisor, Chris Pence, “These ordinances are specifically designed to minimize these negative impacts as much as possible.”

The revisions to the Land Use Ordinance clarify that Adult Uses shall only be allowed in the Agricultural/Forested Land Use District with a conditional use permit and yearly license thereafter. The Land Use Ordinance only applies to the unincorporated areas of the county.

The new Public Health Ordinance that regulates Sexually Oriented Businesses clarifies how the business shall operate including lighting standards and a separation distance between patrons and employees. This ordinance will prevent prostitution-related activities and, thereby, the transmission of sexually-transmitted diseases in these establishments and applies countywide. A yearly license is required by this ordinance. According to Gwen Anderson, Community Services Health Division Supervisor, “You only need to look at what occurred one county south of here at the former Krazy Rabbit bar by Camp Ripley to know that this kind of illegal activity is a very real risk with this type of business, one that we need to minimize as best we can.”

“Regardless of how a person feels towards these types of activities, there ought to be general agreement that this kind of thing is inappropriate for children, that minimizing a neighbor’s loss of property value, avoiding increases in crime, and the spread of STDs because of a business activity better serves the public interest. Crow Wing County is taking a pro-active approach to ensure that the negative secondary effects of Sexually Oriented Businesses are minimized,” stated Houge.

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