

Tommy Wells Praises Moratorium on Single Sales of Alcohol on H Street, NE

Contributed by Charles Allen
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Councilmember Tommy Wells today praised the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC Board) for its proposal to implement an H Street, NE moratorium on single sales of alcohol. Citing chronic problems with peace, order and quiet, specifically with respect to litter, loitering, public drunkenness, public urination and criminal activity persistent on H Street, NE, the ABC Board proposed a 3-year moratorium on the sale of single containers of beer and liquor sold in half-pint volume from the 700 to 1400 block of H Street, NE.

“A moratorium will go a long way to address some of the chaos and crime afflicting H Street, NE,” commented Mr. Wells. “On top of that, the neighborhood is tired of people using the streets, alleys and treeboxes as public urinals and trashcans. To realize the promise of H Street, this is a necessary step to bring back order and stability and make it a thriving asset for the neighborhood.”

ANC 6A first asked the ABC Board to issue a ban on singles sales in September 2006. After a public hearing with neighborhood residents in support of the ban, in addition to hearing support from Mayor Adrian Fenty, Councilmember Tommy Wells, the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the ABC Board cited concerns about peace, order and pedestrian safety, and a negative impact on economic development, as additional reasons to impose the moratorium.

“For too long, we’ve had individuals using our curbsides and sidewalks as open-air bars. We’ve seen the effect a singles ban can have in other neighborhoods. I’m proud to support the ANC and residents to put the moratorium in effect and begin calming the chaos on H Street, NE,” added Mr. Wells.

Quick Facts:

- - According to MPD, a similar ban on singles sales in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood over the last four years has resulted in a 41 percent reduction in total calls for MPD service and a 51 percent reduction in calls complaining of disorderly conduct — allowing MPD officers to focus on more serious crimes.
- - From January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006, between the 800 and 1400 block of H Street, NE, there were 330 calls to MPD regarding urinating in public, drinking in public, public intoxication, and disorderly conduct and 245 arrests — requiring 787 MPD man hours to respond and process the calls and arrests.
- - The proposed ban will impose a three year moratorium on the sale of single containers of beer, malt liquor, and ale, as well as liquor sold in half-pint or smaller volumes by the holders of retailer’s licenses class A and B located on both sides of the street on H Street, NE, between and including the 700 block of H Street, NE and the 1400 block of H Street, NE.
- - The ABC Board will transmit the proposed moratorium rules to the Council of the District of Columbia for a 90-day review period. Council must approve or disapprove the rules by resolution within 90 days.