

To: City Council
From: P. McGinnis, City Manager
Date: April 28, 2020
RE: Outdoor Seating Request



When the economy opens back up, our restaurant businesses may be fighting with one arm tied behind their backs for the rest of the summer.

A very rational proposal came out of Washington two weeks ago, and it is entirely likely that we will see this operationalized in Michigan later this spring. The White House Advisory indicated that bars may open in phase two of the recovery with "diminished occupancy." This will likely be applied to restaurants as well. What diminished occupancy will mean is open for speculation, but if we give restaurants more space to operate, they will be able to get back to full or near-full capacity this summer (when they really need to MAKE HAY).

I received a direct appeal from the owner of Harbor Restaurants this week. He would like to occupy space in front of and behind the Snug Harbor Restaurant (see attached).

I have placed this request on the agenda and have followed it with a request to allow staff to approve other such requests this year only. The basis of such approvals will be:

- Concurrence of the City Manager, Public Safety and Public Works Directors, and
- Approvals presented at next regular Council meeting for affirmation, and
- Temporary authorization to expire on October 31, 2020

Entities will need to apply for other levels of approval based on City authorization to occupy public property. This is only one level of authorization these businesses will need to achieve. We are seeking similar flexibility from:

- Planning and Zoning
- Michigan Liquor Control Commission
- Ottawa County Health Department

Acting quickly at the City level may make the difference between a restaurant getting up and running this summer (or never again?) We will all need to be flexible to achieve a healthy environment in which these businesses will have a fighting chance at making a profit.