

ITEM #:	30
DATE:	06-10-25
DEPT:	ADMIN

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AMES SUMMERTIME SERIES - CAMPUSTOWN ON JUNE 18, 2025

BACKGROUND:

On March 11, 2025, the City Council [approved several requests](#) from Ames Main Street for the Ames Summertime Series - Campustown. **Ames Main Street is now requesting suspension of enforcement of Section 17.16 of Ames *Municipal Code* for the event to allow alcohol to be served in the area where minors may be present.**

Section 17.16 makes a distinction between alcohol-licensed premises that function more like a restaurant, with food sales making up the majority of the sales, and premises that function as a bar, where alcohol sales are a majority of the business. For the former, minors may be in the premises without a legal-age adult. For the latter, minors are not permitted without a legal-age adult accompanying them. The Police Department relies on business records of transactions to make the determination regarding whether minors would be allowed or not under the ordinance's criteria.

Typically for events such as the Summertime Series, since the license holder sells the alcohol and separate vendors sell food and other items, and since no historical pattern of sales can be evaluated for intermittent events, the alcohol sales have been treated like a bar--a designated alcohol consumption area has been created using fencing, and those allowed in must either be 21 years of age or older, or (if the organizers wish) a minor child accompanied by their legal-age parent or guardian.

Ames Main Street has requested the ability to license the entire event area as the premises for the event and not be required to fence a separate beer garden area. This would allow attendees of all ages to move freely throughout the event area. This request follows a [similar waiver being granted](#) for 515 Days, which was held Downtown in May. City staff notes that there were no reported issues with the alcohol service at that event.

The City has had a long history of requiring alcohol consumption for special events to occur in a designated area without intermingling of legal age adults and minors. The concern from staff has historically been the challenges observed with minors being able to obtain alcohol in establishments that advertise or operate like a bar, but where just enough food sales occur to qualify for minors to be allowed on the premises.

Staff discussed these issues with Ames Main Street and has developed a list of the specific circumstances for the proposed event that the Council could consider justifying allowing a suspension of Section 17.16 in this instance. It should be emphasized that other events in the future, with circumstances outside of these described below, are not likely to receive staff support to allow minors on the premises.

The circumstances related to this event that may justify the requested suspension of enforcement of Section 17.16 include:

1. The event includes entertainment and activities that are the focus of the event (alcohol consumption is incidental to the event).
2. Food and non-alcoholic beverages will be offered in a meaningful variety. No distilled spirits are involved.
3. The event is non-ticketed, intended to be family-friendly, and includes promotional materials that suggest it as a family event.
4. It is organized by a locally established entity, with a track record of hosting events successfully and with an interest in continuing to do so.
5. Private security is being hired for the event, in addition to volunteers to manage the event area.
6. The event is on a weekday night and will take place entirely during daylight hours. Additionally, the event is being held when Iowa State University classes are out of session, reducing the potential for larger crowds that can be challenging to manage.
7. The event area is in a parking lot that contains permanent fencing and walls, making for a well-defined space that is simpler to manage than an open event area.

Organizers have provided a letter (attached), which outlines the event plans in greater detail. Separately from the alcohol request, organizers have requested that the event boundaries not be fenced using the typical high or wide fencing but instead relying on the permanent fencing and walls in place in the parking lot. Staff believes that some minimal fencing is still necessary on the west portion of the north event boundary, but that relieving the organizers of the requirement for additional fencing would be acceptable.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the request to waiver enforcement of Section 17.16 of *Municipal Code* to allow minors to be present for Ames Summertime Series - Campustown on June 18, 2025.
2. Refer this item back to staff for additional information.
3. Do not approve the request.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Ames Main Street is a well-established local entity that has successfully hosted many events with alcohol components in Downtown. Most recently, for 515 Days, Ames Main Street demonstrated an ability to handle an event at which this same provision of *Municipal Code* was suspended, allowing for minors to be present in the alcohol service area. The factors listed in the report above make a case to support a waiver of enforcement of Section 17.16 of *Municipal Code*. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Alliance Letter of Request for All Ages Event Status.pdf](#)