

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

No. 71

**Resolution on rules application to Liquor
Licenses in Minneapolis**

March 1957

Citizens League
601 Syndicate Bldg
Minneapolis 2, Minn.
March 6, 1957

Minneapolis City Council
City Hall
Minneapolis, Minn.

Gentlemen:

At the meeting of the League's Board of Directors today, the following resolution was adopted by a 13 to 1 vote. Mr. Desmond Pratt absented himself from the meeting when this item was discussed and voted upon and Mr. Wallace cast the dissenting vote:

The Citizens League's primary concern is the improvement of city and county government. As a result, it studies civic problems from this angle first. The Licensing Committee of the League has been studying the problem involved in issuing, denying and revoking licenses in Minneapolis for almost five years with particular emphasis on the issuance of licenses for the sale of liquor.

From this study, the committee concludes that:

1. Minneapolis licensing procedures generally should be made uniform, and more precise standards should be established to determine who is and who is not entitled to a license. These changes can and should be made by the City Council.
2. Under present laws, 305 liquor licenses are authorized for issuance in Minneapolis. Of these, 263 must be within the patrol limits and 42 can be located anywhere in the city. Even though liquor licenses are technically not transferable and are a privilege and not a right, the monopoly position which these 42 licenses enjoy in some degree results in their having excessive value. In fact, their value may result from time to time in their holders using undue influence on city officials.
3. The patrol limits as presently established are unrealistic and they interfere with the development and redevelopment of the city. Concentrating liquor licenses in certain areas results in the blight of these areas and in increased law enforcement problems. In particular the problems of the lower loop cannot be solved until the concentration of liquor licenses is satisfactorily removed from this area.

and the committee recommends:

- A. That the City Council should hold public hearings on this problem now and indicate its intention to establish policies by ordinances which will (1) prevent the concentration of licenses in a particular area. (2) give adequate recognition to community attitude before relocating any licenses. In this connection the League again urges the adoption of a general ordinance establishing uniform licensing procedures and standards along the lines of the proposal recommended by the League in 1953 and 1955 which includes a provision for community consent in the location of liquor licenses.
- B. That concurrently with the City Council doing (A) above, the legislature abolish the present patrol limits as being contrary to the best interest of the city.

While to some it may seem that the legislature should adopt substitute restrictions on the location of liquor licenses, the Citizens League believes that the adoption of such restrictions as may be necessary is more properly the responsibility of the City Council, since Minneapolis is a home rule city. The League expresses confidence that the City Council will use discretion in the relocation of liquor licenses if the patrol limits are abolished and it recognizes the power of the voters to change the membership of the City Council every two years if its members abuse their discretion.

The League offers its help and cooperation in working out a satisfactory solution to this knotty problem.

Yours very truly,

Walter S. Harris, Jr.
President