

Mac's Owners Support Effort With Police To Combat Issues In Downtown Alton

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Mac's owners Mac and Rob Lenhardt were in attendance on Tuesday at an Alton Public Safety Meeting at City Hall and both concur the correct steps will be taken to combat increased vandalism, loitering, and fights in Downtown Alton.

Mac and Rob each praised Alton Police Chief Jarrett Ford who led the meeting for his responses and the plan that will move forward from the meeting.

Mac and Rob also both agreed much of the problem downtown is not coming from local residents, but “some patrons coming from across the river.”

The downtown Alton area has seven bars with liquor licenses that allow alcohol sales until 3 a.m., however, Mac and Rob said while costly, they will continue to close at 1 a. m. on the weekends.

Betsy Allen, Alderman of the 1st Ward agreed with the Lenhardts in a previous interview and said: “There are no places down there, I don’t think, that are having any problems inside their businesses. The problem is outside.”

Mac’s owners plan to contribute with other bar owners to a fund for the time being so additional police officers on foot will be available in Downtown Alton until the problem is resolved.

“It is time to take charge of the situation,” Mac Lenhardt said. “I see the problem as some of the people coming in from across the river into Downtown Alton,” he said. “I think the enforcement will be aggressive the next three or four weeks to get the message out. We don’t want something bad to happen.”

Rob said he is glad the local businesses and bars downtown are going to pay for some off-duty cops to help clean up the Downtown area on Friday and Saturday nights.

“Something has to change and there have to be citations issued for violating city ordinances, such as open alcohol containers of Alton in the street, smoking marijuana and loitering. We don’t see a problem inside the establishments. But it is not uncommon to see 10-20-30-40 people and sometimes 100 people smoking and drinking in the alleys and parking lots. This is not the same ones coming in and patronizing our businesses.”

Rob added that he wants people to feel safe and be able to come down for dinner even at 9 or 10 at night.

“It is a matter of simply abiding by city ordinances and citations being written to those who don’t abide outside the establishments,” he said. “Chief Jarrett did an excellent job with the meeting on Tuesday.”