



MICROBREWERY TEXT AMENDMENT

The first Microbrewery Text Amendment Meeting was held January 8, 2012. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the community with the baseline of where microbreweries are currently permitted and to get volunteers to participate in a Citizen Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG will aid in identifying issues, providing feedback and responding to staff recommendations.

Ultimately the CAG will provide input to the staff team that is charged with reviewing and potentially revising regulations for microbreweries.

The following are notes provided by CAG participants.



TABLE 1

BRAD SHELL, JOHN MARRINO, ERIC HOWELL, ALLEN WEST, DANIEL HARTIG, PHIL BUCHY, TODD FORD, SUZI FORD, MICHAEL McRAE, CHRIS HARKER

CHARACTERISTICS

A microbrewery is just a small brewery that brews and packages beer for distribution locally and/or regionally. A microbrewery may also have an onsite tasting room or restaurant and sell packaged beer and merchandise for customers to take home.

Square footage is not a good method of defining a microbrewery. Production amounts would be better as they provide a proportionate indication of activity levels. We feel that the Brewery Association's definition of a Regional Brewery (production \leq 60,000 barrels/year) would be a reasonable upper limit if the City were inclined to impose size restrictions on breweries in certain zoning classifications.

As a production facility, there should be no restrictions on hours of operation. All activity occurs within the walls of the brewery and would be invisible to anyone external to the building. (NOTE: This is separate from any restrictions that may or may not be desirable for a brewery tasting room or restaurant.)

CONCERNS

There are really not sight, sound and traffic issues related to a brewery other than those associated with normal raw materials deliveries (which are relatively infrequent) and trucks departing to deliver our product (also not a significant activity level). Smell for smaller breweries is similar to that of local bakeries, coffee shops, restaurants, etc. as the steam from the "cooking" of the beer carries some "bakery-type" bread odors during mashing and some more floral "hop" aromas during the boiling of the beer.

Slightly larger systems (including the one OMB intends to purchase this year) employ an energy recovery heat exchanger to capture the steam from the kettles and use it to heat hot water. Therefore, there are no odors emanating from these systems.

There should be no restrictions on distance from residential as long as the brewery is in an approved zone.

BENEFITS

Breweries are an integral part of the social fabric of communities

throughout the world. People draw pride from a quality local product, and appreciate the ability to recycle their consumption expenditures within their own community. This results in local jobs both at the breweries but at local suppliers as well.

CONSTRAINTS

We didn't have strong feelings on this...we can understand that you may not want to allow microbreweries in purely residentially zoned districts. If anything perhaps a brewpub would fit better in residential zones.

TABLE 2

JASON ALEXANDER, JEFF ALEXANDER, SCOTT LEWIS, CLAY PARK, JENNIFER McCARTNEY, TRACY WATKINS, RUSSELL FERGUSSON, MEGAN LITTLE GUDE, KURT HOGAN

CHARACTERISTICS

Micro-breweries tend to be unique small level production facilities that incorporate a tasting room and offer the chance for visitors to tour the brewery, meet the staff, and sample some of the product. Often times these breweries have a strong connection to the city and even neighborhoods that they are located.

Breweries are a destination location for local, regional and even national travelers. Micro-brew enthusiasts seek to visit local micro-brews when they travel and travel specifically to visit favorite locations. Asheville is a good example of the beer tourism industry.

Best for city to rely on commonly accepted industry definitions to avoid confusion. Definition should be based on production limits. Because recording production amounts is already required, production limits are an accurate way to distinguish breweries. Production limit definitions would not place an additional burden on breweries and can be determined without expense to the city. Production limits make more sense than the use of a square footage requirement and are not as likely to restrict flexibility. Microbreweries would be less than 60,000 barrels per year. Nano-breweries would likely be less than 15,000 barrels.

There should be no limitation on hours of production. Production is very similar to a bakery and is unlikely to cause negative impacts to neighboring properties.

CONCERNS



microbrewery text amendment

crafted ideas

CHARACTERISTICS

What are the characteristics of a microbrewery? Does square footage matter? Production amounts? Hours of operation?

CONCERNS

Sights? Sounds? Smell? Traffic? Relationship to residential?

BENEFITS

Community identity? Neighborhood Amenity? Economic?

CONSTRAINTS

Are there areas they don't belong?

CONDITIONS TO OFFSET

Limit hours of operation? Distance to residential? Production based on zoning?

What is your definition of a microbrewery?

Think big • Encourage discussion • Listen

Our group did not really have significant concerns. Many of us know from experience that it is extremely unlikely for the brewing process to impact neighboring properties. Noise is limited. Distribution at a microbrewery level is often carried out in smaller trucks and vans and would be less traffic than typical restaurant deliveries. During Brewing a smell could be noticed, but the smell is subtle and unlikely to overpower the smells of the cookie factory or area restaurants. In any event our group was inclined to think that I was a positive aroma, similar to a bakery or restaurant.

There do not seem to be concerns for breweries that would merit special restrictions from residential areas.

BENEFITS

Economic opportunity: micro-breweries are almost universally a locally owned business that requires employees on site. Therefore they are likely to have a sustainable economic impact. It is also very common for micro-breweries to revitalize older buildings in areas that have low rent. Many of the breweries we have visited seem to have reclaimed formerly vacant areas. Microbreweries will generate tax income for the city.

Quality of life: We all agreed that having microbreweries in a city creates a sense of pride and adds to the activities available for recreation. Preferably these locations would be allowed to establish themselves near neighborhoods and public transportation. Several person in our group have enjoyed visiting taprooms of the existing Charlotte microbreweries on our bicycles. Several of us mentioned that we have taken out-of-town visitors to microbreweries.

Tourism: a successful microbrewery can be a source of tourism income for the city, and may eventually become a selling point for convention traffic.

CONSTRAINTS:

Flexibility is paramount for any small business venture. Microbreweries should be given an opportunity to be unique and seek success in their own style. Apart from restricting commercial breweries from locating on residentially zoned property and setting a production limit for non-industrial zoning districts, we did not list any constraints. Specifically, we did not see a good reason for placing a linear distance requirement from other uses.

TABLE 3

ROBERT ROSE, TED BOYD, BESTY BROWDER, MATT PERA, CHRISTIAN STAPLES.

CHARACTERISTICS

- Size (15,000-60,000); we didn't see a reason to vary from the guidelines on this for a "microbrewery"; we would define "nanobreweries" and "regional breweries" differently
- Square footage should not be an issue; leave it up to the owners to decide
- Hours: unlimited for actual brewing of beer; it is necessary to have the ability to do this or else the beer may be ruined; obviously, different considerations exist for tap rooms, etc.

CONCERNS

- No real concerns regarding sight, sound, smell, or traffic. The sight and smell can actually be a good

thing in certain instances.

- No real concerns regarding relationship to residential areas. We don't see how it's different than a restaurant or bar located in mixed use areas.

BENEFITS

- Community identity – almost all existing breweries in Charlotte have this and we think it is a good thing.
- Economic redevelopment and renewal; breweries typically need cheap buildings/locations from a financial standpoint which means they typically look at less developed or older parts of town which are in need of revitalization
- Reduced crime (because of the fact that a microbrewery is nearby means there are more people around, lights on, etc., which deters criminals)
- Employment
- Tourism (from neighborhood to neighborhood and from out-of-towners)
- Education/entertainment – this can be accomplished by brewery tours, lectures/talks from the brewer, etc.

CONSTRAINTS

- May want to consider limiting the number of breweries in a certain geographical area, but this may be difficult to define
- We do not believe there should be any restrictions on location per se, but we probably don't want breweries next to schools or churches as a matter of principle

CONDITIONS TO OFFSET

- We were not prepared to define a residential proximity limitation
- Didn't really see any conditions other than as discussed above

NEXT CAG MEETING

January 29, 2013 • 6 - 7:30

NoDa Brewing Company • 2229 North Davidson Street Charlotte, NC 28205

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