

Village of Grafton makes former "gentleman's agreement" enforceable with new noise ordinance

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GRAFTON – Grafton Mayor Ric Eberlin described Grafton's new noise ordinance as making a former “gentleman's agreement” both official and enforceable.

Before the ordinance went into place, Eberlin said the majority of Grafton's business adhered to the agreement to not host loud music after 11 p.m. He said this was needed due to the density of Grafton with its business district so close to residential areas. He said it making it a village ordinance does nothing except add a layer of enforcement to the former agreement. The 11 p.m. curfew for live loud music is seven days a week with no difference between weekdays and weekends. The curfew lasts until 8 a.m. and states “no live music outside the peripheral of the establishment.”

“We wanted to do preventative measures to give law enforcement some teeth,” Eberlin said. “It was not brought up with any businesses in mind. If police go through town and a business is rocking hard after 11, eventually it will cause a problem.”

If a business is “rocking hard after 11,” Eberlin said the most likely outcome will be a police officer entering the establishment to tell them to quiet the music. He said they would give the business about 10 minutes or so to get the volume to acceptable levels before moving into documentation and even possible fines.

“The first time will be a strong reprimand,” he said. “At least now we will have the opportunity to take it in front of council and document it. We don't want to revoke anyone's business licenses or anything. It's too damn hard to make it the way they can. The reason businesses may push music after midnight is to make every dime they can to survive the winter.”

Eberlin said anyone who believes this is a ban on outdoor music in Grafton is wrong. He called the possibility of such a ban “idiotic.”

“People come to Grafton to have a good time, and we're not ever going to ruin that,” Eberlin assured.

He said as much as 90 percent of the businesses in Grafton are in full support of this ordinance with no issues.