

Plan Commission's tie vote over tattoo parlor sends Hinkle back to City Council

by Brittany Kohler, Content Manager
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The City Plan Commission Meeting today ended in a tie vote (5-5) on the recommendation for the City Council on whether or not to grant a special permit to local businessman Chris Hinkle.

Chris Hinkle is the owner of [Grand Piasa Body Art](#), a business he has grown from the ground up over the past decade. The tie vote from today's meeting sends a negative recommendation to the City Council on granting Hinkle the special use permit to have a tattoo parlor in the C-4 District of Broadway. A "super majority" vote is required for the motion to go in his favor. The City Council will vote on the matter at the City Council Meeting, June 24th.

“I guess now I’ll get back on the campaign trail and rouse up some supporters and show up on the twenty-fourth” said Hinkle.

Roughly a month ago, Hinkle found himself in this same situation, standing in front of the City Plan Commission, requesting permission to move his business from Homer Adams Parkway to the growing arts district on the corner of Broadway and Henry St. in Alton.

The Alton zoning requirements prohibits body art establishments, though it has not been revisited in over a decade. The last time Hinkle stood in front of the planning commission, they sent a negative recommendation to the City Council to deny his request. However, the City Council voted against the Plan Commission, allowing the zoning restriction be lifted for Hinkle’s business, seeing the benefit of more business and foot traffic downtown.

“I think I would compliment Chris on one of the best campaigns I have ever seen for getting something approved,” said a member of the Alton City Plan Commission. “I think it is a little bit one-sided but you did a darn good job...It was the most unusual meeting I have ever been to where they had a motion that did not get a second and yet you convinced one alderman that everyone in the city wanted to have a tattoo parlor on that corner. I will vote in favor of the motion, but I am not happy about it.”



The dilemma then was zoning, and he won. The issue now is the special permit allowing him to purchase and restore the building. Much of the meeting today discussed the restriction on signage and structural/cosmetic changes to the historic building all the way down to allowing a trashcan on the sidewalk. The final restrictions and guidelines are being reviewed and will be published shortly.

The discussion has been prevalent in the media lately and many supporters, including several business owners on Broadway, have voiced their opinions in favor of Hinkle's business plan, with minimal speakers opposing.

"I would like to thank everyone that has been supportive and staying on track with this. Without them, I would not be this far along."

It has been a long road for Hinkle so far but he stays positive and is hopeful that a super majority vote is granted in his favor.

"I feel people will come to reason and make the best decision of Alton," said Hinkle.

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