

# Big week for River Bend region decision makers

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The Grafton City Hall and the Alton City Hall meetings this week are expected to have full houses, for the matters discussed have been in the headlines of media for some time and are popular topics of discussion among River Bend area residents.

Grafton is a small tourist town at the North end of the Great River Road. The small town has many pubs and unique wineries where people come from all over to enjoy the weather, the food, drinks and live music.

Tonight, the Grafton City Council may vote on a proposal to ban outdoor music from the premises of “businesses where alcoholic liquor at retail is permitted” in the City of Grafton, Illinois.

The Ordinance reads:

“21-3-36 **NO OUTDOOR MUSIC**. No licensed business where alcoholic liquor at retail is permitted shall present, permit or allow the playing of music so as to be audible outside the building of the business at any time.”

Some local residents of Grafton and a handful of law makers argue that the noise is a nuisance and should be prohibited. Others believe that music is great for entertainment and that Grafton is well-known for that environment, which adds tax revenue for the city from the businesses that have live music.

The meeting will also discuss the proposal of cutting down on the number of liquor licenses permitted for the city.

The Grafton City Hall meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. at the Grafton City Hall next door to the Police Department on Main Street.

Tomorrow, the Alton City Hall meeting is scheduled to convene at 7:30 p.m. in the Chambers Hall Room at City Hall. The Alton City Council will take a final vote on granting Chris Hinkle a special use permit, allowing him to purchase the building located at 558-560 E. Broadway in Alton where he hopes to move his business, Grand Piasa Body Art & Art Supply.

Hinkle has jumped through many hoops throughout this strenuous process to go through all the steps necessary to purchase the nearly abandoned building across the street from Jacoby Arts Center. In April, the Plan Commission voted against Hinkle’s request for a tattoo parlor to be added to the amendment in order to allow such business in the C-4 district. A couple weeks later, the City Council overrode that recommendation and voted in favor of Hinkle’s request, allowing a tattoo parlor to be added to the C-4 district of businesses on E. Broadway.

Much of that decision was based off of the feedback received from the community. Hinkle managed a well-organized campaign, getting many Broadway business leaders on board and other local supporters together to speak out in favor of Piasa Body Art being allowed to open for business at that location. The campaign worked, the Alderman voted and the amendment was reformed.

For Hinkle, the next step is obtaining a special use permit, which basically allows specific exceptions to zoning regulations. The permit will have guidelines as far as signage, paint, added structures and more.

Roughly three weeks ago, at the last Plan of the Commission meeting, a tie vote of 5-5 sent a negative recommendation to the City Council, proposing that they do not grant Hinkle with a special use permit to purchase and refurbish the building and move his tattoo and art supply business into the building.

At the same meeting, the Alton City Council will also vote on the future of Alton Main Street. Alton Main Street is a non-profit organization that collaborates with other Main Street organizations in other areas to build relationships and share figures, ideas and other planning insights. Some budget amendments, including employee layoffs and Main Street's funding will be voted on.

Executive Director Sarah McGibany encourages locals that have been impacted by Alton Main Street in any way to join the “Save Main Street” campaign. Whether it was being involved in the volunteer opportunities, the beautification of the city or even just attending one of the many events that Alton Main Street is involved in, Main Street needs support. Full details and instructions can be found at: [www.DowntownAlton.com/SaveMainStreet](http://www.DowntownAlton.com/SaveMainStreet).

*Alton Main Street: To engage the community in the continued renewal of our historic downtown district and Mississippi River heritage by cultivating an attractive center of economic and social activity.*