

Spartanburg City Council approves first reading for ban on open carry of firearms at City-permitted events

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14



Ban would apply to permitted events held on public property within city limits

At their meeting on Monday, Spartanburg City Council voted unanimously in favor of a first reading of an ordinance to bar open carry of firearms at all events on public property requiring a permit within city limits. The move comes after a change in state law allowing those who've obtained a concealed weapon permit to carry their firearms openly.

According to City Attorney Bob Coler, the new law gives local governments the option of enacting such restrictions. In a memo to City Council, Coler wrote "in light of the fact the City has offered and allowed organized festivals, parades and other special events on its sidewalks, streets and public right of ways, the City deems it is in the best interest of the City of Spartanburg and its citizens to exercise its authority given to it by the state law to prohibit the open carrying of firearms during permitted events." The ordinance will require a second reading by City Council before going into effect.

Also at Monday's meeting, Council gave final approval to a development agreement for a new commercial development to be located at the site of the former Sunshine Inn at 578 N Church St. Called "The Hub," the development will feature 16,800 square feet of mixed-use restaurant and retail spaces, bringing new life to a Northside parcel once plagued by crime and becoming the first fully commercial development so far in the Northside's redevelopment.

As part of the the development agreement the City will spend \$20,000 on improvements to the sidewalk and to make the intersection at N Church and Evins streets safer for pedestrians.

Additionally, the City plans to provide a three-year rent subsidy for tenants leasing the retail spaces available in the development at \$1 per square foot. However, if a business is minority-owned, Northside resident-owned, or owned by graduates of the Northside's StartMe business accelerator program the City's Amplify business accelerator program, then that subsidy will be \$2 per square foot. According to City Manager Chris Story, the total cost for the subsidies should around \$50,000, which would be well below the tax revenue the space is expected to generate for the City.