



Out-of-control parties target of proposed ordinance

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A proposed Carson City code addition would hold property owners responsible for illegal activities that transpire during wild parties held in their dwellings.

The Board of Supervisors will hear the Social Host Liability Ordinance during their meeting Thursday.

"If you allow something to go on in your facility and it's against the law, you're going to be held responsible - and that's the way it should be," said Mayor Marv Teixeira, about the proposal.

The ordinance is modeled after similar laws enacted around the country as a way to deter out-of-control gatherings where underage drinking and any use of illegal drugs occurs.

While there are already laws targeting the people conducting the activities, the idea behind this type of ordinance is to make it difficult for people to find a place to behave this way because the owner, lessee or person who has control of the property will be punished, city officials say.

"It's another tool," said District Attorney Noel Waters. "It will make property owners more cognizant of what's going on in their premises, because ultimately they're responsible."

Government officials in Ventura County, Calif., produced one of the model ordinances, which focuses on curbing binge drinking among teens and young adults.

A 2005 telephone survey cited by that county's health department states that a significant number of residents there ages 25 and younger binge drink: Nearly 30 percent in their own homes and 45 percent in someone else's house parties.

Sheriff Ken Furlong said the Carson City ordinance also could be used to control local gang activities because many members are teens and young adults and have these types of gatherings. Deputies were called out to two of these regular party spots in the city on Saturday night, he said.

"I think this is going to be a very useful," Furlong said. "Often, we go to the same houses time and time again."

People who "conduct, aid, allow, permit or condone such gatherings are maintaining a public nuisance and subject to escalating civil fines" if the rules are broken repeatedly during a 12-month span, according to the proposal.

The first violation would result in the property owner or manager having to pay a fine of \$250. The second violation would cost \$500, and the third and subsequent violations would cost \$1,000 each.

Along with the fine would be the added cost of emergency response to the scene by law enforcement, fire or ambulance if it's required for at least the second time within a year.

This will be the first reading of the ordinance, it won't be adopted by supervisors until it is subject to a second reading.

Officials also emphasized the ordinance isn't a response to the fatal shooting last month during a teen party in the northeast section of the city.

The anti-meth coalition started talking about it months ago, Teixeira said. And the home on Longridge Drive wasn't a gang hangout or considered a trouble spot, Furlong added.

If you go

What: Carson City Board of Supervisors meeting

When: 8:30 a.m. Thursday

Where: Sierra Room, Community Center, 851 E. William St.

- Contact reporter Terri Harber at tharber@nevadaappeal.com or 882-2111, ext. 215.

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