

Waukegan mayor seeks ban on liquor sales at gas stations

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BY DAN MORAN

Gas stations in Waukegan would be prohibited from selling liquor if the mayor of the north suburb has his way.

"It makes no sense to provide alcohol at the same location where people are fueling their vehicles," Robert Sabonjian said. "I believe, as do many in Waukegan, that it sends the wrong message about driver responsibility and public safety."

If approved by the suburb's city council, the ban could be implemented over the course of a year.

Though the mayor also serves as the city's liquor commissioner and can administer licenses, only the council can legislate the number of licenses available and in what categories. The city has six licenses assigned to businesses that sell gas and have a convenience store.

According to city attorney Newton Finn, liquor licenses are assigned on an annual basis, and the council can legislate a change in which businesses are eligible. "It's a year-to-year thing," he said.

Sabonjian said he feels selling liquor at gas station convenience stores "gives a small minority [of businesses] an economic advantage over all the other stations that rely on gas and non-liquor goods to make a living. It is a matter of both public safety and fundamental fairness to all service station owners."