

Clemson council puts Sunday alcohol in voters' hands

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — Clemson City Council has approved second and final reading of an ordinance seeking a November referendum to allow voters to determine whether to legalize Sunday alcohol sales in grocery and convenience stores throughout the city.

Last week, council voted 4-2 to approve first reading of the ordinance with council members Mark Cato and June Hay in opposition and Mayor J.C. Cook not in attendance.

Council passed second reading Monday night with a 4-0 vote. Cato, Cook and Hay did not attend the meeting.

Four years ago, Clemson voters approved a referendum question allowing local restaurants to purchase a permit to sell alcohol for on-premise consumption on Sundays. Permits are issued for the entire year or for specific days, depending upon the request of the business, and local restaurants are allowed to purchase a permit to sell alcohol for that purpose on Sundays.

Cook said when council members considered the issue four years ago, they were approached by a group of local restaurant owners and managers who asked that the question be put on the ballot. The mayor said the latest request came from a convenience store and would impact convenience and grocery stores, in addition to restaurant Sunday alcohol sales.

City attorney Mary McCormac said South Carolina's Alcoholic Bev-

SEE ALCOHOL, PAGE A5



ALCOHOL: 'No' vote would stop Sunday sales

Clemson voters will decide in November whether grocery and convenience stores will join restaurants throughout the city in being allowed to sell alcohol on Sundays.

erage Control Act sets forth only two referendum questions available to Clemson voters — the question asked four years ago regarding only sales for Sunday on-premises consumption and the question regarding on-premises consumption and sales for off-premises consumption.

"The reason only the on-premises question was asked before appears to have been because that was the only request presented to council," McCormac said last week. "The current request only addressed sales for off-premises consumption. But to present that request to the voters,

we have to present the joint question."

The city attorney added that voters will be asked to vote "yes" or "no" on the joint question. If "no" is the answer, she said neither type of sale will be permitted on Sundays.

The referendum will be on the ballot before city voters in the Nov. 6 general election. Two readings of the ordinance were required, and the special meeting was required in order to submit the referendum request to the Pickens County Office of Registration and Elections prior to the noon deadline Wednesday.

goliver@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6687
Follow on Twitter @JournalGO