

# Council votes to establish entertainment oversight committee

By Justin Sayers

The Tombstone Epitaph

The Tombstone City Council voted last Tuesday to establish an Entertainment District Oversight Committee in an effort to facilitate potential downtown expansion.

The committee will consist of Ward 2 Councilman Donald Taylor, Ward 4 Councilman Herbert Linn, City Marshal Billy Cloud and four volunteer members from the community.

The vote was approved 3-0 by Ward 1 Councilman Armando Villa, Ward 3 Councilwoman Stacey Korbeck-Reeder and Mayor Stephen Schmidt. Taylor and Linn abstained due to their involvement with the government commission.

"It's just an oversight committee on activities within the entertainment district," Schmidt said at the meeting. "We're trying to form a committee before everyone starts fighting."

The group will oversee the approval and extension of liquor licenses and facilitate permanent district boundary expansions, among other duties. The committee will help with the development of the downtown district, namely Allen Street.

By developing and expanding the downtown district, the town hopes that visitors will stay in Tombstone longer than a few hours.

"We have several groups and several organizations that want to expand the entertainment district downtown," Linn said. "We're going to be a committee that they can come to first and we will try to keep them on a straightened arrow."

According to a recent survey done by the Cochise County Tourism Council, roughly 68 percent of Tombstone visitors said that they only intended to stay for the day.

Local group Tombstone Forward has made recent efforts to entice visi-

tors to stay overnight by promising to keep businesses open later and to provide evening entertainment for tourists.

Tombstone Forward will hold their first event, Tombstone at Twilight, tomorrow, featuring shopping, dining and entertainment events beginning at 5 p.m., according to their Facebook page.

With the town stuck in a financial rut, the Tombstone City Council hopes that capitalizing on tourism will help alleviate some of the economic concerns.

"The city has serious financial problems and we need a lot more people to get involved to generate more income," Councilman Linn said. "You can generate more income by making the city prettier and more tourist friendly and we're on the right track."

Another way that the city council hopes to capitalize on tourism is by attracting visitors from adjacent cities.

According to CCTC representa-

tive Steve Troncale, Benson is set to become a regularly scheduled Amtrak stop. The town hopes to promote Tombstone by placing flyers with lodging deals in Amtrak offices in an effort to encourage visitors to make the 20-plus-mile-trek south.

The group has also discussed the possibility of providing shuttle services from Benson to Tombstone, according to Troncale.

With the recent track record of the Tombstone City Council, some residents are apprehensive that government intervention will discourage people from volunteering.

Tombstone Forward volunteer Mike Carrafa said that the organization's meetings are calm and productive and that they have done just fine without the oversight committee.

"The government oversees this town too much and it's choked this town into nothing," Carrafa said. "They want to control the streets too much. Every time

the government seems to get involved in this town, they seem to stifle whatever's going on. Why do you need a committee to oversee what's working?"

Despite these concerns, Carrafa will continue to stay involved with Tombstone Forward. He said that he's planning an event for the July 4 weekend called Doc HolliDAYS, which will have multiple activities tailored to children.

Planned events include a gun drawing competition, in which competitors can fire guns filled with blanks.

"We have to make sure the kids enjoy their days here because that's the future of the town," he said.

In terms of the Entertainment District Oversight Committee, the next step is to wait and see how many members of the community come forward to volunteer, according to Councilman Taylor. There is no time frame on when the seven-person committee will be established.