

Concerns about the Islamic Center of Tucson shut down liquor license from being approved to Beer Nerds, a new bar planning to open across the street.

At the Tucson City Council meeting on Sept. 17, Micah Blatt, owner of Mr. Heads and the Drunken Chicken, requested to transfer a liquor license in preparation for opening a new business, Beer Nerds, which will be located on Tyndall Avenue, 357 feet away from the ICT, according to Blatt.

The city council members recommended that the state liquor board deny the transfer request.

Blatt claimed that the restaurant wouldn't operate as a bar with bar hours that go well into the early morning, but normal restaurant hours during the day.

Maria Molina, a spokesperson for the ICT, voiced her concerns for approval of the license and a new restaurant serving alcohol opening 65 feet away from the center, according to Molina.

“Due to the frequency of problems that ICT has encountered involving intoxicated students and tenants of adjacent apartment buildings, we feel at fear that an approval of a liquor license transfer at this location would result in an increase of disturbance and overall unsafe atmosphere,” said Molina.

There have been number of incidents recently near or aimed directly towards the ICT that makes this request for a liquor license daunting for Molina and the center.

“As the location is already inundated with dangerous incidents resulting from inebriated students and tenants, the Islamic Center of Tucson respectfully requests that the Beer Nerd liquor license transfer be declined. It is an establishment incompatible with safeties needed to host the

large numbers of children that we teach on a weekly basis, and conflicting with the overall neighborly sense of harmony.”

Beer Nerds restaurant would be an asset to the neighborhood and not a nuisance or cause more disruptive behavior to come to the ICT, according to Blatt.

According to [state law](#), a liquor license cannot be issued to a business if that business is within 300 feet of a church or school building with grades K-12.

The initial TPD report states that there are no churches or schools within 300 feet of where the business plans to establish themselves. It also states that the ICT is located 357 feet away from the business, maintaining within state law. According to this report, the ICT center is considered a prayer center, not a church.

“I believe that the reason that the Islamic Center not considered a church is it is considered a prayer center and a cultural but nothing under the definition of a church,” Roger Randolph, Tucson City Clerk said.

Further conversations about whether the ICT was considered a church was also discussed.

“That’s absurd, I’ve been in there [ICT] multiple times observing church services, observing worship services in the center, they hold them multiple times every single day of the week and for us to take the position that that is not a church is probably actionable,” said Kozachik. “How do we define a church if not that. I mean what else do you have to do, to have a steeple or what?”

The liquor license was denied by all city council members and was passed on to the State Liquor Department for a final decision about the approval of the license transfer application.

