

Denial

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would do the same thing in Ward Three," he said. "I think my record speaks for itself as far as alcohol sales."

Said city Business Services Manager Jim DiFiore: "With our findings last council meeting, I believe that we can show that they were intending to sell these items, which are characterized as drug paraphernalia. I think the council has grounds to deny the change of location for this license," he said. He recommended the city do so, saying sale of the items in conjunction with a license to sell beer and wine would constitute a nuisance.

"The Suns have not been good neighbors," said Weekly, long a harsh critic of the two. "We get calls every single day about the problem."

"Where do we begin cleaning up this process?" he asked. He said the problem isn't as bad "in any of these other wards, because those sitting up here would not allow it, would not have it. I'd love to see you take your license and go in one of these other wards. You'd be shut down within a matter of weeks because they're not going to tolerate it."

The problem is not that they sell scouring pads, said Councilman Michael McDonald of Ward 1. "It's the fact that they cut them up. They don't come like that, someone cut those up and they cut them up for a purpose," he said, calling the debate a "common sense" issue.

But Councilman Larry Brown of Ward 4 opposed Weekly because he felt denial would neglect due process.

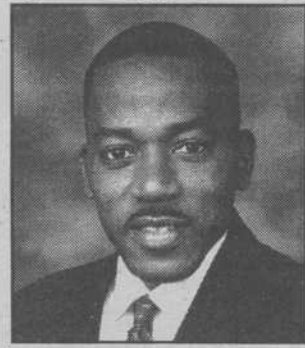
"If there are certain rights of every applicant and every private property owner and there are certain rules that this council has to abide by," said Brown, "we can't start today (to) make them the first one's and say you're it. I think we're going after it the wrong way."

Mayor Oscar Goodman sided with Brown.

"I understand where Councilman Weekly is coming from," the mayor said, but added he is troubled because "there hasn't been some kind of action taken for this activity, which all of a sudden this council is being asked to find so offensive."

"I find it very difficult," he went on, "for us to deny somebody a property interest when our own law enforcement and enforcement people haven't done one thing about it. I find that to be a real problem. There's something really, really wrong happening here."

Ward 2 Councilwoman Lynette Boggs McDonald



LAWRENCE WEEKLY

noted sales of such items at other stores, even swap meets. She said she feared intent could form a basis for denial, and become a precedent-setting "slippery slope" for public policy decisions. She preferred a comprehensive resolution that would regulate all stores that stock the questionable items.

Meanwhile, Councilman Michael Mack of Ward 6 established a theme. He claimed to share Weekly's concerns and to be "quite committed to that cause," but said, "I'm having a hard time wrestling with making a decision up here."

"If it's not good for anybody else's neighborhood, what makes you think it's good for this one?" Weekly asked, reacting to the opinions he was hearing. "It's unfortunate that this council would have this kind of attitude and mentality." To Brown, Weekly said, sharply, "Explain it to the people."

Crosby suggested issuance of a 6-month conditional license that, in theory, would allow the Suns to prove good intentions.

But the council voted 5-2 to deny the application, with Goodman and Brown dissenting.

Jamil Nesson, of mideastern ancestry, was trying to obtain a new license for alcohol sales as well as a new restricted gaming license for his J & D Market at 900 North Martin Luther King Boulevard. His problems started with being across the street from the Andre Agassi Boys and Girls Club, and were exacerbated by selling drug paraphernalia.

He, too, found a formidable opponent in Reese, who said, "I've got to say, it's against everything I believe in, because we're trying to protect our churches, our parks, our boys' club, all the other things that go along with it."

DiFiore said an inspection had revealed "items that we have previously discussed," and described the license request as "a very similar issue." He said Nesson "has been open for business in a convenience store operation for about a year now," stated "these items were out for sale," and, again, recommended denial.

Nesson responded that when told for the first time by inspectors - what the items were for, he took them out. DiFiore said he had asked Nesson why the items were behind his counter for sale and was told, "Because my customers demand them."

Said Weekly, "Many of the convenience stores that we deal with, particularly in this area of town, have been allowed to get away with this stuff for years. It has been swept under the carpet, there has been no enforcement."

Oddly, that was the basis of Goodman's opposition: there had been no arrests, which implied no crimes had been committed. Why, then, he reasoned, should the coun-



RACE MATTERS

Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Cmd. Doug Gillespie outlined the department's community relations efforts last week for members of the Urban Chamber of Commerce's Blue Ribbon Panel on Race. Panelists peppered Gillespie with tough questions about Metro's shaky relationship with minority communities during the meeting at the Reed Whipple Cultural Center. The panel has held four race forums.

cil act punitively, denying an application based on the store's inventory?

But Weekly wanted to know if not with the cases being considered now, "then where do we begin? If I'm not doing the right thing by starting somewhere," he said, angrily, "then I guess I don't need to be here."

"You do have to be here," Goodman responded, ex-

pressing respect and admiration for Weekly's position on the issue. However, he then proceeded to answer the councilman's barely rhetorical question, still resolute about his own stance. "I think we have to begin with the laws," he said.

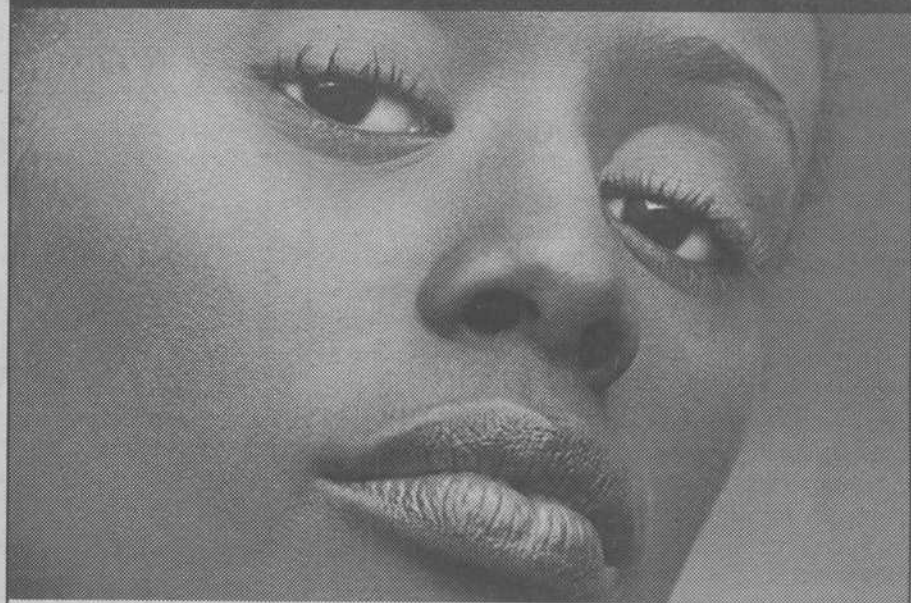
"I believe that what you're trying to accomplish is the ultimate good," the mayor continued, "But at the same

time I have to vote against it, because I don't believe that the laws that presently exist support you."

Undaunted, Weekly reiterated an exchange during the council meeting two weeks ago. Michael McDonald had been asked how he felt about a store carrying these items being located in his district.

"What did you say?" (See Denial, Page 4)

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