

Liquor hearings continued to Feb. 25

By Jessica Hackett

Thu Jan 31, 2008, 02:10 PM EST

From the Easton, MA, Journal.

Three stores whose employees sold alcohol to minors will have to wait another month to find out whether they will be disciplined while the town investigates whether there was a procedural error in the police department's bi-annual alcohol compliance checks.

Owners of Pop's Fine Wines and Liquors, Dynasty Convenience Shops and Tedeschi's Food Shops appeared in front of the board of selectmen Monday night, Jan. 28. All three owners admitted their employees served alcohol to a minor. However, Robert Hamalian, owner of Pops Fine Wines and Liquors, said the police department failed to notify the businesses they would be conducting compliance checks during the month of October. Hamalian said an announcement was published in the Easton Journal Friday, Nov. 2 announcing the checks for November, but said the department checked his store Oct. 30. Police also conducted checks of Tedeschi's and Dynasty Convenience Shops the same day.

"It says in the article they were going to happen in November. The police conducted on Oct. 30. That's not fair," Hamlian said.

Easton Police Sgts. Gary Sullivan and Mark Ferretti said they worked with a Stonehill College student to conduct the checks. Ferretti said they gave the 19-year-old Stonehill College student \$30 to buy a 30-pack of Bud Light at Pop's. The clerk did not ask the student for his license and let him buy the beer. Ferretti said the clerk admitted to serving the student. Selectmen Chairman Colleen Corona said the town should be following the correct procedures, but said stores should not need a warning from police to start checking people's identification.

"I totally understand (the possible procedural error) but I would hope stores wouldn't need notice to check IDs," Corona said.

Hamalian said the store has been in Easton for 14 years and this is the first time an employee sold to a minor. Steve Allen, owner of Dynasty Convenience Shops, also said it was the first time his business was caught in a sting. He said he was "embarrassed" to be in that position. Allen said he requires all of his employees to be TIPS trained since the incident occurred. TIPS training teaches employees how to prevent intoxication, drunken driving and how to recognize and prevent potential alcohol-related problems. He also said he changed his company's bylaws so that any employee caught in a sting would immediately be fired. Easton police said the clerk at Tedeschi's tried to let the Stonehill College student borrow \$3 after he said he did not have enough money to purchase the alcohol and after she asked the student if he had identification. The student said he told her he did not have identification and told her his real birthday. Elizabeth Parveg, owner of Tedeschi's, said the clerk was TIPS certified. Parveg also said if an employee asks for the person's identification, the person conducting the compliance check is supposed to leave. The student told selectmen he did not leave because the clerk persuaded him to borrow \$3 after he made repeated attempts to leave the store.

Parveg said the clerk told her she recognized the student from a previous job at Stonehill College. Parveg said she has not disciplined the clerk because she wanted to hear both sides of the story before she did anything.

"How much more can I do?" Parveg said. "It was bad judgment on her part and she admits it."

Selectman John Haederle said he was bothered by Parveg's lack of responsibility as a business owner.

"If someone is going to lose their job, I feel like I should get the story from both sides before I make that determination," Parveg said.

Selectmen voted to continue all three hearings until Monday, Feb. 25.