



Live Music in Mount Pleasant

Many Mount Pleasant residents were disappointed that the “Demonstrators Rally for Live Music” in the December issue did not provide balanced reporting on the “live music” discussion.

No one in Mount Pleasant is opposed to live music. But many are opposed to a recent proposal that several restaurants include live music, dancing, a cover charge and stay open until 2 or 3 a.m. every night.

Mount Pleasant is a residential community with a very small commercial strip. Walk along Mount Pleasant Street, and you’ll see a mix of restaurants, stores and services. We have a pharmacy, a dentist, tax and legal services, a hardware store, bakery and other services that are part of neighborhood life. It is a vibrant main street that few neighborhoods can match. We do not want it become another night-club district.

We see what has happened to Adams Morgan, which used to be a place where Latinos from the entire region went to enjoy a papusa or churros. Most of those Latino business owners have been forced out by higher rents, which only bars and clubs can pay.

We know that live music costs money: musicians must be paid and advertising purchased. These expenses can only be met by significantly increasing the sale of drinks and attracting people from all across the area. This means more cars and more inebriated people in our neighborhood.

We fear the rise in crime that happens around night clubs. The Metropolitan Police say the number of robberies and fights between intoxicated people rises significantly after bars and clubs close.

We believe, however, that we can have live music without inviting all the problems that night clubs attract. Real concerns must be addressed. We want a balance between the business plans of several restaurants and the best interest of the neighborhood.

The current discussions about how to bring live music to Mount Pleasant are constructive. While far apart at the beginning, those involved are beginning to agree that those restaurants with a liquor license that want to add live music could do so.

Longtime residents appreciate the work that the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Alliance has done to keep our neighborhood a celebration of cultures; a place where businesses are thriving and families safe. We welcome new ideas from groups like Hear Mount Pleasant. But we must work together in the best interest of Mount Pleasant.

~ Luis Mendez and Marika Torok

Editor’s Note: The writer of “Demonstrators Rally for Live Music” called Marika Torok several times for comment. Torok did not return calls. ■

