

Saturday, July 21. 2007

Blacklist of habitual drunkards

It seems a blacklist has been circulated by Mayor David Felinton's office to downtown Huntington West Virginia establishments that sell alcohol, demanding that the Huntington merchants to refrain from selling alcohol to 19 "habitual drunkards" who are pictured in the document. What happens if one of those "habitual drunkards" in Huntington goes to the ACLU and claims they are being harassed by the city for the symptoms of a disease.. and the term "habitual drunkard" is a synonym for alcoholism. It seems the city is doing its best to provoke litigation. At one time the term "habitual drunkard" was a medical diagnosis. The term "habitual drunkard" is a term taken from the old mental hygiene law. At one time it was legal to commit a drunk to the state hospital just to get them sobered up. The diagnostic term "habitual drunkard" is no longer in use by modern legal or medical professionals in west Virginia and this has been the case since the 1960's as it has been replaced by the diagnostic term "chronic alcoholism". An outdated diagnostic label is none the less a diagnostic label and the city is not qualified to diagnose anyone, much less maintain a medical blacklist. Diagnostic labels are best left to the medical professionals at the health department. The reason that the detox unit at the state hospital does not publish pictures or list names of those drunks in the rehab unit is because HIPAA medical privacy rights are applicable to substance abusers. The city currently maintains a blacklist of alleged "habitual drunkards" in much the same way as Senator McCarthy maintained a list of alleged communists. I believe the harm caused by blacklisting drunks does more to harm our city than any nuisance the drunks can possibly create. Drunks are merely obnoxious in downtown Huntington West Virginia but they pose no serious threat once you get past the smell. It seems kind of heartless to me. If these people really are the "habitual drunkards" that Dr. David Felinton has diagnosed them to be, then our alleged Mayor should instruct the city attorney to obtain a court order to commit the alleged drunks to a detox facility. I believe that ain't going to happen, because that requires far more compassion that has ever existed in city hall. The problem is not the homeless or the prostitutes. The problem in this town is the blasted dope dealers. Get rid of the dope dealers and the peripheral crime associated with addiction will dry up with the dope supply. It seems that city hall desires to give the appearance that the towns problems are being fixed by a series of kneejerk reactions that are in reality a superficial political show.

Posted by Huntington West Virginia in Huntington WV at 14:23