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CRA to address downtown noise concerns

BY RYAN REITERMAN, reiterman@breezenewspapers.com

The Community Redevelopment Agency wants the downtown area to be a place where people can live, work and be entertained. But the residents and the entertainment are having a hard time living together.

During the CRA meeting Tuesday night, several residents and business owners expressed concern over noise levels from area bars.

Businesses want a decibel level and a distance from the noise established. Currently, businesses are being cited for being too loud, but are not given a decibel reading. The citations are then thrown out in court when there is no evidence of how loud the business was.

Several business owners said they want to be “good neighbors”. By having a set decibel level and distance from the business, bar owners can use their own decibel meters to test if they are in violation. If they find they are too loud, they can have the band turn down their amplifiers before the police are called.

Suzanne Kuehn, CRA executive director, said she would get a group of residents and business owners together to measure the decibel levels and distance, and try to come to an agreement. The issue was tabled and will be addressed again after the group conducts its field study.

In other businesses Tuesday, the CRA Board approved to set up a meeting with City Council to address various issues — something that has never been done.

The CRA wants to discuss tax increments, the permitting process and update council on the CRA expansion.

“I think it’s something we should do regularly,” said CRA Boardmember Don Heisler.

The board decided to include the Planning and Zoning board and hire an outside moderator.

Councilmember Dolores Bertolini, who attended the CRA meeting Tuesday, said getting the three groups together is a great idea. She said she was unaware of the CRA’s concerns about the permitting process, and by getting the groups together she hopes they can work those issues out.

