

Springboro joins in ban against gaming cafes

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SPRINGBORO — Ohio cities, like Springboro, regulating Internet sweepstakes cafes could be blocked from enforcing their local laws later this year.

On Thursday, Springboro City Council approved zoning regulations for the new businesses where customers play electronic games with the potential to win cash prizes in sweepstakes. The city already has business license and tax rules for the new businesses offering “games of chance,” viewed by some as gambling.

Laws aimed at regulating the growing Internet sweepstakes cafe business, already passed in other Ohio cities would be pre-empted by House Bill 195, according to a lawyer specializing in Ohio gambling law.

“They can’t regulate it,” said Mike Zatezalo, head of the gaming section for Kegler, Brown, Hill & Ritter in Columbus. “If this law passes, it will be regulated by the state casino commission.”

The state law would allow communities to ban the electronic game parlors. Lakewood, a city west of Cleveland, banned them in April.

“We’re just being proactive. If they overrule us, they overrule us,” Mayor John Agenbroad said.

Springboro City Council voted Tuesday for zoning regulations, also allowing sexually oriented businesses to be located in the city’s employment center district, where Internet sweepstakes cafés would allowed. During research on the café regulations, the “omission” of sexually oriented businesses from the local zoning code, updated in 1996, was discovered, according to a memo to City Council.

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