C-P approves move to outlaw ‘Rush’

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The Metro Council’s Finance and Executive Committee on Wednesday approved a proposal to outlaw a variety of chemical substances commonly known as “Rush” or “Lockeroom,” except for certain uses in industry and medicine.

The proposed ordinance would make illegal possession or use of the substances — sometimes referred to as “the poor man’s cocaine” — punishable by a jail term of up to six months, a fine of between $300 and $500, or both.

Councilman Lank Corsentino said he thought the proposed ordinance did not provide sufficient punishment for those who sell the chemicals and recommended that city-parish officials work up additional legislation to provide for revoking the occupational licenses of offending businesses.

Marcus Wright, director of the city parish Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, said the board already has the authority to revoke or suspend liquor licenses in such cases.

The proposed ordinance is scheduled to go before the full council for a public hearing and vote next Wednesday.

The committee declined to make a recommendation on a proposed ordinance that would outlaw the use of skateboarders and roller skaters “on any city-parish-owned parking area, upon the grounds of any city-parish-owned facility or building, or upon sidewalks adjacent to any city-parish building.”

Youthful skating enthusiasts have protested the proposed ordinance, and Councilwoman Lynda Imes offered to work with them on possible additional revisions to the proposal before a public hearing and vote next week.

The committee also declined to make a recommendation on proposed amendments to the city-parish parking ordinance designed to exempt churchgoers from parking restrictions during church services.

The council recently approved a waiver of parking restrictions during Sunday church services, and Parish Attorney Lynn Williams said at the time that he would have to draft amendments to the parking code to make what the council had already voted to do “more legal.”

Williams said Wednesday that before he can make any further progress he needs to know precisely what it is the council members want — a blanket exemption for all churches or specific exemptions for specific churches where those attending services park illegally because there are no adequate off-street parking facilities nearby.

Imes favored specific exemptions, Corsentino favored a blanket exemption and Councilman Gordon Curry said he could go along with specific exemptions but that the list would probably have to be amended, constantly as new problem areas are discovered. The committee came to no conclusion.

The committee also deferred action on a series of proposed amendments to the city-parish Code of Governmental Ethics intended to bring local ethics commission enforcement procedures in line with constitutional due process.

The committee did approve a $26,000 settlement to a $1 million lawsuit filed by Pace Concerts after a performance by Ozzy Osbourne was canceled at the Riverside Centroplex.

And committee members were told by Council Administrator-Treasurer Don Nijoka that the council will have to take some action soon on a tax dedicated to paying the bills of the Consolidated Road Lighting District, which takes in much of the unincorporated portion of the parish.

Nijoka said the current 7-mill property tax expires this year and will have to be placed on the ballot for renewal. Nijoka said the council must consider that the tax at its current level does not generate enough money to pay for the operations of the district.

Nijoka said that a 12.91-mill tax would be necessary to completely fund the operations of the district this year, and that a tax of as much as 16 mills could be necessary within the next five years.

SEE RUSH, 2B