City Council members repealed Sunday alcohol sale restrictions a second time Tuesday night after more than two hours of arguing with supporters and opponents.

In the 4-1 vote, the same four members who supported repeal June 27 supported it again before a 50-person crowd.

Mayor Dud Lastrapes said after the meeting he will sign the repeal and other liquor law changes Wednesday or Friday, making them effective this Sunday.

City Police Chief Gary Copes said he is glad to finally be "finished with it."

"It's time to move on to other things," Copes said after the council supported repeal with only Council President F.V. "Pappy" Landry opposing removing Sunday restrictions.

The repeal will allow any business already licensed to sell alcohol — grocery stores, bars, restaurants, hotels and others — to makes sales between 11 a.m. and midnight Sunday.

The law prior to amendments allowed only restaurants, hotels if to guests and non-profit groups to sell on Sundays.

Landry said some residents get relief from noisy bars only on Sundays and complained the repeal is only because Copes said limitations can't be enforced.

"If we can't write an enforceable ordinance, then shame on us. That's pitiful," Landry said.

The Rev. Perry Sanders, local First Baptist Church leader and Sunday closing supporter, said the council's vote is "saddening that they don't have better insight."

"I don't feel anybody here listened to people. Everyone speaking in favor were bar owners," Sanders said, adding that he thinks the ordinance was "brutally administered" and that he will seek a legal opinion on whether amendments were handled properly.

Council member Nancy Mounce said no city ordinance she has handled before has ever been "so poorly handled" and that it was issued in a "halfhazard fashion."

John Hagleman, a resident supporting continued restrictions, told the council there "seems to be a lack of organization as to how amendments are proposed and handled."

He said, when the council was 90 minutes into its discussion of non-Sunday closing amendments, that people in the audience were confused.

The amendments the council read were the same ones they approved 4-1 on June 27. Lastrapes said he wants a means of noise control added to city laws such as keeping bar doors closed and an open container rule that would stop street (See Liquor, page 6)
drinking, such as in the “Strip” area.

Lastrapes said the Sunday limitations were not stopping alcohol sales on Sundays or keeping bars closed anyway and that now the city can concentrate on getting more police officers and on alcohol crackdown programs.

Simon, voting in support of repeal, said, “Let’s be honest about it. There are bars now in Lafayette selling alcohol whether it be legal or illegal.”

He said he would be the first to bring the amendments back to the table if there are any problems with Sunday openings.

And Mounce demanded a report from Copes in 30 days on any increases in criminal activity or disturbances because of openings.

Sanders said a month is no time to measure the increases and that the council members won’t change their decision on repeal.

And, he said, other council members supported repeal before even hearing opponents’ arguments.

Mounce replied that she had not decided until after the arguments were made.

Scott Frazier, a local attorney opposing repeal, said bar owners were “trying to ramrod this thing through and they got the chief of police on their side for whatever reason I don’t know.”

John Morgan, a local nightclub performer, said it is bars’ constitutional right to open at anytime it desires and that bar owners were being friendly to approve some closing restrictions.

Frazier contended that Morgan’s arguments were a “selfish view of freedom” and that the Supreme Court has upheld alcohol sale limitations as constitutional.

Frazier added that Copes could not enforce the law because it is too lenient in comparison to what state laws allow municipalities to restrict.

Sanders told the council during the meeting, “I don’t understand how in the world you can open the faucet any wider and let a little more (alcohol) flow.”

He told the council that supporters of repeal “would never have his support” in another election.

Council member Jan Heymann said that whatever the council decided would not make the Strip any worse than neighbors already complain about and said three of the six bars there already open on Sundays.

John Trahan, a bar owner, complained that churches, being non-profit, are exempt from restrictions while bars are limited, but that church groups are the ones fighting repeal of restrictions.

Sanders said non-affiliated residents don’t want bars open on Sundays either and that beliefs that only religious groups want restrictions is “a bunch of baloney.”