

On Tuesday night, June 2, the Franklin Common Council voted 5-1 to suspend both the Class B combination license and the entertainment and amusement license for The Irish Cottage. The suspension is scheduled to begin this September and will remain in effect until October 1.

The Tragedy

The incident occurred in November 2022, when Jim Riegling and his dog, Poppy, were struck and killed on Lovers Lane in Franklin. Authorities identified the driver responsible for the crash as Leonel Molina Rios.

A Plea for Accountability

The decision to suspend the pub's licenses followed a moving public comment session during Tuesday's council meeting. Debra Riegling, the victim's widow, stood before the council to urge them to hold the establishment accountable for its role in the tragedy.

Riegling argued that The Irish Cottage had overserved Molina Rios prior to the crash, directly contributing to the circumstances that led to the loss of her husband.

"My world has been torn upside down, our future together is gone. Most days I don't know how I put one foot forward," Riegling stated during the meeting. She pressed the council members to consider the gravity of the situation, adding, "The community must know what you are doing to hold the bar and bartenders accountable for what you feel is a fair price for the murder of my husband."

Council Action

Following the public comments, the Common Council moved into a closed session to deliberate the matter. Upon their return, the council members moved forward with the vote to impose the 30-day suspension.

As the community prepares for the upcoming suspension, the case serves as a somber reminder of the responsibilities held by local establishments and the profound, lingering impact such tragedies have on the families affected.