

**13. How can Red Bank get more good restaurants and shops, if we don't sell and develop the old middle school site?**

The paucity of good restaurants and interesting retail shops in Red Bank has **zero** to do with the undeveloped status of the old Red Bank Middle School site. Red Bank already offers abundant empty, vacant or rundown commercial sites in downtown, ready and waiting for investment and rejuvenation. Two other city shortcomings have been the main barriers.

First, the City's antiquated alcohol ordinance long has been a well-known preventative to the establishment of more unique restaurants, brew pubs, taverns, and sports bars. Under this ordinance, alcohol would have been prohibited at any restaurants that might want to build at the old middle school site, because the site is surrounded by churches which block any private entrepreneur's desire to serve alcohol.

On November 2, 2021, the Red Bank Board of Commissioners voted 4-1 to approve the proposed modernized beer ordinance. The modernized ordinance eliminates the distance restriction and the visibility screen requirements, and removes the prohibitions against dancing and billiards where alcohol is served. Thus, the long-term opportunity is improved for interesting new restaurants and social establishments throughout Red Bank.

Second, Red Bank does not offer a reliable, concentrated customer base for additional restaurants and interesting retail shops. Red Bank is a **service economy**; thus our citizens have become accustomed over decades to do our retail shopping in Hixson or Chattanooga. Red Bank currently offers little to attract, concentrate and hold an interactive customer base year-round.

Our *Save Red Bank Central Park* movement contends that creating a 12-acre 1<sup>st</sup>-class central park and public commons at the old middle school site will become the **downtown anchor** that draws and sustains an unprecedented customer base and fuels increased attractiveness to retail investors in the Red Bank city center.