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## Cecil closed

### Notorious hotel bar runs dry

By [SHAWN LOGAN](#), SUN MEDIA

One of Calgary's most notorious watering holes was ordered to close yesterday, just hours after a city committee agreed to back a tentative deal to purchase the property.

The Cecil Hotel, at 401 4 Ave. S.E. was ordered to shut its tavern after its business licence was suspended, the same day sources told the Sun the city's land committee had agreed behind closed doors to a tentative deal to purchase the property that has long been on the radar for cops.

The hotel portion of the building can remain open and the owner, Sam Silberman, who couldn't be reached for comment, will have an opportunity to appeal within 30 days.

Mayor Dave Bronconnier said the decision to pull the licence has nothing to do with ongoing talks to purchase the property, a debate that council will have next week.

"These two items are totally separate from one another -- there were very serious breaches that were identified by the Calgary Police Service and other agencies," he said.

"A deal has not been struck yet, that is something city council will have to decide next Monday if we are to entertain a real estate transaction."

The ruling came down after a six-day hearing between Oct. 28 and Nov. 10, with the city's chief licence inspector deciding to pull the business licence over concerns for public safety garnered from a police investigation dating back to 2007.

Police will propose conditions that will alleviate public safety concerns and the city and the hotel's representatives will meet tomorrow to discuss what will be required to reinstate the licence.

But it may all be moot, said Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart, one of the plan's opponents, if the city makes a deal to buy the downtown property, which has already been eyed as a potential spot for affordable housing, a parkade or mixed-use.

"We have even more reason today not to get involved with this right now -- this is a complete waste of taxpayer dollars," she said. "This is an arrogant disregard for the times we are in and the times people are facing."



"We could have dropped taxes by a couple of points with this kind of money laying around."

While no details of the potential deal have been made public, it is expected to cost the city millions of dollars to acquire the property.