



Licensing Board
CITY OF WATERTOWN
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
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BOARD MEMBERS

DONNA B. DOUCETTE
SANDRA KASABIAN HOFFMAN
JOHN LABADINI

ALTERNATE MEMBER
JIM TSEREKAS

MINUTES FEBRUARY 15, 2024

1. Special Licenses

- **Edward Aucoin, St. Patrick's Parish** **Approved 3-0**
Special All Alcohol License, Public Dance and Entertainment
Licenses Dinner/Dance
St. Patrick Parish Hall, 26R Chestnut Street, March 9

Edward Aucoin appeared in support of the application. Chair Doucette reviewed the elements of the application. A St. Patrick's Day dinner dance event, with a small band; hours of 6:00 to 11:00 p.m.; 150 expected attendees, in the 60's age group; floor plan; ABCC-approved wholesaler delivery memo; TIPS certification; designation of alcohol storage area; certificate of liability insurance. Mr. Aucoin stated that there will be two bartenders. Tickets will be sold in advance, with no door sales; and attendees will be adults only, no one under 21. The Building and Fire Departments and Zoning Enforcement Officer had no comment on the application. The Health Department reported no objection. Sgt. Swift stated that the Police Department had no objection to the granting of the licenses requested, subject to the conditions in the department's written report. The Board voted to grant the licenses, subject to the conditions requested by the Police Department.

- **Hellenic Cultural Center** **Approved 3-0**
Special All Alcohol License Church-sponsored dinner dance event
25 Bigelow Avenue March 9

Irene Cobb, function manager for the Hellenic Cultural Center, appeared in support of the application. Chair Doucette reviewed the elements of the application: estimated 100 attendees, of all ages; TIPS certification; crowd manager certification; designation of alcohol storage area; alcohol liability insurance certificate; example of advertising flyer; ABCC-approved wholesaler receipt. Ms. Cobb stated that the event is being organized in conjunction with the parish of St. Sava – a Serbian church. There will be a bartender and crowd manager, and id's will be checked at the bar. The event will not be advertised to the general public. Chair Doucette commented that identification should be checked for each service of alcohol. The Building and Fire Departments had no comment on the application. The Health Department and Zoning Enforcement Officer

reported no objection. Sgt. Swift stated that the Police Department had no objection to the granting of the license requested, subject to the conditions in the department's written report. The Board voted to grant the license, subject to the conditions requested by the Police Department.

- Phil Gordon and Angela Guo Approved 3-0
Special Wine and Malt License Art showcase event
100 Parker Street February 16

Phil Gordon appeared in support of the application. Chair Doucette reviewed the elements of the application: 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.; an estimated 50-100 attendees, in the 21+ age group; Boston's Best Bartending as server; ABCC-approved wholesaler invoice; layout of interior; advertising flyer; designation of alcohol storage area; alcohol liability insurance; TIPS certification. Mr. Gordon stated that there will be no service of food, and the expected attendance is about 50. Id's will be checked at the door. The event is designed as art in motion, and is intended to be an uplift for Black artistry in Greater Boston. There will be two visual artists, and a dj providing music. The Building, Fire, and Health Departments and Zoning Enforcement Officer reported no objection. Sgt. Swift stated that the Police Department had no objection to the granting of the license requested, subject to the conditions in the department's written report. He noted that the crowd manager recommendation was based on the 100 attendees stated in the application and that he could discuss that issue further with the applicant. The Board voted to grant the license, subject to the conditions requested by the Police Department.

- Katherine Herer, Charles River Approved 3-0
Regional Chamber, Inc.
Special Wine and Malt License Business networking reception
66 Galen Street February 27 (snow date: February 28)

Katherine Herer appeared in support of the application. Chair Doucette reviewed the elements of the application: business reception, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; estimated 150 attendees, in the 21+ age group; owner's approval of space use; layout; ABCC-approved wholesaler receipt; TIPS certification, caterer's license; transportation licenses; advertising flyer; certificate of liability insurance. Ms. Herer stated that there is a caterer for the event who has a food permit, and alcohol storage will be in the galley kitchen space; the prep area is shown on the layout. This will be a networking reception, with cocktails and mingling. Piano music will be offered by a Perkins School student. The purpose of the event is to showcase the new building at the site. The event itself will be confined to the lobby, but attendees will be offered the opportunity to view the building, on a case-by-case basis, not group tours. Chair Doucette noted that the alcohol must stay in the lobby. The Building and Fire Departments had no comment on the application. The Health Department and Zoning Enforcement Officer reported no objection. Sgt. Swift stated that the Police Department had no objection to the granting of the license requested, subject to the conditions in the department's written report. The Board voted to grant the license, subject to the conditions requested by the Police Department.

- Jessica Peterson, Arsenal Yards
One Day Entertainment Licenses
130 Arsenal Yards Boulevard

Approved 3-0
‘Pop-up’ Music Series
March 1 – December 31

Jessica Peterson, marketing director, appeared in support of the application. She stated that this request is for a fourth year of the Arsenal Yards pop-up music series. She explained that Arsenal Yards has become a place for community events, including family friendly events, and that the site operator would like to continue the program for this year. No alcohol will be served at the events. Hours during which events will be held are 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. The full set of dates is not yet finalized. The Building, Health, and Fire Departments had no comment on the application. The Zoning Enforcement Officer reported no objection. Sgt. Swift stated that the Police Department had no objection to the granting of the license requested, subject to the conditions in the department’s written report. The Board voted to grant the license, subject to the conditions requested by the Police Department.

2. SDD Group, Inc.
d/b/a Subway
59 Mt. Auburn Street

Continued to March 21, 2024

3. S. Christy’s, Inc.
d/b/a Newton Corner House of Pizza
125 Galen Street
Change of Manager for Common Victualer License

Approved 3-0

4. Danielyan Auto Care LLC
d/b/a Danielyan Auto Service
656 Main Street
Motor Vehicle Repair License

Approved 3-0

5. Comments by Board and Police Department

Sgt. Swift stated that the Police Department had submitted a request for a show cause hearing for the Tori-Jiro restaurant.

The Board began a discussion on possible amendments to its rules and regulations. David Doneski, of City Attorney KP Law, noted that he had e-mailed to the Board members a matrix of abutter notification and publication requirements for various types of licenses. He gave to the members copies of excerpts from the rules and regulations relating to application procedures and notice to abutters and other parties, including schools and churches. Attorney Doneski stated that the regulations include references to abutter notices for common victualer and open air parking licenses, in Section II.A, but there are no other specific requirements stated in the regulations.

Board clerk Gilligan noted she had received communications on the subject of diminishing administrative burdens on applicants.

Chair Doucette commented that part of the reason the Board has required notice to abutters is the density of development in the city and proximity of businesses to residences. She stated that relying on other departments' notices to property owners for permit activities related to a site that will be the subject of a license application may not be the best approach. She also noted that the Board does not use a transfer process for common victualer licenses.

Clerk Gilligan explained that a transfer process is something that businesses are looking to change. As an example, they would like to eliminate a new notice process for an existing restaurant location at Arsenal Yards, or a change in ownership for an existing restaurant site. She stated that another sample situation would be when a new building for which a restaurant is proposed has already been the subject of a notice given in connection with planning and zoning applications.

Chair Doucette stated that there could be an exception for a building, but if there were a situation of new ownership the surrounding residents would want to have notice.

Clerk Gilligan noted that when there are physical changes to a building there can be Health and/or Building Department reviews.

Chair Doucette commented that if the same company changes equipment, etc. within a building, that would not affect the operation there.

Clerk Gilligan pointed out another issue, for alcohol licenses: approval to operate during the general hours range of 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. The question she has received relates to the Board giving general approval for all licenses and only requiring specific approval for exceptions to those hours. She stated that the businesses are looking to avoid multiple applications.

Chair Doucette stated that the Board's obligation is to the citizens of Watertown. She added that a possible option would be including in the applications, in bold lettering, that the recommended request for hours is 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.; and noted that when longer hours are advertised, there will be more neighbors attending the hearing.

Clerk Gilligan noted that such an approach would work with new applicants, but that some existing restaurants didn't understand the option of general hours of operation being broader than they initially intended, so that there is a question of the Board giving a general approval.

Chair Doucette stated that the printed hours on a license are what the Police Department would follow for compliance purposes. She noted there may be license locations where the Board deliberately restricted hours of operation because of neighbor concerns, and that unilaterally opening up hours for all license holders, without a hearing, would not be good. She added that the Board would need to publicize a change giving all common victualer licensees the option of receiving approval for general hours of operation.

Clerk Gilligan noted she had received requests from some residents and restaurant owners about a hearing, so they can be present. She explained that the issues she has been hearing about are not concerning transfers, but the requirement of a hearing for a new owner with no change of operations. The comment is that the hearing is redundant; and some people have said that if they sign a P&S they have to shut down until the Board takes action.

Chair Doucette stated she could foresee applicants saying they would not change anything about a business's operation but then not follow that statement.

Clerk Gilligan noted that for common victualer licenses without alcohol service, the situation is a 'restaurant to restaurant' situation. There is a concern about process requirements if there is no change of operation.

Member Tsekrekas stated he could understand the issue regarding the same type of business continuing to operate at the same location.

Member Kasabian Hoffman asked if a restaurant is not selling alcohol does it only need to file a business certificate, aside from Licensing Board requirements; and clerk Gilligan stated, yes.

Member Tsekrekas asked whether notice to neighbors would be necessary if the situation is just a new business operating under the same arrangements.

Member Kasabian Hoffman commented that maybe neighbors did not need to know.

Chair Doucette stated that neighbors can be in a position where they do want to know, and expressed concern about leaving loopholes in the process. She commented that abutter notices have been required on account of issues the Board has had over the years. She asked if the Board could draft a rule to address the current concerns. Attorney Doneski stated that the Board could do so and that it was a policy decision, with a business interest and a regulatory interest, as well as a resident interest being among the considerations. He added that statutory requirements for publication require a printed publication, whereas non-statutory publication, such as for common victualer licenses, would allow for more notice options. Regarding general hours of operation for alcohol license holders, Attorney Doneski noted that a change of hours would require public notice and a hearing, a formal proceeding.

Clerk Gilligan stated that she believed most license holders are at their maximum intended hours, and there is more likely to be an issue with restaurants at Arsenal Yards that have alcohol licenses.

Chair Doucette commented that the Arsenal Yards businesses could afford abutter notices, and that in order to provide a separate procedure for those businesses the Board would need to follow the example in the current regulations for arts centers.

Clerk Gilligan noted that in the Arsenal Yards area, traditional, residential abutters are not really present. Chair Doucette stated that a regulation would need to be written so as to apply to all such 'no abutter' situations.

Clerk Gilligan and member Tsekrekas asked about a restriction for the Arsenal Yards area only, and Attorney Doneski stated he would have a concern with a special rule that would apply to only certain licenses since it could raise equal protection issues. Member Tsekrekas stated that the Board should conduct a public hearing.

Clerk Gilligan pointed to the procedure for motor vehicle repair licenses, stating that the Board could remove the current legal advertisement requirement. Chair Doucette commented that the application process could be changed to accomplish that. Attorney Doneski noted that such a change should also be part of a public hearing process.

Clerk Gilligan stated that another issue raised in comments she has received is whether to remove the licensing requirement for livery operations, while still retaining the requirement for Police Department inspection of vehicles, etc. She stated that most surrounding towns have followed this approach, and that livery licenses usually relate to an owner vehicle parked in the owner's driveway. She added that livery vehicle operators need some form of local approval in order to get airport access approval from Massport.

Sergeant Swift noted that there is only one taxi medallion currently in use in the city. Clerk Gilligan stated that she was aware that the building where the current taxi license keeps its office is being sold, and asked if there could be a taxi business with no physical address in Watertown.

Chair Doucette stated that a principle of regulations is having rules that will apply now and in the foreseeable future, and that she would like to avoid the Board abdicating its responsibility for monitoring licensed activities. Clerk Gilligan stated that the City Clerk's office could administer any payment process under a livery approval program.

Clerk Gilligan also noted that another issue is the rates for taxi trips, which are set by the Board under the current regulations.

Clerk Gilligan noted that another type of activity for which she has received questions is road race and walkathon events, and whether those could be allowed without a license from the Board if there is no pre-or post-event gathering. She stated that hosts of these events would still deal with the Police Department and DPW with respect to location and street markings.

Clerk Gilligan also pointed to questions on approval of extended restaurant hours for New Year's Eve, and asked whether such approval could be made a part of the overall annual license renewal process. Attorney Doneski stated that he would need to check ABCC advisories on whether such an arrangement would be permissible. Chair Doucette stated that if it were possible an extended hours approval section could be added to the current application form.

Clerk Gilligan stated that another issue on which she has received comments or questions is approval for music in restaurants. She referred to a research project by Boston University regarding entertainment licensing, and stated she had received a request for the Board to reconsider the current practice, referencing the example of the Shiraz restaurant being the only license without a dancing restriction. Chair Doucette stated that there is no ban on dancing, but that dancing is not generally approved because license holders do not want to create the space that would be required to allow for it and therefore do not request approval.

Clerk Gilligan reported that another aspect of music and entertainment licenses that has been questioned is the standard limit on the types of instruments permitted, and that many applicants feel that they are limited by the standard recommendations of the Police Department in that regard. Sergeant Swift noted that the application form could be adjusted to address the issue. Chair Doucette commented that if an applicant has premises with soundproofing and directs the sound away from residential areas, the Board could address the issue.

Member Kasabian Hoffman also noted that in order to host dancing, the business must have sufficient space.

Clerk Gilligan asked about whether the Board would consider adjusting the starting time of its meetings, noting that the start time for planning and zoning meetings has been adjusted to the 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. range. She also noted that the Board had not recently taken a vote to re-confirm or designate a chair, and that there are other boards that make an annual adjustment.

Chair Doucette stated that she would not want to start meetings earlier than 7:00 p.m., and that the Board needed to make its meetings available to the public.

Attorney Doneski stated that he could prepare a draft hearing notice for comment by Board members.

Start: 7:20PM
End: 9:35PM



Donna B. Doucette, Chair

Present: Donna B. Doucette, Sandra Kasabian Hoffman, John Labadini, Jim Tsekrekas
Also Present: Watertown Police Sergeant Kenneth Swift, Attorney David Doneski,
Licensing Board Clerk - Noelle Gilligan

SDD Group, Incorporated
d/b/a Subway
59 Mt. Auburn Street

A hearing was scheduled to be held on the application of SDD Group, Incorporated d/b/a Subway for approval of a change of hours of operation of its premises at 59 Mt. Auburn Street licensed for Common Victualer Service. No one appeared on behalf of the applicant. The Board voted to continue the hearing to March 21, 2024 at 7:15 p.m. in the Philip Pane Hearing Room, Administration Building, 149 Main Street, Watertown, MA.

S. Christy's, Inc.
d/b/a Newton Corner House of Pizza
125 Galen Street

The Watertown Licensing Board met to consider the application of S. Christy's, Inc. d/b/a Newton Corner House of Pizza for approval of a change of manager of its premises at 125 Galen Street licensed for all alcohol common victualer service.

Anastasio Dres, the proposed manager, appeared in support of the application.

Mr. Dres stated that he has been working at the business for about 29 years. The prior manager, his brother, passed away last year.

Sergeant Swift stated that the Police Department had no objection to the proposed change of manager, provided that the conditions stated below were imposed.

After hearing, the Licensing Board voted unanimously to approve Anastasio Dres as manager, subject to the following conditions:

1. The new manager of record, Anastasios Dres, shall ensure that all employees and servers attend and successfully complete an alcohol awareness training program (e.g., TIPS) within 90 days of hire or expiration of certification.
2. All other conditions of the license shall remain in place.

Danielyan Auto Care LLC
d/b/a Danielyan Auto Service
656 Main Street

The Watertown Licensing Board met to consider the application of Danielyan Auto Care LLC d/b/a Danielyan Auto Service for a motor vehicle repair license to be exercised at 656 Main Street.

Vahe Danielyan, an official of the LLC, appeared in support of the application.

Vahe Danielyan stated that he and his brother, Arman, and their father have been mechanics for some time, and have a current business outside of Watertown. They are looking to establish a new business. He explained that they were advised by their accountant and lawyer to switch the business entity to a LLC for purposes of this second business, but the State Secretary's office declined the LLC name because there was another business with the name proposed. Therefore, this operation has been organized as Danielyan Autocare LLC, and will do business as Danielyan Auto Service.

The Building, Fire, and Health Departments and Zoning Enforcement Officer reported no objection to the application.

Sgt. Swift stated that the Police Department had no objection to the granting of the requested license, provided that the conditions stated below were imposed.

After hearing, the Licensing Board voted unanimously to grant the motor vehicle repair license, subject to the following conditions:

1. The hours of operation shall be 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday.
2. The maximum number of vehicles allowed on the premises shall be eight.
3. There shall be no alcoholic beverages on the property.