

TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
BOARD OF LIQUOR LICENSE COMMISSIONERS

Minutes of Public Meeting
October 23, 2023

The meeting of the Talbot County Board of Liquor License Commissioners was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, October 23, 2023. Present were Chairman Jack M. Gottschalk, Commissioner Edward M. Bridges, Jr., Commissioner David A. Fike and Board Secretary Victoria E. Bradley.

OLD BUSINESS

- Upon motion by Commissioner Fike, seconded by Commissioner Bridges, the minutes of the meeting of September 11, 2023, were unanimously approved with corrections.

NEW BUSINESS

JNK Spirits Corporation d/b/a East End Liquors – Application for Transfer of a Class E, Beer, Wine & Liquor License (Off-sale Alcohol Dispensaries)

All those in attendance to testify in the matter were sworn in, (Tejendra Patel and his Attorney Gordon Fronk).

Mr. Fronk gave opening statements with regard to the applicant and the application, explaining the pending purchase agreement of the current business that is set to close at the end of the year.

Commissioner Bridges asked about the outstanding issue of the current business license and Attachment 3. Mr. Fronk testified that the business license was submitted to the Board. Secretary Bradley clarified that the license submitted was for the current license holder, the applicant JNK Spirits Corporation has not submitted a Business License. Mr. Fronk testified that they will be able to provide that after they go to closing on the business purchase. Mr. Fronk also submitted Attachment 3 at this time.

The Chairman asked to discuss the Fire Marshalls inspections paper because the form submitted is illegible due to the form their office using being carbon copies. Mr. Patel testified that there were minor issues noted and they have been taken care of and have been re-inspected and passed by the Fire Marshall.

The Chairman asked the applicant if he has ever run this or any business before. Mr. Patel gave testimony to his prior experience in alcohol sales as a manager of other businesses in Talbot County.

The Chairman asked if the applicant has a bulk transfer permit from the State of Maryland. Mr. Fronk testified that they are working with the current owner to complete this and anticipate it being completed when they go to closing at the end of the year.

Mr. Patel gave further testimony that they will be completely renovating the building including both the exterior and interior of the building.

Commissioner Fike asked if the applicant plans to change what is sold as far as alcohol sales. Mr. Patel said they plan to still sell beer, wine and liquor at this location.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

- Motion made by Commissioner Bridges, seconded by Commissioner Fike that the approval for the transfer of the Class E liquor license will be pending the applicant's submission of a Bulk Transfer Permit, Business License for the applicant as well as pay all fees due. Motion passed unanimously.

Our Greek Market, LLC d/b/a Our Greek Market – Application for a Class A, Beer, Light Wine (Off-sale Alcohol Dispensary, Supermarket and Convenience store)

All those in attendance to testify in the matter were sworn in, (Peter Paris and Lucie Paris)

The Board determined that the applicants original request for a Class E license would not be able to be approved because the business fails to meet the requirements of a Dispensary which requires 75% of the floor space be reserved for alcohol sales. After discussion with the applicant, Board and Inspector it was agreed the application be changed to request a Class A license and the hearing continue.

The Board review the application along with documents that were submitted the day of the hearing including Attachment 3, attendance confirmation letters for the TIPS class, Occupancy Certificate from the Town of Easton and the Fire Marshalls inspection report.

The Chairman asked the applicant to give testimony regarding the Fire Marshall inspection. Mr. Paris testified to the Fire Marshalls certificate and the changes they made to pass the inspection.

The Chairman asked for clarification regarding a letter the Board received from the Comptrollers office asking the Board to hold any license for this business at this time. Secretary Bradley testified that the hold from the Comptroller's office has been released. Mr. Paris explained the issue was the Comptrollers office had an old address for the business and the issue has been resolved.

Mr. and Mrs. Paris asked the board and the inspector about the possibility of offering tastings of wine. Inspector Gottschalk explained that the County Code does not allow this for the class A license. The Board and Inspector informed the applicants to lobby the County Council in order to change the County Code to allow tastings for class A license holders.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

- Motion made by Commissioner Fike, seconded by Commissioner Bridges to approve the Class A liquor license. Motion passed unanimously.

McZak, LLC d/b/a The Ivy Cafe – Application for a Class F-A liquor license
(hotels/restaurants – on-sale, beer, wine and liquor)

All those in attendance to testify in the matter were sworn in, (Jennifer McCrea)

The Board reviewed the application along with documents submitted on the day of the hearing.

The Chairman asked for clarification regarding the letter from the Comptrollers office requesting the Board hold any license being issued at this time. Secretary Bradley testified that she has been in contact with the applicant and the Comptrollers office to resolve this issue and she should have a response from the Comptroller's office releasing the hold any day. Ms. McCrea testified that this was an oversight on her part while she was changing accountants, and all fees were paid.

The Chairman asked the applicant to testify regarding the Fire Marshalls inspection. Ms. McCrea stated that the building has passed all inspections. The Chairman asked if she could submit a Fire Marshalls inspection report clearly stating that the building has passed.

Ms. McCrea gave testimony as to her business set up and her plan for the future regarding the new space and expansion of the business. Ms. McCrea testified she will be serving two meals per day, a light breakfast and lunch to meet the Codes requirements.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

- Motion made by Commissioner Bridges, seconded by Commissioner Fike that the approval of the Class F-A liquor license will be pending the applicant's submission of a clear

approval from the Fire Marshall, release letter from the Comptroller's office as well as pay all fees due. Motion passed unanimously.

Liquor Inspector's Report

Inspector Gottschalk briefed the Board on the Maryland Alcohol Licensing Association (MALA) conference he attended. Inspector Gottschalk encouraged the Board to make room in the budget so they could attend, he believes the Board will benefit greatly from this conference.

Inspector Gottschalk briefed the Board as to ongoing County liquor inspections. There is no new information to report; no major violations occurred.

Old Business

Secretary Bradley informed the Board that Bill 1547 a Bill to amend Chapter 11 of the Talbot County Code (Alcoholic Beverages) regarding operations of Class I Alcohol Dispensary did pass and was approved in September and will be going into effect November 11, 2023. The Board reviewed and discussed the new changes this Bill makes.

There being no further business to discuss, the Board moved to adjourn.

- Upon motion by Commissioner Fike, seconded by Commissioner Bridges, there being no further business to discuss, the Board voted unanimously to close the meeting at 10:57 a.m.