MEETING MINUTES

Liquor Control Board
Wednesday, January 31, 2018 11:00 a.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Room 2750

Members Present:  Mayor Stephen H. Hagerty (Local Liquor Control Commissioner);
Marion Macbeth; Dick Peach

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Grant Farrar, Theresa Whittington

Others Present: Lenice Levy (Good to Go); Dennis Levy (Good to Go);
Rob Spengler (Board & Brush); Drew Valko (Board & Brush); Shannon Valko (Board & Brush);
Michael binsteil (Binny’s); Kevin Gazly (Binny’s);
Greg Versch (Binny’s)

Presiding Member: Local Liquor Control Commissioner Stephen H. Hagerty/Mayor

CALL TO ORDER
The Local Liquor Control Commissioner Stephen Hagerty called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Good to Go Jamaican Cuisine, LLC dba Good to Go, 711 Howard Street
Lenice Levy (LL), owner, requested approval of a class D (restaurant/liquor) liquor license. LL explained that she and her husband (Dennis Levy) purchased the building at 711 Howard street and are in the process of renovating it. For 16 years they have owned and operated Good to Go on the Chicago side of Howard street. They are long time Evanston residents and are excited to move the restaurant across the street into the renovated building on the Evanston side of Howard. Good to Go will be a full service restaurant with a private event space that can accommodate 150 people. Mayor Hagerty inquired if Good to Go has had any alcohol violations related to underage drinking at its Chicago establishment. LL responded that there have been no issues.

The Local Liquor Control Commissioner asked the members if there were any further questions or concerns over the request. None were voiced. The Board recommended issuance of a liquor license to be introduced at the City Council meeting on February 12, 2018.

Target Corporation, Dba Target Stores T3283, 1616 Sherman Ave

Krysanna Bowery (KB), Team Leader, attended the meeting on behalf of Target and requested approval of a Class F (grocery/liquor) license. KB stated that Target wished to be a one stop shop with alcohol to cater to customer needs. She stated that most neighboring city Target stores sell alcohol. 1400 stores nationwide sell liquor. Target
conducts extensive training of its Team Leaders on responsible sale of alcohol with a 90% and greater test score. The point of sale system in place at Target requires cashiers to obtain photo ID from all customers purchasing alcohol. Marion Macbeth reminded KB of the close proximity to NU. Mayor Hagerty asked if all cashiers are BASSET trained. KB explained that only Team Leaders are BASSET trained and cashiers undergo internal liquor training. Mayor Hagerty asked if she has had any issues with underage drinking at Target stores. KB responded that there have not been any issues in any of the stores she has worked at over the past 12 years. Mayor Hagerty reminded KB of the privilege and responsibility of having a liquor license and that there is a zero tolerance for underage drinking.

The Local Liquor Control Commissioner asked the members if there were any further questions or concerns over the request. None were voiced. The Board recommended issuance of a liquor license to be introduced at the City Council meeting on February 12, 2018.

**Board and Brush Creative Studio, 802 Dempster**

Drew Valko (DV), owner, requested approval of a new liquor license classification for an Arts and Craft studio that hosts activities involving "painting, ceramics, woodworking, craft design, and construction projects utilizing fibers, metals, wood or glass" to be able to serve beer and wine to customers for on-premises consumption. He explained that Board & Brush is a franchise that hosts wood board décor workshops 3-4 nights a week and weekends. Wood is distressed at the beginning of class using drill and hammers and similar tools. These are all put away within the first 10-15 minutes of class. Classes are instructor led. The remainder of class is spent sanding, painting and staining. There are about 200 locations and the average consumption is 1-2 drinks. They are seeking beer and wine only. Mayor Hagerty characterized the business as an “experiential” business. Shannon Valko stated that it’s a social gathering experience. Dick Peach said he was not thrilled about adding yet another liquor license classification but said it is a unique application and has no issue creating a license class for it. Marion Macbeth appreciated that the distressing tools are put away early in the process. Shannon Valko stated that there are over 200 location and almost all offer alcohol. Similar new liquor license classes have been adopted in Park Ridge, Downers Grove and New Lennox. The owners of Board & Brush also own Little Beans Café in Evanston. Mayor Hagerty said he was amenable to creating a new liquor license class. Grant Farrar clarified the process and stated that the new license class would be presented to City Council first. Once the new license class is created, the applicant can submit an application for issuance of liquor license. Mayor Hagerty reminded the applicants of he zero tolerance for underage drinking.

The Local Liquor Control Commissioner asked the members if there were any further questions or concerns over the request. None were voiced. The Board recommended creation of a new liquor license classification to be introduced at the City Council meeting on February 26, 2018.

**Binny’s Beverage Depot, 111 Chicago Ave**

Mayor Hagerty shared his appreciation to Binny’s for listening to his concerns about the proposed amendments to license class K. Mayor Hagerty asked Binny’s representatives to introduce themselves and discuss the revised proposal to amend license class F-1. Michael Binstein (MB), owner, stated that Binny’s was started in 1948
by his father. It is a private, family-owned business. It offers a range of products not currently offered in Evanston. Binny’s has been interested in opening in Evanston for 15 years and feels it has finally found the right location at 1111 Chicago Ave. Binny’s needs a big store to house its big selection. It has 30 employees on staff on a typical day. MB said the crux of the proposed F-1 changes revolve around craft beer container sizes and education and tasting seminars to customers. Smaller craft beer sizes are needed to be able to offer the best selection. He further suggests changing those sizes for all license class holders. Binny’s has nationally acclaimed educators that offer tasting seminars to customers. These sorts of seminars are currently offered at the Lincoln Park and Highland Park locations. He would like to offer similar events in the Evanston store. 

At the request of Mayor Hagerty, Grant Farrar (GF) summarized the differences between Classes K and F-1. GF explained that the main differences related to scale and fees. Binny’s proposal would require amendments to the existing class F-1. Craft beer container sizes have been evolving rapidly. Binny’s requested changes to container size could be extended to other license classes should they seek a similar amendment. Mayor Hagerty asked MB to discuss what sort of food products would Binny’s stock. MB said Binny’s would have a modest selection of “drink local and eat local” items. It will be a rotating selection of items from local artisans from food and liquor. It is a new and exciting category for Binny’s.

The meeting was turned over to public comments. Eight (8) people spoke and asked questions. Some questions pertained to fees, zoning and square footage. Others included comments that class K is not appropriate; a Class E would be more appropriate; that Binny’s should not be granted any amendments; Binny’s should have to “play by the rules” and requests that Binny’s sell food items.

Mayor Hagerty summarized the issues and challenges to the Class K, E and F licenses with respect to Binny’s. He noted that the issue raised about Class F businesses opening within 500 feet of each other illustrates the need to clean up conflicts that exist in the city’s liquor code since the City already has businesses that are not in compliance with that particular requirement. Mayor Hagerty asked staff and liquor board members if it has previously made modifications to liquor license classes in the past. Grant Farrar responded “many times” by applicants and prospective applicants and estimates about 50 amendments over the past eight years. He summarized the various amendments made to license class K in 2009, 2013, and 2015 at the request of current license holders. Marion Macbeth commented that many of the amendments were made at the request and benefit of small business owners and feels the double standard for a larger business is not appropriate. Dick Peach agrees and adds that at the time the Class E liquor store license was created it was restricted to downtown because liquor sales were still relatively new to Evanston. Evanston 1st Liquors was one of the very first licenses issued. The thought was that containing alcohol to downtown would allow the City to better control it. Since then, Evanston has changed a lot and it has added a lot of new liquor licenses such as boutique wine stores and distilleries and craft breweries. He feels the board must be careful not to reject new ideas just because they come from a “big box”. He feels the City should be accommodating and not shut the door on any business. Mayor Hagerty said he likes the revised focus on the Class F. He agrees with Alderman Wynne’s desire to see some uniqueness with regards to a deli, cheese, demonstration kitchen or other similar food offerings. Alderman Rainey offered that Binny’s is so different that it might benefit from a new license class. Mayor Hagerty agreed that another F category, such as an F-2 might be more appropriate. Grant Farrar offered that the comments received by email and LCRB meeting will reviewed
and incorporated as an amendment to license class F (F-2) or a brand new license classification, depending on the direction given by the board. Presentation of an ordinance to City Council is tentatively set for February 28th to allow time for staff to review the issues and comments and to get further details from Binny’s regarding its specific business model.

The Local Liquor Control Commissioner asked the members if there were any further questions or concerns over the request. None were voiced. The Board recommended creation of a new liquor license classification to be tentatively introduced at the City Council meeting on February 26, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by the Local Liquor Control Commissioner Stephen H. Hagerty, Mayor at 12:28 p.m. January 31, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,

Theresa Whittington
Liquor Licensing Manager, Legal Department