

**February 7, 2024
9200 Basil Court
Largo, MD 20774
Virtual Hearing**

Present:

Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms, Chair
Armando Camacho, Vice Chair
Tammie Norman, Commissioner
Tammy Sparkman, Commissioner
Dennis Smith, Commissioner
Jason DeLoach, Esquire, Counsel
Terence Sheppard, Director
Robert Clark, Chief Liquor Inspector
Leonard Vauss, Deputy Chief Liquor Inspector
Christian Mendoza, Deputy Chief Liquor Inspector
Patricia Bell, Administrative Manager
Keyanna Little, Administrative Aide
Katrice James, Administrative Aide
Alecia Hughes, Assistant to the Director

Start Time: 7:00 p.m.

Commissioner Bridgwaters-Simms: At the Board of License Commissioners, we endeavor to be as efficient as possible in our virtual environment. Thank you for your patience. This is a public meeting subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act so a truthful, transparent, open, and honest dialogue and record is required. As such, there are some formalities that will take place that may appear redundant but nonetheless are important and required to ensure compliance with the law.

Director Sheppard: During a typical hearing, there would be an exchange between the Board and the attorneys to exchange information as exhibits. Because this hearing is now virtual, we have implemented a 10-day rule to give those individuals here today, 10-days from today's date to add to the official record. I would ask that you email myself or the administrative staff of the BOLC. You may add information to the record long as it is information that has been discussed in this hearing.

REGULAR SESSION:

1. Patrick Nwaokwu, Managing Member, **t/a GQ Palace**, 8833 Greenbelt Road Greenbelt, Maryland 20770, Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor For a decision on your fine for violation of RR #9, No licensee, his/her agent, or employee shall allow consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages by patrons on the licensed premises during the hours when such sales or consumption is not allowed by the Rules and Regulations for Prince George’s County. To wit: that on December 3, 2023, at approximately 1:30am, Inspector North, entered GQ Palace (undercover) located at 8833 Greenbelt Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770. Inspector North purchased a drink at 2:58am and stayed at the establishment until approximately 3:20am, and he noticed patrons were still being served alcohol at the time. This is a violation of RR #9 selling, furnishing, dispensing alcoholic beverages after 3:00am. There is a prior violation for RR7, Consumption of Bottled Goods on Licensed Premises on 7/31/2022 an a fine of 7,500.00. The licensee is subject to all potential penalties identified in the Alcoholic Beverage Article, Rule 26 of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George’s County and any other provision(s) governing said license, which may include other violation(s) identified at the hearing. Continued from January 10, 2024, Regular Session Hearing.
Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to find the licensee for t/a GQ Palace, in violation, as charged, with a fine of \$6,000, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.
Fine can be made payable over three-monthly installments of \$2,000.
After Board vote, the motion carries.
2. **t/a Southern Avenue Liquors**, Sahaj S. Dhillon, Member-Manager, Class A, Beer, Wine and Liquor, 4259 S Avenue Spirits, LLC, 4259 Southern Avenue, Capitol Heights Maryland 20743. – Request for a Special Sunday Sales Permit. Represented by **Robert Kim, Esquire**. The licensee agrees to spend the \$50,000 capital investment within one year of today’s date. The upgrades include but are not limited to new tiles, new lighting, new ceiling tiles, new display shelves, reach in coolers, upgrading store sign, cleaning, and painting the interior and exterior walls, customer counters, and new system.
Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to approve the Special Sunday Sales Permit for t/a Southern Avenue Liquors, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.
After Board vote, the motion carries.
3. **t/a Mix and Mingle Coffee Lounge**, Chandra Moore, President, Tara Pendergrast, Shannon Jordan, Secretary, Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor, Mix and Mingle, Inc., 8923 Woodyard Road, Clinton, Maryland. – Request for a Special Entertainment Permit. Licensee does not have an attorney, acknowledge their right to an attorney and agree to move forward without an attorney.
Corporal Juan Hunt (Prince George’s County Police Department) states he conducted a site inspection, viewed their cameras, and discussed the Rules and Regulations. The security plan is adequate.
The plans for Mix and Mingle Coffee Lounge if granted a Special Entertainment Permit are to have music, karaoke, a DJ, variety of activities, and themed events.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to grant the Special Entertainment Permit to Mix and Mingle Coffee Lounge, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.
After Board vote, the motion carries.

4. Rhonda Hall, Managing Member, **Ladies 1st Cigars**, 402 Coventry Way, Clinton, Maryland 20735, Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor, is summonsed to show cause for an alleged violation of an alleged violation of RR #58 A(2) and A(5) There shall be employed a sufficient number of chefs and /or cooks to prepare food at all hours that the establishment is open. The licensee shall not deviate from the operating conditions allowed and defined by the Board concerning the operation of the restaurant. The operating conditions of the establishment include but are not limited to the hours of operation, type of menu, availability of food, and the number of tables and chairs provided for patrons. & RR #37(E) Change in Mode of Operation (Permitting smoking in the establishment) To wit: on Thursday, November 30, 2023, at approximately 10:00pm, Inspector Farmer-Johnson of the Board of License Commissioners entered the Ladies First Cigars, located 6402 Coventry Way, Clinton, MD. While inside she ordered food but was advised the chef left and that they had no food to offer. Also, Inspector Farmer-Johnson noticed patrons smoking cigars inside the establishment. This is a direct violation of RR# 58 A(2) and A(5). Also, a violation of RR #37 (E) Changing mode of Operation. The licensee is subject to all potential penalties identified in the Alcoholic Beverage Article, Rule 26 of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County and any other provision(s) governing said license, which may include other violation(s) identified at the hearing. Continued from January 10, 2024, Regular Session Hearing.

Represented by **Traci Scudder, Esquire**.

Inspector Farmer-Johnson of the BOLC testified about the incident that occurred on November 30, 2023. She asked several employees if an order can be placed for food, and was advised to go to Shoppers because their kitchen was closed.

Ms. Scudder cross examined Inspector Johnson about the night in question.

Ms. Scudder states Ms. Hall opened this bar, restaurant, and cigar lounge approximately three years ago. She operated successfully with her Beer and Wine license, recently she upgraded to a Beer, Wine, and Liquor license.

Ms. Hall states we opened at noon and food was available, I was on the premises until approximately 10:55 p.m. My cook, bartender and concierge were all there.

Mr. Forte and Mr. Anderson of Ladies 1st Cigars testified stating food was available on the night in question. In addition, the establishment offers a one-day membership of ten dollars per person.

Commissioner Norman asked Ms. Hall if she allowed smoking inside of her establishment?

Ms. Hall states patrons are smoking inside of the restaurant, I did promise the Board there will be no smoking. However, I obtained the proper permit to smoke indoors and was granted permission from the County. I was unaware that I needed to get permission from the Board, and I needed a different Class license.

Ms. Scudder requested that the charge for change in mode of operation be dismissed. She asked the Board if she can invoke the ten-day rule to submit evidence such as the Use & Occupancy Permit, receipts for food items, and camera footage.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to continue this case once evidence is received, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

Adjourned: 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alecia L. Hughes
Assistant to the Director