

July 26, 2016

9200 Basil Court
Largo, MD 20774

THE BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS MET IN REGULAR SESSION:

PRESENT: Charles W. Caldwell, III, Chairman
Shaihi Mwalimu, Vice Chair
Earl Howard, Commissioner
Kenneth J. Miles, Commissioner
Anuj Sud, Commissioner
David D. Son, Chief Liquor Inspector
Cristian Mendoza, Deputy Chief Liquor Inspector
Kelly E. Markomanolakis, Administrative Assistant

Time: 1:40 p.m.

In the matter of Sharon Taylor, Owner is summonsed to show cause for an alleged violation of Section 20-108.1 of Article 2B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, to wit: That Sharon Taylor, owner of the subject property, allowed 14300 Willoughby Road to be used as a bottle club by serving, giving, dispensing, or allowing to be consumed by a patron paying admission alcoholic beverages from supplies purchased or otherwise brought to the premises or establishment by an owner or operator or an agent of an owner or operator. Further, that Ms. Taylor also served, gave, dispensed, kept or allowed to be consumed by a patron alcoholic beverages from supplies that the patron purchased, reserved, or otherwise brought to the premises or establishment. On June 4, 2016, an event was held at the subject property where tickets were purchased by the general public through Eventbrite and at the door for admission to a function in which alcoholic beverages could be purchased as well as bottles of alcohol could be purchased. No permits were obtained prior to the event that allowed the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Sharon Taylor stated that she had consulted with an attorney; that her attorney is unable to attend the hearing today; that her attorney has Lupus and is unable to get out of bed; that she has spoken with her attorney and knows the questions to ask.

Bryon Bereano stated that he would like to continue from where the last hearing left off; that they had previously submitted six exhibits.

Mr. Sud stated that Ms. Taylor was advised to seek counsel; that she states that her attorney has Lupus and is unable to get out of bed.

Mr. Edelen stated that he was aware of the party scheduled for June 4, 2016; that he checked for the required permits; that they was initially make aware of this address from a 311 compliant; that different agencies assist with the investigation; that events like this are handle by the JAG unit; that he attempted to contact Ms. Taylor to get information on the event; that the event took place on June 4th; that there were over 300 people in attendance; that they had food, alcohol and a swimming pool; that people were in the

pool; that photographs were taken at the event; that there appears to be stand up lap dancing in the photograph; that Ms. Taylor was provided different information regarding the event; that it doesn't look like a re-pass; that the health department has requirement for the pool if it is open to the public; that there would need to be a licensed life guard; that when a pool is open to the public there are different requirements; that he check for permits; that no permits were applied for; that he met with Ms. Taylor on June 2nd; that the requirements for the event were provided to her; that he requested an invite list; that the regulations were explained; that an email was sent confirming what a private event is; that a flyer was distributed; that Ms. Taylor stated the flier had been updated.

Ms. Taylor stated that she updated the advertisement; that she contacted Eventbrite on May 27th to request the event be changed; that she has a sign in sheet with 66 people.

Mr. Edelen stated that the list provided to him has 20-22 people on it; that less than 80 people were on the invite list; that Mr. Gentry went to the address on Saturday morning to provide a party letter again; that tickets were still being purchased; that tickets had been purchased.

Ms. Taylor stated that she told Mr. Edelen that she would change the event.

Mr. Edelen stated that once an event is on social media it is impossible to change the event; that the photographs were taken on June 4th between 4 – 9 p.m.; that he does recall the conversation regarding changing the event; that their first meeting was June 2, 2016; that he did not see an email from Eventbrite; that there is a process for non-profit organizations to host events; that once tickets are purchased everything changes.

Mr. Bereano stated that this event was public because tickets were sold.

Mr. Gentry stated that he is an inspector from DPIE; that he has been an inspector for 11 years; that he is in code enforcement; that he is familiar with the property; that he received a compliant regarding this event; the he had previously received complaints; that he spoke with a tenant of the address on June 2; that he provided the tenant with a party letter; that he spoke with Ms. Taylor on June 4th along with the Prince George's County Police Department and reiterated the county codes; that alcoholic beverages were sold at the event; that he spoke with Ms. Taylor on the telephone; that he indicated that a license would be required to sell alcoholic beverages; that subsequent to the event a violation notice was issued.

Mr. Bereano stated that the undercover police officers are not here but that their sergeant is here to provide testimony.

Sergeant Doyle stated that he is the supervisor of the undercover officers; that he is assigned to the intelligence unit under Homeland Security; that he is familiar with the address on Wiloughby Road; that he had a discussion with the undercover officers; that several investigators attended this event; that their tickets were purchased on Eventbrite; that he does not have any information regarding a donation or that this was a fundraiser; that the undercover officers were not invited to the event; that the party was open to the general public; that the undercover officer took pictures at the event; that he spoke with the undercover officers while they were at the event; that they arrived at 7:00 p.m. and stayed for over an hour; that the event had port-a-potties; that food and alcoholic beverages were for sale; that 300-350 people were in attendance; that the undercover paid \$25.00 for a small bottle Hennessy and \$5.00 for a Corona; that the alcoholic purchased was turned over to Corporal Cicale; that he was provided with a

written statement from the undercover officers; that the report has been redacted to protect the identity of the officers; that statement confirms that there was a full bar with bartenders; that both report have similar narratives; that there was music and dancing; that the music could be heard from the street; that their identification was checked; that they were not required to sign in; that they were patted down; that a person who appeared to be a bouncer patted them down; that the ticket price was not refunded.

Donald Storms stated that he is an Agent for the Comptroller of Maryland; that he has been an agent for 30 years; that he is responsible to enforce tax law with regard to alcohol and tobacco; that they do not do enforcement at private residences; that selling alcohol without a permit is a violation of the law; that no permit was applied for from the State of Maryland; that there was not a sales and use license issued; that the 501(3)(c) for one is the promoters was not valid; that this case is part of an ongoing investigation. Sharon Taylor stated that the promoter has a 501(3)(c); that her attorney attempted to contact Mr. Gentry; that the attorney was unable to find the regulations regarding this event.

Clement Jalloh stated that he is a resident of Largo; that he is the youth coordinator for the organization with the 501(3)(c); that he organized and put together this party; that Ms. Taylor is his Godmother; that they put funds together to donate to Sierra Leone; that he does not have any proof of a donation; that he does not have any knowledge of where the funds go; that they have two different 501(3)(c) organizations; that he does not have personal knowledge of the tax status of these organization; that the money for the tickets was refunded; that they are allowed to have a free event; that the organization did not receive any money from the event; that he did not know everyone at the event.

Ms. Taylor stated that she didn't see alcoholic beverages at the event.

Sergeant Doyle stated the ticket price was not refunded to the undercover officers.

Ms. Taylor stated that this was a private event; that it was no longer a fundraiser or a promoter event.

Mr. Bereano stated that this violation is before the Board due to a new statute; that this is a novel issue before the Board; that this is a trend to have bottle clubs are in the home; that the issues in adult entertainment, human trafficking and crime associated with these events; that this event was advertised as a public event for over a month; that you have no control over who attends a public event; that this address has been associated with habitual events; that another event was scheduled for June 18th; that this homeowner thumbed her nose at regulations; that she did not comply with the regulations regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages; that she didn't even attempt to obtain the required permits; that this is a bottle club in a community; that the event was operated like a club with bouncers, people were carded and patted down; that she was given a chance to cancel the event; that no taxes were paid; that someone could have drown in the pool; that he would request the maximum fine be imposed because this event was a threat to the peace, safety and welfare; that there was no compliance with the tax laws; that they skirted the laws meant to protect the community, health and safety.

Ms. Taylor stated that she has evidence at home; that the event on June 18th did happen; that they donated \$100 to Mary's House; that she advocates to help the less

fortunate; that she helps homeless people; that you can't go on assumptions that the house is being used as a club; that she is trying to give back to the community.

Mr. Miles moved to find Ms. Taylor in violation and imposed fine of \$12,500, the motion fails for lack of a second.

Mr. Sud move to find Ms. Taylor in violation and imposed a fine of \$7,500, seconded by Mr. Miles and carried by Mr. Caldwell. Mr. Mwalimu votes no and Mr. Howard did not participate.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly E. Markomanolakis
Administrative Assistant