

February 23, 2021
9200 Basil Court
Largo, MD 20774
Virtual Hearing

Present:

Daphne Turpin-Forbes, Board Chair
Armando Camacho, Vice Chairman
Tammie Norman, Commissioner
Tammy Sparkman, Commissioner
Terence Sheppard, Director
Jason DeLoach, Esquire, Counsel
Robert Clark, Chief Liquor Inspector
Christian Mendoza, Deputy Chief Liquor Inspector
Johnny Toles, Deputy Chief Liquor Inspector
Patricia Bell, Administrative Manager
Leonard Vauss, Administrative Assistant
Katrice James, Administrative Aide
Keyanna Little, Administrative Aide
Jamie Schaefer, Administrative Aide

Start Time: 10:05 a.m.

Commissioner Forbes: This is an open meeting for the Prince George's County Board of License Commissioners. To ensure compliance with the law (Maryland Open Meetings Act) and our goal of transparency, to please identify yourself when speaking and speak audibly. As a professional courtesy, when not speaking, please mute your device. If someone from the public that is not providing testimony as a witness today, I will recognize you in the hearing and give you an opportunity for your voice to be heard. Everyone's voice matters at the BOLC. We understand that some of you may be passionate about what you have to say and that passion, in this regard, is permissible. What is not permissible is if truth, facts, and respect are not grounded in your voice. Thank you in advance for being truthful, respectful and honest during the entire proceeding.

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 for the BOLC. You may add information to the record long as it is information that has been discussed in this hearing.

1. Substitution of Corporate Officers application, **t/a Nando's Peri Peri (Laurel)**, Class B(BLX), Beer, Wine and Liquor, 14828 Baltimore Avenue, Building I, Laurel, 20707, Leslie C. Williams to serve as Authorized Person in the place of Jessica Reicher, Authorized Person. Substitution of Corporate Officers application, **t/a Nando's Peri Peri (National Harbor)**, Class B(BLX), Beer, Wine and Liquor, 191 American Way, National Harbor, 20745, Leslie C. Williams to serve as Authorized Person in the place of

Jessica Reicher, Authorized Person. Substitution of Corporate Officers application, **t/a Nando's Peri Peri (College Park)**, Class B(BLX), Beer, Wine and Liquor, 7400 Baltimore Avenue, College Park, 20740, Leslie C. Williams to serve as Authorized Person in the place of Jessica Reicher, Authorized Person. **Leanne Schrecengost, Esquire** is representing. **Leslie Williams** is sworn in.

Ms. Schrecengost: Ms. Williams, can you confirm for me that none of the information filed in these applications has changed? (**Ms. Williams-** correct, everything is the same.) No felony convictions or violations of alcoholic beverage or gambling laws? (**Ms. Williams-** no.) Can you confirm that you are an authorized person for all 3 Nando's Peri Peri locations? (**Ms. Williams-** yes, for College Park, Laurel and National Harbor.) And you have a 1% ownership interest in all those locations? (**Ms. Williams-** yes.) Can you please tell the Board what your roles and responsibilities with Nando's restaurant group? **Ms. Williams:** I am the Vice-President of Operations for Nando's in the U.S. I have received restaurants in the DMV, Chicago, and soon Texas. Everything regarding food safety operations.

Ms. Schrecengost: Have you received a copy of this Board's Rules and Regulations for alcoholic beverage sales in Prince George's County? (**Ms. Williams-** yes.) Can you tell me the correct age to serve alcoholic beverages in the state of Maryland? (**Ms. Williams-** 18.) And the age to purchase alcoholic beverages? (**Ms. Williams-** 21.)

Ms. Williams proves her knowledge of the 6 acceptable forms of I.D. in order to serve alcoholic beverages in the state of Maryland.

Ms. Schrenengost makes note for the Board to amend the agenda to reflect her client taking the place of Jessica Reicher.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to grant the SCO for Nando's Peri Peri of Laurel, College Park, and the National Harbor, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**. After Board vote for each individual entity, the motion carries for all 3 entities.

2. Substitution of Corporate Officers application, **t/a Mi Patria Restaurant**, Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor, 5906 Riggs Road, Hyattsville, 20783, Selvin A. Gutierrez to serve as Member/Manager/Authorized Person in the place of Jose R. Parada, Member/Authorized Person. **Robert Kim, Esquire** is representing. **Selvin Gutierrez** is sworn in.

Mr. Kim: This is a Substitution of Corporate Officers with the owner and operator surrendering their shares to Mr. Gutierrez, making Mr. Gutierrez the only member with 100% ownership of the business. Selvin, you are a citizen of the U.S.? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** yes.) Are you a resident of the state of Maryland? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** yes.) Have you ever been convicted of a felony? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** No.) Have you ever been found in violation of the laws for the sale of alcoholic beverages or gambling laws? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** No.) Have you ever had a license for sale of alcoholic beverages revoked? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** No.) You are not on the license now, but your plan is to become the sole member, correct? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** Yes.) How much time do you spend at the business? (**Mr.**

Gutierrez- 40-50 hours per week.) Do you own any other business in Prince George's County with an alcoholic beverage license? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** No.) You're familiar with the Rules and Regulations of this Board? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** Yes.) The Board has a copy of the Alcohol Awareness Certificate for Mr. Gutierrez. How old must you be to purchase liquor in the state of Maryland? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** 21.) How old must you be to sell alcoholic beverages? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** 18.) Mr. Gutierrez proves his knowledge of the 6 acceptable forms of I.D. required to purchase alcoholic beverages.

Mr. Kim: Have there been any changes to yourself or the business since the application was submitted? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** No.) Do you understand that you will be solely responsible for everything that happens in the restaurant? (**Mr. Gutierrez-** Yes.)

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to grant SCO for t/a Mi Patria, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

3. **Chuck's Liquor 2020-2021 Renewal Protest** continued from February 10, 2021. **Linda Carter, Esquire** is representing Chuck's Liquors, **Robert Kim, Esquire** for the opposition.

Commissioner Forbes: The 10-day rule has afforded both parties, as well as the Board, to review and consider all the documents and testimonies that we heard at the February 10, 2021 hearing regarding Chuck's Liquors. There was a plethora of information that was made available, proving the 10-day rule critical for us in this decision. Last hearing gave us the opportunity for the business and the opposition to provide testimony. Today we are here to decide, based off those testimonies and exhibits, as to whether we move forward with the t/a Chuck's Liquors 2020-2021 Renewal. For me, I had a problem understanding whether there are opportunities for the city and for the community/other authorities to resolve the loitering problem. We would like to see an opportunity for everyone come together, businesses to collaborate, to tackle the loitering issue. Any suggestion is always good. Are there any comments from the commissioners?

No comment from Commissioners.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to grant the Renewal for t/a Chuck's Liquors, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

4. Carlos R. Flores, CEO/President, Stephen P. Miano, Vice President/Treasurer/CFO, Mario Lara, Local General Manager, for a Class B(BH), Beer, Wine and Liquor for the use of Sonesta International Hotels Corporation, t/a **Sonesta Select Greenbelt**, 6301 Golden Triangle Drive, Greenbelt, 20770, transfer from Courtyard Management Corporation, t/a Courtyard by Marriott (Greenbelt), Annette London, Assistant Secretary, Margery A. Breneman, Assistant Secretary, Mario Lara, Assistant Secretary. **Adena Santiago, Esquire** is representing. Licensees granted extra time in the hearing in order to have all licensees qualified. **Carlos Florez, Stephen Miano, and Mario Lara** are present and sworn in.

Ms. Santiago: This is an existing hotel. Everyone is familiar with the laws and rules of Prince George's County and the community. Everyone had been involved. Mario Lara is listed on the license being transferred.

Mr. Lara proves his knowledge of the ages to serve and sell alcoholic beverages in the state of Maryland as well as the 6 acceptable forms of I.D. to purchase alcoholic beverages.

Commissioner Forbes: (to all 3 applicants) Are you familiar with the rules and regulations of this Board? (**Mr. Lara, Mr. Miano, and Mr. Florez-** Yes.) Are you aware that if any alterations are to be made to your business that they must be approved by the Board? (**Mr. Lara, Mr. Miano, and Mr. Florez-** Yes.) Are you aware that you will be responsible for any violations on the premises? (**Mr. Lara, Mr. Miano, and Mr. Florez-** Yes.)

Commissioner Forbes: On the application, Ms. Santiago made statements for other establishments. I'm curious, what were these regulatory inquiries?

Ms. Santiago: We had an incident in Michigan a while ago, I can understand the confusion. This was a singular, isolated incident. Other business had sales to minors incidents and they have new policies in place. I have represented them for 15 years and have had very few violations.

Jason DeLoach: I need to talk to Ms. Santiago for a moment offline before we proceed.

Commissioner Forbes: Our Board attorney has called for a side bar.

Intermission put into effect.

Nithya Nagaraya, an attorney barred in Maryland and partner with Ms. Santiago is sworn in.

Ms. Nithya: I am an attorney barred in Maryland. I vouch for Ms. Santiago's suitability, credibility, and ability. I make a pro hoc motion for her to be admitted to practice with the Board of License Commissioners.

No objections from the Board.

Ms. Santiago: We have nothing to add.

Commissioner Norman: Among the new licensees, have any of them received Alcohol Awareness training?

Ms. Santiago: Mr. Lara has completed Alcohol Awareness training.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to grant the transfer for t/a Sonesta Select Greenbelt, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

- Michelle Grant, President, Lionel Grant, Vice President, for a Class B(AE), Beer, Wine and Liquor for the use of Era Wine Bar, LLC, **t/a Era Wine Bar**, 3300 Rhode Island Avenue, Mount Rainier, MD 20712. **Commissioner Forbes** informs applicants that they have the right to an attorney. The applicants acknowledge that right and agree to move forward without representation. **Michelle Grant** and **Lionel Grant** are sworn in. **Commissioner Forbes:** Ms. Grant, how long have you lived in the state of Maryland? (**Ms. Grant-** 3 years.) Mr. Grant? (**Mr. Grant-** 3 years.) Have either of you ever held a license for the sale of alcoholic beverages? (**Ms. and Mr. Grant-** No.) Have either of

you ever been convicted of a felony? (**Mr. and Ms. Grant**- No.) Have either of you been found in violation of laws for the sale of alcoholic beverages or gambling laws? (**Mr. and Ms. Grant**- No.) Can you tell me about your business?

Ms. Grant: Era Wine Bar is a restaurant and wine bar, serving small plates from around the world, as well as wine by the glass and bottle. We also have a significant amount of space for special events and a membership program. Our business is centered around wine and global food pairing. We are closed on Mondays. Tuesdays through Thursdays we will be open from 4:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays we will be open from 4:00 p.m.-12:00 a.m., and Sundays 12:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m. We have 47 seats indoors and 25 seats outdoors.

Commissioner Forbes: Are you both aware of this Board's Rules and Regulations? (**Mr. and Ms. Grant**- Yes.) Do you understand that you both will be responsible for everything that happens on the premises? (**Mr. and Ms. Grant**- Yes.) Do you agree to ensure that your business is operating accordingly with state and county rules and laws? (**Mr. and Ms. Grant**- Yes.) Are you aware that any alterations to the business must first be approved by the Board? (**Mr. and Ms. Grant**- Yes.) Are you aware that you are accountable for any violations of the business? (**Mr. and Ms. Grant**- Yes.)

Ms. Grant proves her knowledge of the ages to serve and sell alcoholic beverages in the state of Maryland as well as the 6 acceptable forms of I.D. to purchase alcoholic beverages.

Mr. Grant proves his knowledge of the ages to serve and sell alcoholic beverages in the state of Maryland as well as the 6 acceptable forms of I.D. to purchase alcoholic beverages.

Commissioner Sparkman asks clients to repeat Hours of Operation. (**Ms. Grant** repeats.)

Commissioner Norman asks if they are Alcohol Awareness Certified.

Ms. Grant: Me, my partner, and all servers will be Alcohol Awareness trained together. Our goal to open is in May 2021.

Commissioner Camacho: How many seats are inside?

Ms. Grant: 47.

Commission Camacho: Your application states there are 45 seats available inside. Please amend the application to reflect the correct number of seats.

Maps Presentation by Robert Clark: There are no schools within 1,000 ft or churches within 500 ft of the premises. There are 5 other liquor stores in a one-mile radius.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to approve the Class B(AE) Liquor License to t/a Era Wine Bar, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

6. Guo Xiong Zheng, President/Secretary/ Treasurer, for a Class B, Beer and Wine for the use of Rock & Toss Largo, Inc., t/a **Rock & Toss Crab House (Largo)**, 908 Largo Center Drive Upper Marlboro, MD, 20774. **Martin Johnson** is not representing but aiding the applicant. Commissioner Forbes notifies applicant of his right to attorney. The applicant agrees to move forward without representation. Applicant **Guo Xiong Zheng** "Chris" is sworn in. **Martin Johnson** is sworn in.

Maps Presentation by Robert Clark: There are no schools within 1,000 ft or churches within 500 ft of the establishment. There are 6 liquor stores within a one-mile radius of the establishment.

Martin Johnson: I have been hired by Mr. Zheng's company. I have worked for Howard County Police Department, enforcing the rules of alcoholic beverage establishments for many years. I believe Mr. Zheng has his presentation ready.

Mr. Zheng: Because English is my second language, I will do my best. With Martin as my manager, we submitted pictures of the business and a copy of alcohol awareness certification. We have no negative effects on the neighborhood, and I am fit and proper to hold this license. The business is still under construction. It will be a full restaurant like the one in Bowie. I worked for the business in Bowie and now the owner and I are business partners. The bar has 12 stools and there is no outdoor seating. We have plenty of storage for alcohol and check I.D.s for anyone that appears under the age of 40. We will not serve drunken customers. We have 18 employees and all servers have taken Alcohol Awareness courses. We have no plans for entertainment. All seafood will be in season and served like a seafood boil. There is a lot of lighting. The closest school is 2 miles away. Liquor inspectors are welcome to meet with us at any time. I have been a Maryland resident since last year and am registered to vote in the state of Maryland. I have no criminal record and have never had any violations. Weekdays we will be open from 4:00 p.m.- 10:00 p.m. and Friday- Saturday 4 p.m.- 11 p.m. Due to Covid-19, we may make about a 1-hour adjustment to this schedule in the future.

Commissioner Norman: Do you have a projected opening date?

Mr. Zheng: We plan to open next month on the 15th.

Commissioner Norman: Are all approvals done? Permits obtained?

Mr. Zheng: We are still waiting on the health inspection but that is all.

Commissioner Forbes: Have you ever been convicted of a felony? (**Mr. Zheng-** No.) Have you been provided with a copy of this Board's Rules and Regulations? Do you know them and agree to abide by them? (**Mr. Zheng-** Yes.) Do you understand that any alterations must be made aware to the Board? (**Mr. Zheng-** Yes.) Do you understand that you are responsible for everything that happens at your business? (**Mr. Zheng-** Yes.)

Martin Johnson: Mr. Zheng and I studied the Rules and Regulations together. He has taken my Alcohol Awareness course and passed with a perfect score. I've watched him work and I am confident in his capabilities. We highlighted his copy to be made part of the policies and procedures of the business. I would like to thank Ms. Little, Ms. James, and Ms. Schaefer for their assistance in the process. They have truly been a great help.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to approve the Class B (BW) Liquor License for t/a Rock & Toss Crab House (Largo), seconded by **Commissioner Norman**. After Board vote, the motion carries.

Adjourned: 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jamie Schaefer
Administrative Aide BOLC*