

**September 28, 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
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. Welcome to our House. 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. Heeyong Kwan, President/Secretary/Treasurer, for a Class D, Beer and Wine for the use of Jo Jo Food, Inc., **t/a Laurel Food Mart**, 9107 Marshall Avenue, Laurel, 20707 transfer from Jo Jo Food, Inc., t/a Laurel Food Mart, 9107 Marshall Avenue, Laurel, 20707, Jae Kwon, President/Secretary/Treasurer. Robert Kim, Esquire is representing. **Mr. Kim:** If I could give but a 30 second introduction—Mr. Heeyong Kwan is the previous licensee of this entity and Mr. Jae Kwan was his son, who later took over this business. Mr. Jae Kwan has since passed due to pancreatic cancer. We will now be going back to the business being under the ownership of Mr. Heeyong Kwan. **Heeyong Kwan** is sworn in.

Mr. Kim: Mr. Kwan, are you a citizen of the United States? (**Mr. Kwan-** Yes.) Have you ever been convicted of a felony? (**Mr. Kwan-** No.) You owned Laurel Food Mart from 2006-2013, correct? (**Mr. Kwan-** Yes.) And there was a violation in 2019 made by an employee, correct? (**Mr. Kwan-** Yes.) Have you ever had a license for the sale of alcohol revoked? (**Mr. Kwan-** No.) Do you own any other business with an alcoholic beverage license? (**Mr. Kwan-** No.) And you will be 100% stockholder, President/Secretary/Treasurer, correct? (**Mr. Kwan-** Yes.) How much time will you be spending on the premises? (**Mr. Kwan-** 5 hours per week.) The business will be operated by your nephew, correct? (**Mr. Kwan-** Yes.) Your alcohol awareness training is scheduled for October 6th, correct? (**Mr. Kwan-** Yes.) As the owner, will you ensure that all employees comply with the rules and regulations of this Board? (**Mr. Kwan-** Yes.) What is the legal age to purchase alcoholic beverages? (**Mr. Kwan-** 21.) What is the legal age to serve and sell alcoholic beverages? (**Mr. Kwan-** 18.)

Mr. Kwan proves his knowledge of the 6 acceptable forms of identification for purchasing alcoholic beverages.

Mr. Kim: Have any changes been made since the filing of this application? (**Mr. Kwan-** No.) Are you aware that you are responsible for any violations on the premises should one occur? (**Mr. Kwan-** Yes.) Madam Chair, that's all I have of my client.

Ms. Forbes: Commissioners, any questions of Mr. Kim or his client?

No questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to grant the transfer of t/a Laurel Food Mart to Heeyong Kwan, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

2. Akash V. Patel, President/Secretary/Treasurer, for a Class A, Beer, Wine & Liquor for the use of 6017 Parkway, Inc., t/a **Parkway Liquors**, 6017 Greenbelt Road, College Park, 20740 transfer from Parkway Liquors, Inc., t/a Parkway Liquors, 6017 Greenbelt Road, College Park, 20740, So Yeong Chun, President/Secretary/Treasurer. Robert Kim, Esquire is representing.

Akash Patel is sworn in.

Mr. Kim: Mr. Patel, are you a Permanent Resident of the United States? (**Mr. Patel-** Yes.) And you recently got married, correct? (**Mr. Patel-** Yes.) Have you ever been convicted of a felony? (**Mr. Patel-** No.) Have you ever been found in violation of any gambling or alcoholic beverages laws? (**Mr. Patel-** No.) Have you ever had a license for the sale of alcoholic beverages revoked? (**Mr. Patel-** No.) Have you ever had a license for the sale of alcoholic beverages? (**Mr. Patel-** No.) You have experience in running stores though, correct? (**Mr. Patel-** Yes.) You are currently operating a store in Glen Burnie? (**Mr. Patel-** Yes.) Are you Alcohol Awareness Certified? (**Mr. Patel-** Yes.) Do you have an interest in any other business with an alcoholic beverage license? (**Mr. Patel-** No.) You will be 100% stockholder, President/Secretary/Treasurer, correct? (**Mr. Patel-** Yes.) How much time will you spend on the premises? (**Mr. Patel-** Full time.) Have you read and do you understand the Rules and Regulations of this Board? (**Mr. Patel-** Yes.) Should this license be approved, will you ensure all employees will comply with these Rules and Regulations? (**Mr. Patel-** Yes.) What is the minimum legal age to purchase alcoholic beverages? (**Mr. Patel-** 21.) What is the minimum legal age to sell or serve alcoholic beverages? (**Mr. Patel-** 18.)

Mr. Patel proves his knowledge of the 6 acceptable forms of identification for purchasing alcoholic beverages.

Mr. Kim: Have any changes been made since the application was filed? (**Mr. Patel-** No.) Do you understand that it is your sole obligation as the sole licensee to respond to the BOLC? (**Mr. Patel-** Yes.) Do you agree to accept this responsibility? (**Mr. Patel-** Yes.) Madam Chair, I have no further questions.

Ms. Forbes: Commissioners, any questions for Mr. Kim or his client?

No questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to grant the transfer for t/a Parkway Liquors, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

3. Israt Jahan, Member-Manager, for a Class B+, Beer, Wine & Liquor for the use of 24/7 MH Grocery & Restaurant, LLC, t/a 24/7 MH Grocery & Restaurant, 3210 Branch Avenue, Silver Hill, 20748 transfer from Riordans, Inc., t/a Asian Restaurant & Carryout, 3210 Branch Avenue, Silver Hill, 20748, Liping Lin, President/Secretary/Treasurer. Robert Kim, Esquire is representing.

Mr. Kim: Ms. Jahan has been studying very hard; however, we have a Mr. Rahul as a translator if her English is too spotty.

Ms. Irsat Jahan is sworn in and **Mr. Rahul** is sworn in in case interpretation services are needed.

Mr. Kim: This case is a little bit different because Ms. Jahan is purchasing a class B+ liquor license. Her plan is to operate the establishment while planning on what she would like to do with the license. The plan would be to no longer sell alcohol when they go to closing. Ms. Jahan, are you a permanent resident of the United States? (**Ms. Jahan-** Yes.) Have you ever been convicted of a felony? (**Ms. Jahan-** No.) Have you ever had a license for the sale of alcoholic beverages revoked? (**Ms. Jahan-** No.) Do you own any other business with an alcoholic beverage license? (**Ms. Jahan-** No.) You will be 100% owner and member/managing member of this business, correct? (**Ms. Jahan-** Yes.) How much time will you be spending on the premises? (**Ms. Jahan-** 20 hours per week.) You took the alcohol awareness course yesterday, correct? (**Ms. Jahan-** Yes.) And you will submit the certificate to the Board? (**Ms. Jahan-** Yes.) Do you agree to ensure all employees of the establishment with comply with all the rule, laws, and regulations of this Board? (**Ms. Jahan-** Yes.) What is the minimum legal age in order to purchase alcoholic beverages? (**Ms. Jahan-** 21.) What is the minimum legal age to sell/serve alcoholic beverages? (**Ms. Jahan-** 18.)

Ms. Jahan proves her knowledge of the 6 acceptable forms of ID for purchasing alcoholic beverages.

Mr. Kim: Have there been any changes to since this application was filed? (**Ms. Jahan-** No.) Even though you will not be selling alcohol, do you understand that if anything goes wrong, you will accept full responsibility? (**Ms. Jahan-** Yes.) That is all I have, Madam Chair.

Ms. Forbes: Are there any questions from the Commissioners?

Commissioner Camacho: Why should the Liquor Board approve a license that will not be put in use?

Mr. Kim: They may be getting a new owner.

Commissioner Camacho: You are giving us no timeline. We can't go into this blindly.

Mr. Kim: If you want a timeline, we can do it probably within 6 months. The license has value. They do have some alcohol, but they want to find a better location, or we can transfer the license in 6 months.

Ms. Forbes: Maybe 6 months is right. We understand this is not forever, but we need to know what you'll do with this license. This is a B+ license with a Sunday Sales permit. We understand it has value, but we will need you to get back to us and let us know what a reasonable timeframe is.

Mr. Kim: I know we can have the Transfer of Location in 6 months. We have talked about selling alcoholic beverages; we just want to be careful and not cause issues.

Ms. Forbes: Let us ask Mr. DeLoach for clarity. Are we good with this?

Mr. DeLoach: I think we're good with that. I think a 6-month timeframe may be a bit lengthy. This is something that should be done in a quick timeframe. We cannot have the license unutilized.

Mr. Kim: They are selling alcohol now. I don't think that will be a problem.

Mr. DeLoach: Okay, we're good, Madam Chair.

Commissioner Norman: For clarity, she is purchasing the establishment, the business, they are currently selling alcohol, but they haven't decided whether to continue?

Mr. Kim: Yes.

Ms. Forbes: Any more questions for Mr. Kim or his client?

Mr. DeLoach: It is to my understanding that this is for a 6-month time period to sell, a 6-month time period to plan the Transfer of Location, or to immediately put the license into use.

Commissioner Norman: So, once the business is purchased, they will sell alcoholic beverage?

Ms. Forbes: It is possible that they are not going to sell. So, we are coming up with a plan to either immediately put the license in use or to apply for Transfer of Location.

Director Sheppard: The renewal for this license is May 31st. It is coming up and we may need to act.

Mr. Kim: We will be done before then and before the renewal is even filed.

Ms. Forbes: And there is a 6-month window before the renewal?

Ms. Little: The date is April 1st, Madam Chair.

Mr. Kim: We appreciate your help in understanding this.

Ms. Forbes: Understood, you keep us on our toes, Mr. Kim. Are there any further questions?

No further questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to approve the transfer of the Class BL+ license with the caveat of a 6-month timeframe and plan to either submit a Transfer of Location application, sell the license, or immediate use of the alcoholic beverage license seconded by **Commissioner Norman**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

Return to case in 6 months.

4. Ahktar Nawab, Member/Authorized Person, Michael T. Wetherbee, Jr., Member/Authorized Person, for a Class B(DD), Beer, Wine and Liquor for the use of Hospitality HQ, LLC, t/a **Le Fantome**, 4501/4555 Woodberry Street, Riverdale Park, 20737. Linda Carter, Esquire is representing.

Maps Presentation Chief Clark: In the matter of t/a Le Fantome, the distance requirement is exempt due to the Class B(DD) being located in a development district. There are 9 other liquor selling establishments within a one-mile radius.

Ms. Carter: This shopping center is sometimes referred to as the “Whole Foods shopping center”. Madam Chair, I would like to bring to the attention of the Board 2 changes we would like to have made. The first is the corporate name. We would like to change this to “Le Fantome Food Hall Bar, LLC.”

Board approves by unanimous consent.

Ms. Carter: The second is an update for the home address of Mr. Wetherbee since he has recently moved. We would like to amend the application to reflect this change.

Board approves by unanimous consent.

Ms. Carter: We have filed an application for a business with over 8,000 square feet and 114 seats. This is not your typical food court. We filed exhibits with renderings the quality of the location. Riverdale has met these qualifications and it took a long time for them to settle with Hospitality HQ.

Akhtar Nawab and Michael Wetherbee are sworn in.

Ms. Carter: Michael, is all the information on the application besides those addressed at the beginning of this case still true and accurate? (Mr. Wetherbee- Yes.) So, you have a lot of experience with food halls. Talk to us about your background.

Mr. Wetherbee: I am one of 2 partners with Hospitality HQ. This is a company based in Brooklyn and we are investing partners with Washington D.C. HQ stands for “high quality”. Guests can come back many times and expect quality. We are creating a structure with rules and we have never had a violation related to alcohol sales.

Ms. Carter: In response to that part, I’d like to draw attention to Tab 4 in the exhibit book. They have one location with the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Mr. Wetherbee: Most people who are familiar with us know to expect updated and more refined. We really try to uplift.

Ms. Carter: With the way things are set up, only non-alcoholic beverages are served and alcohol is only served through a central point, controlling all points of the sale. In addition to no underage sales, someone may only order 1 drink at a time. Mr. Wetherbee, do you card 100%? (Mr. Wetherbee-Yes.) Do you have a policy in place for alcohol awareness?

Mr. Wetherbee: All employees must complete TIPS training. This differs across the states, but we all get certified in the state of Maryland.

Ms. Carter: Even though you will not be on site full time, do you know the rules and regulations of this Board? (Mr. Wetherbee- Yes.) Do you understand you will be responsible for anything that happens on the premise? (Mr. Wetherbee- Yes.) What is the minimum legal age to purchase alcoholic beverages? (Mr. Wetherbee-21.) What is the minimum legal age to sell and serve alcoholic beverages? (Mr. Wetherbee- 18.)

Mr. Wetherbee proves his knowledge of the 6 acceptable forms of identification for purchasing alcoholic beverages.

Ms. Carter: The total capital investment for this business has been \$7 million, correct? (Mr. Wetherbee-Yes.) Madam Chair, I have no further questions.

Ms. Forbes: Could we ask these questions to Mr. Nawab?

Ms. Carter: Of course! Akhtar, you heard the testimony of Michael, correct? (**Mr. Nawab-** Yes.) Do you believe everything that was said to be true and correct? (**Mr. Nawab-** Yes.) Tell us about yourself.

Mr. Nawab: I started cooking when I was young, around 20 years old. I've worked at 3- and 4-star restaurants in California. I've lived in New York since 1998. Michael and I formed this business in New York. The restaurant in New York has a few Michelin Awards. We are very focused and driven as a food hall. We are excited to help the community thrive with what we bring. Oh, and we have a restaurant in D.C. as well.

Ms. Forbes: Are there any more questions? Actually, paint a picture for me. I see centralized purchase but what about the location for drinking? What stops me from flipping a drink to an underage person?

Mr. Wetherbee: We have 3 managers on the floor. There is always management that is trained to be aware. Someone on staff would notice in their rounds.

Ms. Forbes: I will entertain a motion.

Commissioner Camacho makes a motion to grant t/a Le Fantome the Class B(DD) license, seconded by Commissioner Norman.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

Commissioner Norman: Is there a projected opening date?

Mr. Wetherbee: February or March.

Ms. Forbes: I'd like to take a moment to offer a moment for anyone from the public to speak on anything from the cases discussed here tonight. Anyone?

No further comments from the public, commissioners, or staff.

Adjourned: 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Schaefer
Administrative Aide BOLC