

**August 12, 2026
9200 Basil Court
Largo, MD 20774
Virtual Hearing**

Present:

Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms, Chair
Tammie Norman, Commissioner
Dennis Smith, Commissioner
Ono Achale, 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
Katrice James, Administrative Aide
Keyanna Little, Administrative Aide
Ariana Posada-Mejia, 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 as long as it is information that has been discussed in this hearing.

REGULAR SESSION

1. Gurpreet Bhinder, President, **t/a Pleasant Liquors**, located at 5704 Martin Luther King Highway, Seat Pleasant, 20743. For an alleged violation of Section 6-311, Purchase Alcoholic Beverages from other than a Wholesaler, of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and R.R. #11-Other than a Wholesaler, R.R.#26(A)(7)-Failure to Keep Records.

Continued from August 5, 2026. Represented by **William Ford, Esquire**.

Inspector Hawk of the ATCC gave a report of the incident that occurred on April 20, 2026.

Mr. Ford asked him what size the bottles that he confiscated were.

Mr. Hawk states they were two 750 ML Buffalo Trace Bourbons.

Mr. Ford proffered that these bottles came with the store when it was purchased from Seat Pleasant Liquors. Ms. Bhinder submitted a Bulk Sales Permit at the time that the license was issued. Mr. Ford's assistant sent over an exhibit to the Board in which Ms. Bhinder identified that it consisted of 6 pages of invoices that at the time that she spoke to agent Hawk she could not find.

Mr. Ford asks Ms. Bhinder if the past owner did the inventory for those 6 pages.

Ms. Bhinder states that they were in the office. It was in one of the many folders she had from the previous owner. The inventory did include Buffalo Trace Bourbon.

Mr. Hawk questions how many bottles were listed and in what year they were purchased.

Mr. Ford states that they were purchased in 2022 and it was a total of 6 of them.

Mr. Hawk informs the Board that those bottles on the invoices could not be the same bottles that were confiscated. The bottles from the date of seizure were less than 5 months old at the time of inspection. The BOLC submitted pictures to Mr. Ford's email prior to the hearing for review.

Mr. Ford was able to review the evidence that included 5 photographs.

Mr. Hawk explained to the Board that he has come in contact with employees from Sazerac, the company that distills and labels the bottles and learned how they mark each bottle of Buffalo Trace Bourbon according to the date and time it was packaged. The bottles confiscated were from 2025.

Mr. Ford questioned who had access to the bottles after confiscation to determine the security of the evidence.

Mr. Hawk stated that only him and the property manager from his department had access and no evidence was tampered with.

Mr. Ford does not believe Mr. Hawk has enough evidence or knowledge to know that the bottles confiscated were not the same ones transferred over to Ms. Bhinder during the Bulk Sales transfer. Mr. Hawk was not present to witness how each bottle is packaged and does not know for certain if the employees he spoke to were people who physically work with the operation of the plants. He states we have not been given any federal regulations or materials from Buffalo Trace or Sazerac that speaks on the measures or what kind of record keeping they make when these bottles are created. Ms. Bhinder is sincere about her belief that they were part of the 6 from the Bulk Sales transfer.

Commissioner Achale informed the Board that Buffalo Trace does have public information on their website showing what their trace looks like.

Commissioner Smith asks what the retail price for the bottle of Buffalo Trace is.

Ms. Bhinder is unsure because there are a few in inventory. She cannot give an estimate of what she believes they cost.

Commissioner Norman asks whether it is common practice for bottle distillers to label their whiskey to trace.

Mr. Hawk states that these specific bottles are awarded. Buffalo Trace is the only one that he has seen has laser dated their bottles this way.

Mr. Ford goes back into questioning the security of the evidence.

Mr. Hawk states it is a two-person job to secure the evidence that took about 30 minutes to box up, tape it, sign the tape and chain it in the evidence room. He had no other alcohol in his possession that was seized previously.

Attorney DeLoach asks if the photographs were officially entered into evidence and informs Mr. Ford, he has an opportunity to deny the photos if they were not officially moved into evidence.

Mr. Ford states that the pictures were not received as evidence at the time of seizure.

Mr. Hawk states that the photographs were not produced earlier since the invoices were received the day of this hearing.

Commissioner Norman motions to find t/a Pleasant Liquors in violation of R.R. No. 11 and R.R. No. 26(A)(F) assessing a fine of \$1,500, seconded by **Commissioner Smith**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

2. **t/a Cork and Bottle Liquors**, Daljit Singh, Member, DEM Corks & Bottles, LLC, 516 Main Street, Laurel, 20707. Request for a Delivery Permit.

Represented by Stephan Fogleman.

Mr. Fogleman states Mr. Gulati and Mr. Sharma will be the two main drivers. Mr. Gulati has been the manager of Cork and Bottle Liquors since 2021 when it was transferred to Mr. Singh.

Mr. Fogleman has gone over R.R. No. 76. With Mr. Singh and his delivery drivers. They are familiar with the Rules and Regulations of the Board. Their Alcohol Awareness certificates and the Traders License have been submitted to the Board.

Commissioner Norman motions to grant the Delivery Permit to t/a Cork and Bottle Liquors seconded by **Commissioner Smith**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

3. Constance A. Ikechi, Managing Member/Authorized Person, t/a **Tropicana Grill and Food Market**, located at 3503-3505 Maryland Avenue, Cheverly, 20785. For non-payment of fines related to violation of R.R. No. 83-Alcohol Awareness of the Rules and Regulations of Prince George's County.

Licensee has no attorney, acknowledges her right to an attorney and agrees to move forward without an attorney.

Ms. Ikechi informed the Board that she was in Africa for 6 months for a family matter. Her husband had checked the mailbox and stated no notice of the violation was in the mailbox. She had sent an email to the Board requesting a waiver as well as another email regarding the late fee being waived. She stated that the Alcohol Awareness certificate was in a drawer within the establishment. The employee who was asked for the certificate did not understand what was being asked for at the time of inspection.

Ariana Posada-Mejia, Keyanna Little and Patricia Bell of the BOLC testified that multiple notifications were made to the licensee and her husband. Ms. Posada-Mejia physically gave a copy of the violation letter when he came into the office during the 2026-2027 renewal period within the beginning of the year.

Commissioner Norman motioned to allow the fine to be paid within 15 and 30 days, payable in two payments of \$375. If the violation is not paid in full, the Board will suspend the license, seconded by **Commissioner Smith**.

After Board vote, the motion carries.

Adjourned: 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ariana Posada-Mejia

Administrative Aide BOLC