

LA GRANGE LIQUOR COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING

53 South La Grange Road
First Floor Conference Room
La Grange, IL 60525

Monday, October 28, 2019 – 6:45 p.m.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

A special meeting of the La Grange Liquor Commission was called to order at 6:45 p.m. by Liquor Commissioner Thomas Livingston.

Present and constituting a quorum were Liquor Commissioner Thomas Livingston, Commissioner Mike Kotynek and Commissioner Mark Kuchler.

Absent: None.

Also present: Village Trustee Beth Augustine, Village Manager Andrianna Peterson, Village Attorney Mark Burkland, Community Development Director Charity Jones and Police Chief Kurt Bluder.

2. Approval of the Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Kuchler and seconded by Commissioner Kotynek to approve the minutes of October 14, 2019, as submitted. The motion carried on a voice vote.

3. Liquor License Request Class A-2 / Madison Local LLC d/b/a The Elm Restaurant

Liquor Commissioner Livingston asked Village Manager Peterson to provide an overview of the liquor license application.

Village Manager Peterson responded that the Village has received an application for a Class A-2 liquor license from Madison Local LLC d/b/a The Elm Restaurant located at 19-23 W. Harris Avenue. Dan Spain is the managing member (65.44% ownership), Mark Halverson is a member (13.33% ownership) and the additional 21.23% is split between 14 other investors, none with a percentage larger than 3.33%. Dustin Heilmann will be both the store manager and liquor manager.

A Class A-2 Restaurant License authorizes the licensee to sell at retail and serve alcoholic liquor for consumption in the restaurant's dining area in conjunction with a meal and also in a bar or lounge area of the licensed premises. In controlling the dispensing of alcohol, applicants and licensees of a Class A-2 must prove to the satisfaction of the Village that more than 60% of the gross annual revenue of the dining establishment has resulted from the sale of food. Alcoholic liquor may be

served at either the bar and lounge area or in the general seating area. This license also authorizes the licensee to allow customers to carry in their own beer and wine to be consumed within the licensed premises, but only in conjunction with the service of a meal.

Commissioner Livingston thanked The Elm Restaurant team for their investment.

Owner Dan Spain explained that the two story location is still under construction and will include a rooftop deck with a projected opening date of December 15. They are excited to bring this new restaurant to La Grange.

Store and Liquor Manager Dustin Heilmann explained that this was his third new restaurant opening. His other openings include Rosebud in Naperville and Nico Osteria in downtown Chicago. He brings 15 years of experience in the industry to the venture and explained that The Elm will be a great neighborhood restaurant and representation of the community. He explained that the Head Chef is also an asset to the team as an experienced restaurateur with 4 successful restaurant openings. He anticipates that food sales will account for 70% of revenue while liquor sales will account for 30% of sales.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired if lunch will be offered. Mr. Heilmann responded that while The Elm may start off as dinner only, they anticipate offering lunch in the beginning of 2020.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired as to the structure of the corporations involved in the venture. Mr. Spain clarified that he was the sole member of the Harris Restaurant Group and that the location was owned by 21 Harris LLC while Madison Local LLC will be doing business as The Elm Restaurant.

Commissioner Kuchler asked if they expected to meet their hiring needs. Mr. Heilmann explained that they intend to hire an initial staff and then retain their team through team building. Mr. Spain added that they anticipate to keep staff by creating a restaurant that is highly sought after with atmosphere, ambiance and private event rooms; all of which are aspects that are missed in the western suburbs. He explained that good restaurant employees are currently commuting downtown to work at restaurants that offer the same and The Elm would offer the opportunity to work closer to home at the same quality.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired how parking would be managed for private events and if they are looking into a private valet service. Community Development Director Jones responded that staff is currently looking into how to license private valets for The Elm and others that are interested in such options. Mr. Spain responded that he also intends to speak with Cossitt School and the Village further in regards to valet use of parking lots.

Commissioner Kuchler asked what inspired Mr. Spain to pursue a restaurant concept. Mr. Spain answered that he was looking at different real estate opportunities but none offered the amenities that he enjoyed in downtown Chicago. He stated that at 19 W. Harris Avenue he found the perfect location and was able to create the amenities. He met both his General Manager, Dustin Heilmann, and his head Chef through a recruiter. They shared his vision and high expectations in creating The

Elm. He expects that The Elm will represent La Grange and the community and offer a place for people to gather.

Commissioner Kotynek expressed his appreciation for their solid business plan as well as the addition of their private banquet rooms, which he thinks will do well in La Grange. He asked if there were any plans to manage noise from music on the terrace. Mr. Spain noted that they are not going to host loud parties but do anticipate hosting weddings with designated end times where doors to the outside would be shut. Communication with those renting the venue will be key. As they move towards private events they will continue to communicate with their neighbors and the Village to ensure a smooth relationship. Director Jones noted that they were examining the Code of Ordinances in regards to the noise ordinance.

Commissioner Livingston thanked The Elm team for attending and creating an exciting concept. He is excited to see their investment advance and appreciated their continued approach to working together to solve any outstanding issues.

Mr. Heilmann thanked the Commission and reiterated that the next steps for The Elm consist of hiring a private dining coordinator as well as partnering with the Village on valet and noise concerns.

After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Kotynek and seconded by Commissioner Kuchler that the Liquor Commission recommends: (a) that the Village Board of Trustees creates one new Class A-2 Liquor License and (b) that the Liquor Commissioner issues that license to Madison Local LLC d/b/a The Elm Restaurant at 19-23 W. Harris Avenue. Motion carried.

President Livingston thanked the applicants and stated that the recommendation for approval would be made to the Village Board at its meeting on November 11 at 7:30 P.M.

4. Other Business

The Commission asked inquired as to the status of other pending liquor licenses. Staff provided updates.

5. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Kotynek and seconded by Commissioner Kuchler that the meeting of the Liquor Commission be adjourned. The motion carried on a voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Submitted by:
Andrianna Peterson
Village Manager

Date Approved: