

LA GRANGE LIQUOR COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING

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

Monday, February 24, 2020 – 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 Manager Andrianna Peterson, Community Development Director Charity Jones, Police Chief Kurt Bluder and Administrative Intern Kevin Noreikis.

2. Approval of the Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Kotynek and seconded by Commissioner Kuchler to approve the minutes of January 13, 2020, as submitted. The motion carried on a voice vote.

3. Liquor License Request Class A-2 / MG-Cuisine LLC d/b/a Marco's Kitchen

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 MG-Cuisine LLC d/b/a Marco's Kitchen located at 26 South La Grange Road #207. Marco Conte is the sole owner and manager. He will be operating as the 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.

Owner Marco Conte explained that he has over 43 years of experience in the cooking industry, most recently with Café Amano and Market Table in Elmhurst. He stated that his restaurant will have a wide range of cuisines as well as inspired beverages. There are 50 seats total in the restaurant and he wants to make every seat count.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired as to the private events that Mr. Conte intends to host. Mr. Conte explained that private events could be scheduled for lunch during the week, or on the weekend.

Commissioner Kotynek asked why Mr. Conte chose La Grange. Mr. Conte responded that he has always been interested in La Grange and when an opening became available he took the opportunity. He noted that the available valet parking is helpful. He explained that the only changes being made to the interior of the restaurant were cosmetic and progressing quickly.

Trustee Kotynek inquired as to how much time Mr. Conte intends to spend at the restaurant. Mr. Conte responded that it would likely be between 60 – 70 hours a week. He is looking forward to building a relationship with his customers due to his presence in both the kitchen as well as the dining room.

Commissioner Kotynek inquired if staff will be required to have BASSET training. Mr. Conte responded that everyone will be required to have a valid BASSET certificate.

Commissioner Kuchler asked how much additional hiring would be needed before opening. Mr. Conte responded that while he currently has a sous chef and bar manager on staff, he will need to hire additional help.

Commissioner Kuchler asked if Mr. Conte looked in Elmhurst for a location. Mr. Conte responded that while he looked in Elmhurst, all locations available in Elmhurst would need a build out whereas the La Grange location only required cosmetic changes. Commissioner Kuchler asked if he intended to keep the big oven in the kitchen for pizza. Mr. Conte responded that while he would not be selling pizza, he would be baking fresh bread that will be available at the restaurant and La Grange farmers market.

Commissioner Kotynek inquired if he had reached out to the La Grange Business Association. Mr. Conte responded that he had reached out to them and as he is community minded, is looking forward to becoming more involved in La Grange.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired as to his concerns regarding both availability of parking and the serviceability of valet. Mr. Conte responded that La Grange is unique due to its proximity to the train, foot traffic, available valet services, and parking garage. With these different amenities as well as services such as Uber, he is not as concerned with parking availability.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired as to how many employees Mr. Conte was intending to hire. Mr. Conte responded that he was intending to hire 12 full time employees.

Commissioner Kuchler asked if Mr. Conte built a following while working in Elmhurst. Mr. Conte responded that he had built a following and has already received inquiries as to reservation availability.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired if Mr. Conte would be utilizing the Open Table phone app. Mr. Conte responded that he would prefer to use the in-house event planner to book tables in advance. He intends to create an atmosphere where customers do not feel like a number.

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 MG-Cuisine LLC d/b/a Marco's Kitchen at 26 South La Grange Road #207. Motion carried.

President Livingston thanked Mr. Conte for his investment and stated that the recommendation for approval would be considered by the Village Board at its meeting on March 9, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

4. Other Business

None.

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 7:08 p.m.

Submitted by:
Andrianna Peterson
Village Manager

Date Approved: