

LA GRANGE LIQUOR COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING

53 South La Grange Road  
Village Hall Auditorium  
La Grange, IL 60525

Wednesday, July 8, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

A special meeting of the La Grange Liquor Commission was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Liquor Commissioner Mark Kuchler.

Present and constituting a quorum were Liquor Commissioner Mark Kuchler, Commissioner Mike Kotynek and Commissioner Beth Augustine.

Absent: None

Also present: 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 Kotynek and seconded by Commissioner Augustine to approve the minutes of February 24, 2020, as submitted. The motion carried on a voice vote.

3. Review of Waterlemon License and Operations

Liquor Commissioner Kuchler asked Village Manager Peterson to provide an overview of the topic.

Village Manager Peterson responded that on December 10, 2018, the Village Board approved the creation of an additional Class H liquor license for a new concept for Waterlemon Kids LLC at 25 S. La Grange Road, subject to a review of the license and operations of the business before a license is reissued for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Chief Bluder reported that there have been no calls to the location and no activity to report.

Owner Paul Makovski explained that Waterlemon holds itself to a strict standard. They limit the alcohol to wine only, allow one bottle for every six adults, and hold bottles behind the desk. He reported that the expectations are clearly laid out for the two hour parties. He advised that around one out of every four or five bookings requests BYO.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired as to how Waterlemon has handled the impacts of COVID-19. Mr. Makovski responded that it has been challenging, but they adapted by pivoting to providing items such as balloons, parties in a box and Easter Bunny visits.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired as to the future plans of Waterlemon. Mr. Makovski responded that they plan to adjust the space before reopening at the end of July with limited capacity, prescheduled time slots, extra sanitation practices and shorter shifts, in addition to maintaining free local deliveries.

Mr. Makovski stated that they are interested in providing additional private events, and request that the Village look into amending the Ordinance to provide for the ability to increase private events from 4 events to 6 or 8 per year.

Commissioner Kuchler thanked Waterlemon for their investment. After discussion it was the consensus of the Liquor Commission that Waterlemon had satisfied the review requirement and would no longer need to attend an in-person review for the annual review process. The Commission directed staff to issue the Liquor License to Waterlemon after all typical requirements have been satisfied.

4. Liquor License Hearing – Mak’s La Grange LLC d/b/a Mak’s House La Grange

On October 30, 2017, the Village Board approved the creation of an additional Class A-2 liquor license for Cheesie’s La Grange, LLC at 46 S. La Grange Road, subject to certain conditions. Among these conditions, the license holder must reapply for a new license each year including, at the Village’s discretion, a hearing and new background checks on each owner and manager.

On April 8, 2019, the Village Board approved the creation of a new liquor license under a new corporate structure and new name of Mak’s House La Grange. The new corporate structure includes three of the four members of Cheesie’s La Grange LLC. The previous conditions present under the Cheesie’s La Grange, LLC, remained applicable under Mak’s House La Grange.

Chief Bluder reported that backgrounds have been completed for two of the three owners and that he recommended that the conditions remain for an additional year. There has not been any police activity at the restaurant except to follow up on a complaint related to the license conditions. According to owner Mike Siambanes, the issue has been resolved.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired as to the status of the business. Owner Mike Siambanes responded that after transitioning to Mak’s House and completing construction, they were doing well going into this spring.

After discussion, the Commission directed staff to issue the license after all requirements have been satisfied with the same conditions for one additional year. At next year’s hearing, consideration would be given to eliminate some or all of the conditions.

5. Liquor License Request Class A-2 / CPBW Inc. d/b/a Woow Sushi Japanese Restaurant

The Village has received an application for a Class A-2 liquor license from CPBW Inc. d/b/a Woow Sushi Japanese Restaurant located at 35 South La Grange Road. Wei Biao and Cuiping Chen purchased the business from the previous owner. Mr. Biao 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.

Both owners were fingerprinted at the La Grange Police Department and the Police Department is currently in the process of completing those checks. Therefore, it is recommended that if the Liquor Commission is inclined to recommend the issuance of a license, that it be contingent upon successful completion of the background investigations.

Commissioner Kuchler thanked CPBW Inc. for their investment and stated that as new business owners they should take the privilege of a license very seriously.

Commissioner Kotynek inquired as to when the business was sold. Mr. Biao advised that the business was sold on January 1, 2020.

Commissioner Kotynek asked Chief Bluder if any issues had been reported at the restaurant. Chief Bluder responded that no issues had been reported.

Commissioner Augustine inquired if they would be making any changes to the interior of the business. Mr. Biao responded that they are not looking to make any changes at this time.

Commissioner Kotynek inquired as to the 2019-2020 breakdown of food versus liquor sold. Manager Peterson responded that last year the sales were 86% food and 14% liquor.

Commissioner Kuchler inquired if all servers were Basset trained. Mr. Biao responded that all servers are Basset trained. At this time, they are not open for dine-in and have continued to provide carryout services resulting in limited staff. Until they receive a liquor license, they are not selling any alcohol.

After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Kotynek and seconded by Commissioner Augustine 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 CPBW Inc. d/b/a Woow Sushi Japanese Restaurant located at 35 South La Grange Road contingent upon successful completion of the background investigation. Motion carried.

Commissioner Kuchler thanked Mr. Biao for his investment and stated that the recommendation for approval would be considered by the Village Board at its meeting on July 13, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

4. Other Business

Village Manager Peterson reported on topics including updates on existing businesses, restaurant rebranding efforts, new restaurant openings, and one restaurant closure. She also reported on the status of liquor licenses which have been extended during the pandemic.

The Commission asked staff to research a possible amendment to the Liquor Code to allow for additional events under the Class E license.

5. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Kotynek and seconded by Commissioner Augustine that the meeting of the Liquor Commission be adjourned. The motion carried on a voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Submitted by:  
Andrianna Peterson  
Village Manager

Date Approved: