



**ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 6B
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE & CANNABIS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday, December 3, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

(VIRTUAL MEETING)

REPORT

I. Introduction of Commissioners and Resident Members

Commissioners: Chander Jayaraman; Gerald Sroufe; David Sobelsohn; Frank D’Andrea

Resident Members: George Dee; Katherine Szafran; Kristen Hutchens; Jonathan Levy; Russ Mawn;

II. Alcohol License Cases

1. ABRA-077797—Café BISTRO Med, LLC t/a Café 8, Class “C” Restaurant License; Request to modify occupancy limit in Settlement Agreement. [6B04]
 - Modify the established capacity in the Settlement Agreement from 88 patrons to 180 patrons due to expansion of occupied space;
 - Current hours of sales, service and consumption of alcohol on the interior from Sun-Thurs. 10 AM to 1:30 AM; Fri- Sat 10 AM to 2:30 AM;
 - Entertainment Endorsement approved by ANC 6B in December, 2023 after a sound check.

CHAIR NOTES: The owners of Café 8 purchased the three adjacent buildings on the north side of their current establishment (towards the fire station) at some point in 2022 or 2023. This occurred prior to the approval of the entertainment endorsement for Café 8 in December 2023. During the discussion regarding their application for an entertainment endorsement, the Applicant did state their intent to expand Café 8 across on the ground floor by adjoining the three adjacent buildings. The existing second floor apartments were renovated and currently are used for that purpose. The Applicant is requesting to change the occupancy listed in the Settlement Agreement. They have incorporated sound proofing measures into the new space by sound proofing walls, and installing heavy sound proofing curtains towards the front of the expanded establishment. The Applicants indicated that they are pursuing a different business model that attracts an older clientele and have started the process of transitioning to a sports bar theme with hookahs rather than their current entertainment model which includes music with a Disk Jockey (DJ).

The Applicant requested a change to the occupancy stated in the Settlement Agreement from 88 patrons and 54 seats) to a total of 180 seats and maximum patrons so that they could use the new space. Ms. Elis Sam, Mr. Ramazan Sam, and Mr. Christopher Wright appeared before the Committee. She stated that Café 8 had opened up the walls to connect the four formerly separate addresses (420, 422, 424, 426 8th Street SE) into one Establishment. She went on to state that the renovated space has sound proof walls and sound dampening curtains to ensure compliance with the previous sound test, and 27 cameras to monitor both the interior and exterior of the building. The larger establishment will have seven exits, 8 bathrooms, and a fire sprinkler system as required by the DC Department of Buildings (DOB) for the size of the space and occupancy. The DOB calculated the maximum occupancy of the space as 250 people. However, the Applicant is seeking a capacity of 180 people and wish to operate more like a sit down restaurant and sports bar with hookah.

In addition, the Applicant has started to transition to the new business model and have formally changed the age limit of patrons to 30 years of age over the past two weeks. Cmr. D’Andrea asked about operational changes: Ms. Sam stated that previously they had younger crowd who are harder to control;

menu is the same; Ms. Sam said that they will have DJ but they want everyone to sit down so they changed the age limit to 30. Mr. Wright shared that the age change was posted on social media which he claimed received 60,000 views and 50,000 likes.

Com. Sroufe asked whether the age-limit was discriminatory and was permitted under current law. Ms. Sam reported checking with an ABCA licensing specialist who stated that because it was a private establishment, there was no objection to setting a higher age limit than 21. Com. Sroufe asked about the impact of the increased capacity on parking. The Applicant replied that most of their clients come using Uber so the impact should not be adverse. Resident member Szafran reiterated the concern regarding the impact on neighborhood parking. She asked about the capacity of the trash room to accommodate the additional trash generated. They indicated that they have sufficient capacity but would get more trash pick up if necessary. They also plan to work with the third-party trash company to ensure regular trash pick up.

RM Szafran raised the on-going concern about customers who leave Establishments then cause noise issues in the surrounding neighborhood where they are parked. The Applicant stated that is one of the reasons that Café 8 is changing their business model from the DJ / party type of establishment to a more low key sports bar and actively working to bring in older patrons.

There was a discussion about the security plan and what could be included in the plan. The Applicant, in consultation with ABCA, created and submitted a Security Plan to ABCA in 2023 in compliance with the requirements in the SA that provided the Applicant with an entertainment endorsement. The discussion led to the idea of incorporating a staggered release approach that was created by the owners of As You Are, Bar. The concept is to end all entertainment one hour before closing and end all alcoholic beverage sales 30 minutes before closing. The concept is that some portion of the patrons would leave once the music stopped, more patrons would depart once sales and service end, and the remaining would leave at close. In order to facilitate a staggered release with the hours of operation specified in the SA, the Applicant agreed to roll back the hours of sales and consumption of alcohol by 30 minutes on Friday and Saturday from 2:30 am to 2:00 am. In practice, this would result in music ending at 1:00 am; alcohol beverage sales and service ending at 1:30 am and the remaining patrons to close their tab and exit the Establishment by 2:00 am. **RM Szafran asked whether the Applicant would be willing to do another sound check and the Applicant said Yes. This will need to be completed prior to March 2025 when this license will be considered for renewal.**

FINAL MOTION: Modify SA to increase capacity to 180; adjust the sales service and consumption as discussed and approval is contingent on receipt of a Security Plan elements including patrons are seated; staggered release and DJ music; if the SP is not received, then the Commission should not approve the request; [D'Andrea; Sobelsohn 2nd], There was an amendment to the original motion which passed unanimously. The final motion also passed unanimously 9-0-0

III. Administrative Matter

- Selection of a Chair Pro Tempore for the January and February 2025 ABC Committee meetings;

CHAIR NOTES: The Chair asked if Commissioner or Resident member on the committee would be willing to serve as the Chair Pro Tempore. Receiving no volunteer, the Chair presented another option. The proposed plan is to nominate Commissioner-elect Anna Krebs to become a resident member of the ABC Committee since only Commissioners or a resident member on the Committee can serve as Chair. After being appointed to the Committee, ANC 6B can vote to appoint Ms. Krebs as the Chair Pro Tempore for the January and February Committee meetings. The current Chair has offered to stay on as a resident member to assist the incoming Chair Pro Tempore with leading the committee until a new Chair has been selected.

ACTION: Committee members voiced their support for this plan of action and had no objections to the strategy presented. The Committee encouraged the Commission to ensure that a Chair Pro Tempore is appointed.

IV. Other Issues / Topics

- 2025 Restaurant and Tavern license renewal schedule and process;

V. Adjourn