

City of Naperville

*400 S. Eagle Street
Naperville, IL 60540*



Naperville

Meeting Minutes - Final

Thursday, August 8, 2024

3:00 PM

Council Chambers

Liquor Commission

A. CALL TO ORDER:**B. ROLL CALL:**

- Present** 6 - Steve Chirico, Kelly Douglas, John Koranda, Ray McGury, Mitch Stauffer, and Mayor Scott Wehrli
- Absent** 1 - Anthony Signorella

Staff Present: Rachel Pruneda, Assistant to the Mayor; Detective Marty Creighton, Liquor & Tobacco Liaison, Naperville Police Department; Sabrina Spano, Deputy City Attorney

Also Present: Monica Conners, President of Naperville Development Partnership

C. PUBLIC FORUM:

The following speakers addressed the Liquor Commission:

Ken Eng, Anthem Ale House

Mr. Eng stated that he is concerned about Block 59 causing them to lose customers and not being able to compete with the big chains. Mr. Eng is asking the Commission to add video gaming and businesses would then be able to lower their costs with an additional source of income. Adding that they cannot be competitive with these other businesses. He also added that marijuana dispensaries have been approved so why not video gaming.

Nick Tucker - Patron at Anthem Ale House

Mr. Tucker addressed the Commission to share what Ken has already stated. Business has been tough and an additional source of income will help keep Ken above water. He has known Ken along time and he is here to support him and other businesses on approving video gaming in Naperville.

Bryce Logsdon, White Tavern 3:06 pm

Ms. Logso spoke on behalf of the White Tavern, it's a family owned business. They survived tough times during COVID and he is here to support a gaming license that will offer a much needed revenue boost. It's crucial for businesses like theirs and he believes that video gaming will not bring in crime. He is asking for a fair chance to compete to keep his business alive. Adding video gaming will provide support to all businesses like his.

Jonathan Santos, Paris Bistro Owner

Mr. Santos addressed the Commission and stated they have been in business since 2017. Paris Bistro is a family owned business and video gaming is something that is strongly needed, especially on the south side of Naperville. He also stated that he will not be able to compete with Cheesecake Factory or Smash burger. As a family owned business, he cannot compete with the bigger chain restaurants. They need some type of revenue and some tools to help

them stay afloat. He further stated that they support video gaming.

John Parkhurst, Independence Insurance Broker and longtime resident of Naperville for 25 years.

Mr. Parkhurst stated that he is an independence insurance broker that specializes in large restaurants, hospitality insurance across the country. He writes the insurance for Ken Eng from Anthem Ale House. He has seen firsthand what COVID has done to the restaurant industry, but also inflation itself. He said that when minimum wage goes up, workman's comp and taxes also go up. Our local small businesses need a competitive edge in order to compete against the larger chains that are coming into the area. He further stated that people may say that gaming brings in a bad element but he has had 0 claims that have increased from any of his clients across the country who have added video gaming. He stated that video gaming has not brought in the wrong crowd. It's simply not true and should be addressed.

John Norman, Naperville resident

Mr. Norman addressed the Commission to support Ken Eng. He stated that with Block 59 coming in and being a small restaurant against these national chains, he would be nervous too. He does not want to see big business coming and and wiping out small business. He would ask that the Commission be considerate and please help.

Seana Somolik, owner of Danny's Pub & Grill

Ms. Somolik addressed the Commission. She is the owner of Danny's Pub & Grill. Danny's has been in business since 1991 and Seana took over in 2017. Seana stated hat 22,000 in the State of Illinois closed permanently due to COVID and Danny's has made it but that she works 100 hours a week. Gambling if allowed to happen would be life changing for them for small business. 59 Corridor will probably put them out of business. They would greatly benefit fro having video gaming like the surrounding communities. There are 20 people a day that come in to ask if they have video gambling. Having another source of income would allow her to hire cooks, bartenders, servers and she would be able to make improvements.

Mayor Wehrli addressed the issue stating that currently the video gaming issue and the Liquor Commission is somewhat restricted in what it has the power to do. Video gaming issue will need to be brought to the City Council and the City Council would need to have 3 council people be willing to put the video gaming question on an agenda for the Council to take some future action. That future action could be to send it to Liquor Commission to consider what the ramifications would be as far as our current liquor licensees. Mayor directed the speakers to speak at a City Council meeting under Public Forum.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Approve the regular Liquor Commission meeting minutes of April 4, 2024

Attachments: [April 4 Draft Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Chirico, seconded by Koranda, passed. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

E. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Consider AJ's Liquorland variance request to purchase Solo Liquor located at 1474 East Chicago Avenue.

Attachments: [AJ's Liquorland Concept Application](#)

[AJ's Variance Request](#)

[AJ's Liquorland Variance Receipt](#)

Aadi Patel, petitioner and potential owner of Aj's Liquorland is seeking a Class D - Package Store Liquor License. Mr. Patel is seeking a variance of the square footage requirement. He has plans to purchase Solo Liquors at 1474 E. Chicago Ave. He is the current owner of Aj's Liquorland in Aurora, IL and plans to open his 2nd store in Naperville. Mayor Wehrli advised the Commission that the owners of Solo Liquors came before the Commission to request a variance which was approved, but that the license cannot be transferred to a new owner. Commissioners asked Detective Creighton if there were any violations at the Aurora business to which Det. Creighton confirmed that he contacted the Aurora Police Department and the City Clerk's Office in Aurora and there were no violations.

A motion was made by Commissioner Chirico, seconded by Commissioner Stauffer to recommend that the petitioner be referred to the City Council for approval of variance request regarding the minimum 60,000 square feet for a strip center.

This Report was approved and referred to the August 20th City Council meeting.

Aye: 5 - Chirico, Douglas, Koranda, McGury, and Stauffer

Excused: 1 - Mayor Wehrli

Absent: 1 - Signorella

F. REPORTS:

1. Restaurant Association Update

Restaurant Association update.

Monica Connors is the new President of Naperville Development Partnership and is speaking on behalf of the Naperville Restaurant Association to provide a quick update. Monica stated that they have advertised in 30 publications and we started the process of designing the new dining guide. In 2024, they have

distributed 75,000 guides. When they advertise they include a QR codes for people to scan the guide. As far as future liquor liquor license applications, they are aware of 11 businesses that will be pursuing licenses over the coming year. They are actively working with several restaurants on new locations in Naperville. August 20th, they will be attending a Illinois Restaurant Association networking event to promote Naperville to the Chicagoland area restaurants to make sure that Naperville is on the list of fine dining list for the City of Chicago, we want to make sure that Naperville is on that list.

We look forward to supporting the residents of Naperville with a variety of food choices.

2. Receive BASSET statistics for April - July 2024

Receive and file the BASSET report provided by Detective Creighton.

3. Receive the tobacco report

Receive and file the tobacco report provided by Det. Creighton.

4. Receive the DUI reports for May and June 2024

Attachments: [City of Naperville DUI Liquor Report-June 2024](#)

[City of Naperville DUI Liquor Report-May 2024](#)

Receive and file the DUI report provided by Detective Marty Creighton.

5. Receive the Liquor Concept Committee Report

Attachments: [Liquor Concept Report 08-08-2024](#)

Receive and file the Liquor Concept Committee Report provided by Rachel Pruneda.

G. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

H. ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Chirico made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Koranda to adjourn the meeting at 3:40 p.m.

/s/ Rachel Pruneda
Rachel Pruneda, Assistant to the Mayor