



CITY OF MELROSE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

PAUL A. BRODEUR
Mayor

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January 4, 2024

Joseph Nevin, Chair
Melrose Liquor Licensing Commission
Melrose City Hall
562 Main Street
Melrose, MA 02176

RE: Update of Liquor Licensing Commission regulations

Dear Chairman Nevin and Members of the Board:

I write to thank you for your service to the community and to put one more matter on your plate.

In reviewing our liquor licensing regulations to prepare for introducing the farmer-brewery model to the city, we discovered the regulations have several outdated and/or inconsistent provisions.

This presents challenges for the Commission and the business community in understanding, implementing, and enforcing the regulations. The regulations should also be amended to increase opportunities for businesses to enter Melrose, operate profitably, and provide the amenities and services that our residents desire and deserve.

To facilitate this effort, I offer the attached draft regulations. These revisions represent a more clearly organized and understandable product. The draft regulations address many of the issues that arose over the course of our

review as well as the review undertaken by the ad hoc committee that reviewed the regulations early in my term. For example, the current regulations do not make clear the differences between different types of licenses such as the one-day license versus other licenses. The regulations are not clear regarding whether club licensees must follow the same rules as other licensees. The current regulations reference an entertainment license, failing to account for the fact that the city has no process for issuing entertainment licenses. The current regulations even prohibit licensees from having open windows at their establishments, a rule that Rising Eagle and Giacomo's currently do not comply with on a seasonal basis, much to the delight of their patrons. These are just a few examples of areas the draft regulations address.

This is also a matter of competitive disadvantage. None of our four surrounding communities restricts the sale of alcoholic beverages in a similar fashion to Melrose. Medford does have some restrictions but explicitly exempts breweries from any food requirement. The hospitality sector is the lifeblood of our neighbors' successful local business districts, drawing in foot traffic that benefits existing businesses and draws in new ones. It also generates direct additional revenue for the city through growth in meals tax receipts.

Finally, it will come as no surprise that the revisions also include the elimination of the food ordering requirement. While having food available for purchase either onsite or offsite can make sense, a requirement that patrons order food is ineffective and essentially unenforceable. I am unaware of the Commission or the ABCC ever taking an enforcement action based on a violation of this rule. In addition, one-day licensees are not held to this standard as a matter of practice (though under the current regulations, it appears the rule does apply to one-day licensees).

The good news is that Melrose has enjoyed great success licensing events where food is available but ordering food is not required. Our events at Memorial Hall like Beer and Bites, Rotary events, the Bridge Trivia Bee and many others have been extremely well-attended without any incidents of concern. Hundreds of people enjoyed our two beer gardens (so far) at the Beebe Estate without incident. Temple Beth Shalom has also hosted many successful events using this model.

The Commission has always been at the forefront of careful reform of our regulations to protect public safety and allow our residents and others to enjoy the responsible consumption of beer, wine, and spirits. The community has already demonstrated that the proposed changes can accomplish both goals. It is time to move ahead with this comprehensive reform.

In closing, I want to thank City Solicitor Shannon Phillips, Economic Development Director Lauren Grymek and LCC Clerk Tanji Cifuni for their hard work on this important project. Thank you to them and again to you for your service to Melrose. I look forward to participating in this conversation as a civilian.

Sincerely,

Paul Brodeur

Enclosure

CC: Commissioner Michael Iudice

Commissioner Kevin Cronin

Mayor-elect Jennifer Grigoraitis

Tanji Cifuni, Clerk, LLC

Council President-elect Leila Miglorelli

Director of Economic Development Lauren Grymek

City Solicitor Shannon Phillips