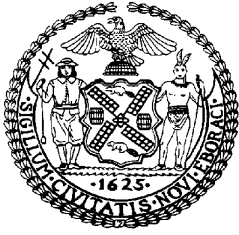


Borough President, Donovan Richards



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

The City of New York
Borough of Queens

Community Board 8

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Deputy Borough President, Ebony Young



District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Cannabis License Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, October 15, 2024
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Community Board 8 Office
197-15 Hillside Avenue
Hollis, NY 11423

Michael Hannibal, Cannabis License Committee Chair

Committee Members Present: Edward Chung, James Gallagher, Caitlin Marziliano and Michael Hannibal

Committee Members Absent: Douglas Sherman, Aliyah Salim, Alan Ong, David Mordukhaev, Mary Maggio, Marva Dudley and Maria DeInnocentiis

Also in attendance: Yolanda Gallagher, Kaza Ofarov, Jae Yu, Greg Kornegay and Paul Pagan
CB8 Staff: Naima Hernandez and Soleil Griffin

Cannabis/Liquor License Committee Chair Michael Hannibal called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. This was followed by self-introductions of all Board Members and staff.

Purpose:

This application was rescheduled from September 17, 2024. The applicant, Royal Skewers located at 190-11 and 190-13 Union Turnpike in Fresh Meadow, is applying for a Liquor, Wine, Beer and Cider License. Chairman Michael Hannibal asked the applicant to state their name for the record. Applicant Simpka Gorgov

Michael Hannibal

Is the restaurant a full restaurant with a bar?

Answer: [Simpka Gorgov] – Yes.

Michael Hannibal

Do you have a certificate of occupancy?

Answer: [Simpka Gorgov] – Yes.

Michael Hannibal

Were you able to provide that to our Community Board Manager?

Answer: [Simpka Gorgov] - No

Michael Hannibal

Will you be able to send that to us via email?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - Yes.

Michael Hannibal

How many people can fit into the restaurant at any given time?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - Between 40-60.

Michael Hannibal

You are under the requirement under the public assembly permit. Just for the record 75 is the maximum, to trigger the public assembly permit. What are the hours of operation?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - 12 p.m. -11 p.m.

Michael Hannibal

Is that Monday – Friday?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - Yes. On Friday it is before sundown that we have to close.

Michael Hannibal

What time do you close on Friday?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - 4 p.m.

Michael Hannibal

It is 12 p.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] – Yes.

Michael Hannibal

How would you handle underage drinking at the restaurant?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - Of course, my bartender knows not to serve those under 21 years old.

Michael Hannibal

Has he been trained to know? Will he be looking at ID's?

Answer: [Simpka Gorgov] – Yes. Before the [job] interview I asked him, and he knows that.

Michael Hannibal

Is he trained? Because there is a training program.

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - Yes, he is trained.

Michael Hannibal

If at any given time, say something comes up, can we see a license or certificate of his training? Would you be able to provide that?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - Yes.

Michael Hannibal

Are there security measures that you are taking to ensure that everything is copacetic?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] – Yes. My son and Rabbi are working there.

Michael Hannibal

Do they have any type of security training in case there is any type of skirmishes or any type of issues with an irate customer?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - No. My Rabbi was a soldier, maybe that will help.

Michael Hannibal

You are relying on their physical training to help with the security?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - Yes. We also have cameras inside and outside.

Michael Hannibal

How do you intend to maintain cleanliness in front of the establishment, i.e. meaning smokers and people loitering?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] First of all, everybody knows there is no smoking inside. Outside, they have to take a couple of feet out to smoke. Not in front of the restaurant.

Michael Hannibal

Will you have little ashtrays if someone is smoking in front of the restaurant.

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - Yes.

Chairperson Hannibal opened the meeting for questions from the Board Members.

Caitlin Marzilliano

In terms of security, how old is your son?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - 25.

Caitlin Marzilliano

Between the two of them, Rabbi and son, one of them will be there every night?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - Yes.

Caitlin Marzilliano

Are they being paid in the capacity of a bouncer?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - They are managing the whole place. They know the rules and regulations

Michael Hannibal

Are they paid employees?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] Yes.

Caitlin Marzilliano:

So, they are like managers?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] Yes.

Ed Chung

If you have a rowdy customer, do you have a panic button that notifies the police to come?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - I can do that. I do not have that.

Ed Chung

How long have you had this business? Is this the same location you have had for years?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] – No. I had a different location.

Ed Chung

Do you have any problems with the Department of Health?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - No.

Jim Gallagher

On the application you have two addresses 190-11 and 190-13 any difference?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] – No. It is just an extension to the store.

Michael Hannibal

Can I have a motion to accept the application for Royal Skewers Incorporated located at 190-11 and 190-13 Union Turnpike in Fresh Meadows?

Motion made by Edward Chung and seconded by Caitlin Marziliano.

Votes in favor: Unanimous

Committee Members who voted in favor: Michael Hannibal, Edward Chung, James Gallagher, and Caitlin Marziliano

Michael Hannibal

Is your restaurant open to people who may not be of the same faith?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] - Yes.

Ed Chung

Is the food 100% kosher?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] – Yes.

Michael Hannibal

When are you looking to open?

Answer [Simpka Gorgov] – We are open already.

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Purpose:

The applicant, 143 Street Deli and Discount Corp. located at 143-01 Hillside Avenue in Jamaica, is applying for Beer and Cider License and Temporary Retail Permit. Chairman Michael Hannibal asked the applicant to state their name for the record. Applicant Kaza Ofarov and representative Jae Yu.

Michael Hannibal

Is the establishment a full restaurant?

Answer [Kaza Ofarov] - There is a restaurant inside.

Answer [Jae Yu] - In front of it is a deli. There is a cooking facility in the back with seating. The establishment has a grocery beer license which is an off-premises license. This will allow people to sit and drink, buy as a package and take to go.

Michael Hannibal

Do you have the certificate of occupancy that you can share with the district office?

Answer [Jae Yu] - I checked the Department of Building records, and they do have a certificate of occupancy, but it is old. It only shows as a store which is a use group six.

Michael Hannibal

For our own records, I ask that you send that to us. In the event that something comes up, we want to make sure we can say that we discussed it. What's the maximum amount of people that can go into your establishment?

Answer [Kaza Ofarov] - 30-40 people.

Michael Hannibal

So that is good. You don't need a Public Assembly permit. What are the hours of operation?

Answer [Kaza Ofarov]- 7 am to 11 pm. 7 days a week. I may close a little early to run errands.

Michael Hannibal

How are you checking to make sure you don't have young people coming in under 21 wanting to have a beer or a cider?

Answer [Kaza Ofarov]: I have some experience with minors who want to buy beer. I would cast them out. I would ask them for ID to make sure they are 21 or older. Me and my employees will check IDs.

Michael Hannibal

Has any of your employees had any like special training in terms of how to ID someone?

Answer [Kaza Ofarov] - My register has an alcohol button to verify the ID. It checks if someone is born after a certain date.

Michael Hannibal

Is this your first establishment? Is this just an extension of what you are doing? Are you just adding another permit to it?

Answer [Kaza Ofarov] – Yes

Michael Hannibal

How have you handled security in the past?

Answer: [Kaza Ofarov] - Well, this is common practice at our store. We have to handle crazy people most of the times, especially at nighttime. Me and my employee always watch their behavior. I monitor it personally and by the cameras to make sure all people are safe on the floor.

Michael Hannibal

How are you handling the cleanliness to the exterior of the property?

Answer: [Kaza Ofarov] – During the winter/windy season I cannot make any guarantee. Every morning when I start the store, I clean the outside more than 18 inches from the curb. If my employee opens, I make sure one guy cleans it and the other guy inspects it to make sure it is clean. I have not gotten any ticket in the last two years.

Michael Hannibal

Would you have ashtrays to catch cigarettes outside?

Answer [Kaza Ofarov] - No.

Chairperson Hannibal opened the meeting for questions from the Board Members.

Ed Chung:

You mentioned that you or your staff will clean after the store is close and clean before the store is closed.

Answer [Kaza Ofarov] - When I open the business, I clean it. After 1 or 2 hours, I go out again to clean the sidewalk and after the cars leave.

Ed Chung

Do you sanitize inside the store i.e. chairs and tables?

Answer [Kaza Ofarov] - Yes.

Ed Chung

Like I mentioned to the other proprietor maybe you should have a panic button at your store to call the police.

Answer [Kaza Ofarov] - Okay

Caitlin Marziliano

What sort of procedure will you have if someone comes in and they are not someone you think should be drinking in your establishment? How are you going to access that?

Answer: [Kaza Ofarov] - If I see someone is drunk, I will not sell them any alcohol.

Caitlin Marziliano:

Is your staff also aware?

Answer: [Kaza Ofarov] – They are aware.

Jim Gallagher

How many people work there?

Answer: [Kaza Ofarov] - Including me three. Sometimes when I am very tired it is four.

Michael Hannibal

Do you do the cooking for the deli and prepare the meals in the back?

Answer: [Kaza Ofarov] - No

Michael Hannibal

Do you have a chef?

Answer: [Kaza Ofarov] – I have a special chef.

Michael Hannibal

Can I have a motion to accept the application for 143 Street Deli and Discount corporation located at 143-01 Hillside Avenue in Jamaica?

Motion made by Edward Chung and seconded by Caitlin Marziliano.

Votes in favor: Unanimous

Committee Members who voted in favor: Michael Hannibal, Edward Chung, James Gallagher, and Caitlin Marziliano

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Purpose:

The applicant is applying for a Cannabis License for a Retail Dispensary Premise for two locations. The first establishment is 420 Wonderland, LLC d/b/a Just a Little Higher Briarwood located at 138-72 Queens Boulevard in Briarwood. The second establishment is Boom Factory, LLC d/b/a Just a Little Higher Kew Gardens located at 146-01 Union Turnpike in Flushing. Chairman Michael Hannibal asked the applicant to state their name for the record. Applicant Grey Kornegay.

Michael Hannibal

Mr. Kornegay, I see a Desann Carty on the application.

Answer [Grey Kornegay] - Yes, that is my chief of staff.

Michael Hannibal

Was she the one handling your paperwork?

Answer [Grey Kornegay] - Yes

Michael Hannibal:

Who is in attendance with you, sir?

Answer: [Grey Kornegay] - Paul Pagan who is the head of my HR and Medina Pagan who runs the operations.

Michael Hannibal

Are you one of the owners of the establishment?

Answer: [Grey Kornegay] - Well, we are the owners of Interstate 420 which is a consultant company that everyone works under. I built a structure so that my kids will not fail. I built a company with lawyers, accountants, HR just to help with the process.

Michael Hannibal

What led you to open this establishment or wanting to establish it?

Answer [Grey Kornegay] - We are in the entertainment business that hosts concerts. We were approached by a lobbyist who asked if we were willing to get into the hemp CBD business. At the time cannabis was not legal. He asked if we were willing to work with them to get into the cannabis business since we had a big following.

Michael Hanibal

Why do you want to sell cannabis in the community?

Answer [Grey Kornegay] - We are from the community. I moved from South Jamaica right here to Hollis. With the cannabis, I want to be in every community that I have touched and give back.

Michael Hannibal:

What type of cannabis will you be selling? You know there are CBDs, THC products, tincture, gummies, edibles.

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] - Literally everything but more THC. CBD can be a part of it, but it has its own permit since it is federal. We have gummies, tinctures, pills, flower, pre rolls and drinks. It is all recreational. They are grown in New York. We operate three other stores within our communities.

Michael Hannibal:

You operate dispensaries?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] – Yes. It is actually four. One is delivery only which located on Sutphin Blvd. and Linden Blvd. We have one in Manhattan in Murray Hill, one in Upper West side in Manhattan and one in Troy, New York, which is like the out-skirts of Albany.

Michael Hannibal

When I get the OCM announcements about the new retail and dispensary, whether they are brick and mortar or they are online, will they be announcing your launch?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] - Boom Factory, which is what we are here for, was approved Friday for Kew Gardens.

Michael Hannibal

Have you confirmed that your establishment is a certain amount of feet from a school, or from a religious organization?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] -Yes. We couldn't get approved from OCM if we weren't.

Michael Hannibal

What are the hours of operation?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] - We defer to you all to let us know. Different boards have different times. In Astoria, we have a location pending. They only allow us to open 70 hours a week. Some say we have to be closed by 11 p.m.

Michael Hannibal

We have always mirrored it to our liquor license. With the type of product you are selling, we would say noon to 11 p.m. As long as it is not 24/7.

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] - We usually do 9 a.m. to 10p.m. Then 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. or 11:30p.m. the latest on the weekend. Our POS system does not roll over. We cannot stay open past 12 a.m.

Michael Hannibal

Maybe this is the chairman discretion; however, instead of opening at 9 a.m., can you do a 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. or 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.? As a proprietor if you can open at 10 a.m. it seems to be a little more daylight then 9 a.m.

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] - Just to let you know we have lines at 9 a.m. in the Upper West Side. Some people need it to work.

Michael Hannibal

How do you handle underage customers?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay]: We have a full POS system for scanning, so not only do they have to present an ID before they even enter our establishment there is security system at the front door as well and outside perimeter. If someone underage tries to get through the doors it would be almost impossible. Also, some of our locations even have an entrance way before you can even get to the sales area. It looks like a square room for you to scan your ID before you even get through a security coded door

Michael Hannibal

Is your staff trained? I am sure there is a little more training involved or certifications that needs to be in place.

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] – Yes. We have State Regulated operating procedures that come through the state that we created into our own. Every single person that is in the front house or the security is trained on what to do. A lot of the staff hired is from the entertainment world i.e. bars and clubs. They are good at identifying fake ID's.

Michael Hannibal

How do you handle loitering outside of your store?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] - We have security outside and inside of the door. They direct traffic. We also implement our own rules, like you cannot stand in front and smoke in front of the building and so on. We keep it away from the entrance of our establishment.

Michael Hannibal

How is your communication with the local precinct?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] - Well, we have several. Our security system goes directly to the precinct. That is based through OCM and how they have it set up. We also have panic alarms.

Chairperson Hannibal opened the meeting for questions from the Board Members.

Ed Chung

There is a big deal across the board and New York City that the cannabis is tainted with fentanyl. When you go to your suppliers, are they legit?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] - Everything we have is lab tested by New York State.

Caitlin Marziliano

Are you making sure that your personnel are trained so that people know what they are getting?

Answer [Paul Pagan] – Yes. Each one of our vendors are licensed cultivators from New York State and have bartender training. They come in once we open and give samples to all the bud tenders. They then go through the specifics of how much THC and CBD are in a product and the effects it is going to have. We advise our customers on how to properly consume.

Ed Chung

When I took the Covid shots at the armory, you take the shot, and they make you sit down for 15 minutes. Do you have something like that for these folks?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] They cannot consume on the premises.

Soleil Griffin:

Our office received an application from Kevin Riley for 420 Wonderland. When we requested that Mr. Riley have an actual signature since it was an electronic signature, we received a new application with Desann Carty as the applicant. What ever happened to Mr. Riley?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] - He is one of the partners, but he is in Columbia. I just didn't want to wait for Kevin to come back.

Michael Hannibal

Since the question will be the same, I ask the committee if we can vote for both applications and consolidate. Does anyone have an issue?

Committee Members Edward Chung, James Gallagher, and Caitlin Marziliano agreed to vote on both applications.

Michael Hannibal

Can I have a motion to accept the applications for 420 Wonderland LLC and Boom Factory LLC both doing business as Just a Little Higher in Briarwood and Just a Little Higher Kew Gardens?

Motion made by Caitlin Marziliano and seconded by James Gallagher.

Votes in favor: Unanimous

Committee Members who voted in favor: Michael Hannibal, Edward Chung, James Gallagher, and Caitlin Marziliano

Michael Hannibal: Okay, unanimous. Alright I wish all of our cannabis applications went as swimmingly. I know I mentioned it and you already said you already have a contact. What I would ask you to do also is that when you open up the store contact the 107th Precinct.

Answer [Gregory Kornegay]: That is fine.

Michael Hannibal

One of the biggest challenges we have is explaining it to our constituents, community members, people living in the area that there is a difference between legal and illegal establishments. Anyone that is selling hemp, CBD or dispensing cannabis should have an official sign like a liquor license sign in the window to say this is legit.

Caitlin Marziliano

There is like a QR code that they can scan but is it in the window?

Answer [Gregory Kornegay] - We do have a sticker in the window. It is required.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Soleil Griffin, Community Board 8 Staff
November 12, 2024*