

May Kaidee

Thai Vegan Restaurant

January 24, 2024

New York City Department of City Planning
Honorable Commissioners of the City Planning Commission
31st Floor, Equitable Life Building
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271

Re: Testimony in support for Dancing proposals within Zoning for Economic Opportunity

My name is Sommay Jaijong and I'm the owner of May Kaidee Restaurant. We are a vegan Thai restaurant and have been at 215 E Broadway in Manhattan for since 1993. Owning a restaurant in New York City has been challenging work.

I come from a small village in the Northeast of Thailand where the people are poor and value family and cultural tradition . At my restaurant we have a karaoke machine and entertain guests for Saturday night parties.

In addition to the vegan cooking that we serve, we offer cooking classes as well as traditional cutting of fruit which is a skill that all high school students learn in my country.

I am very proud of my Thai heritage and we participate in the Annual Dance Parade and Festival with traditional Thai music and dancing. I regret to tell you that this form of entertainment is considered non-conforming at my restaurant under the current zoning laws because dancing is only allowed in high density or manufacturing districts.

I find it strange that it is legal to have live music but when it comes to the elegant dances of my cultural heritage, such dancing is restricted. I want to share the pageantry and traditions of my country. Our society will be healthier when we share an interest in each other cultures.

Commissioners, I hope you will act responsibly and approve the DCP proposals that classifies dancing as scheduled entertainment, allowing intermittent dancing specifically for venues with less than 200 patrons such as my May Kaydee restaurant.

Thank you for your careful consideration and for creating that serves all New Yorkers.

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Sommay Jaijong
Owner