

Liquor License Commission Meeting Minutes

Day, Date and Time: Tuesday, July 1st at 5 pm
Place of Meeting: City Hall Auditorium, 62 Friend St.

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by John at 5:07pm
2. Roll Call – Present were, John Kirton and Russ Saboo (via phone) of the Liquor License Commission.
Also present was Victoria Feger, staff liaison. Absent: Derek Balaam
3. Minutes for Approval – Motion by John to move this agenda item to the end of the agenda. Russ seconded this motion. *The motion passed unanimously.*
4. Public Comment –

Camille Sanders of 79 Elm Street came to speak as a notified abutter of the license applicant, Mill 77. She had the following comments and concerns:

- Camille asked if other abutters were notified – the applicant stated that they sent notices as directed by the assessor's office list. Camille stated that in speaking with other abutters, some weren't notified. Specifically, she was referring to the owner of Alphonse.
- She stated there have been some small issues with Mill 77 in regards to parking, etc. but they have either addressed them or they've been too small to bring up. However, for Mill 77 to become a bar, she feels that the change is of use – a family friend brewery with parents and children and dogs is now going to become a bar. A bar attracts a totally different clientele, and it's not a restaurant. Most of the time, these types of licenses go to restaurants.
- She also stated she was confused by the abutters note, because it didn't say for an 'all alcohol' license and she thought that was tricky. Applicant confirmed that is the notice language given by the city.
- She questioned if getting up the stone steps to the parking in the winter is going to be safe for people will be drinking. Also questioned the clientele that will be anticipated. A main concern to that is whether or not Mill 77 will sell food.
- She indicated that originally, when they met before the planning board, they said they'd stay open until 9, now two nights a week they are open until 10. Noise is a concern for everyone in the neighborhood.
- Her big question is the "why"; why do you feel the need as a brewery to serve more than what you brew. A bar takes on a whole different atmosphere and purpose. There has been vomiting, urinating in the adjacent parking lot. Occasionally there are parking issues, but this is because people are lazy to park in the upper lot. It's not the biggest deal, but you add liquor to someone like that and they have more courage than they may have had before. She thinks the safety of the neighborhood is at risk. The parking is an issue and the residential area near the parking lot is a concern.
- She stated that per the ABCC website – the sale of alcohol cannot be within 500' of a school or church. Had questions about why Fireside Church, which meets in the

3rd floor of Mill 77's building wasn't notified.

- No complaints to the brewery, but a bar she really feels strongly about.

John offered Craig Penno of Mill 77 Brewing to give a public comment in reply.

- He first responded to Camille's main question asked, which was "why". They intend to remain as a brewery on the premises and offer other forms of alcohol as some patrons would prefer. Silvaticus also does this, they do not have a restaurant. Barewolf also has a wine license. As the current license for Mill 77 is, they can only serve malt beverages brewed on the premise. They have customers regularly come in and if one person in the party is not a beer drinker, they would be able to serve because there's nothing else to offer them. They'd like to be able to offer bottled wines or canned wines from a distributor in addition to canned cocktails. They are not looking to change the hours or scope and will continue to brew and sell their own beer. They are trying to be competitive to the other breweries in town as far as what is available on offer for customers. They are not looking to mix drinks or become a bar in any semblance of the brewery. They'd still be Mill 77 brewing.
- Regarding Parking concerns – they have tried to get people on board with where and where not to park. People parking at electrified garage has been an issue and they are working with patrons and have not had any complaints from the garage owners. Craig spoke that Ms. Sanders and her husband seem to have good neighborly relationship with them at Mill 77 and they want that to continue.
- He confirmed that notification was followed as required with the abutters list etc.
- Mentioned fireside church not being an abutter on the list, but that the property manager of the building was notified. Additionally, the church on Market Street was notified.
- Craig then asked Ms. Sanders for a prompting of one of her other questions – she said "safety" and Craig said that they do their best to keep overserving from happening. They do tips training and other serving training for their staff. Their approach to overserving is to be proactive as possible, but he has called the police on patrons who are not fit to drive when needed and they try their best. There was an issue with a person urinating on the building and they have been collaborative with dealing with these issues. He hopes that in the past our interactions have been comfortable and we have been able to put things to rest as quickly as possible. They don't want the neighbors to hate us, they're not in the business of causing trouble. He thinks the noise situation is something we can address as it comes up. He spoke of a recent instance after the block party people came by and were quite loud outside. Craig said they were given a 'last call' to help move the party along and then they continued to loudly talk until finally dispersing. Craig said they do try their best to mitigate any type of risk either through training and the insurance they hold. And they try to put things to rest as best they can.
- In terms of the family nature of the business, the other breweries are doing the same thing [serving other forms of alcohol] and they are still family establishments. In terms of children at breweries, there seems to be a bit of mixed acceptance and families need to also have respect for the business and business neighbors.

Camille Sanders came back to comment again

- The other breweries that Craig mentioned have large parking facilities. They always have food trucks and it's a different environment. Mill 77 has a very challenging food truck spot, she gets it. And when there is a truck it causes lots of rubber necking and backs up to the light. There is going to be serving with no guarantee of food. She stated then that the granting authority is the one who decides this. She asked Craig, are you planning to have a licensed bartender?
- Craig said no – because they will be not mixing, they will be opening a can of pre-mixed drink or wine.
- Camille thinks it's a unique situation and doesn't wish them or their business any ill but she thinks this is one thing we really don't need.

There was no further public comment.

5. Hearing for an application for a new license – 2 applicants

Forrest Hill Brewing Company, LLC, DBA Mill 77 is a brewery located at 77 Elm Street. They applied for a new Section 12 All Alcohol license, which was presented to the commission members for review and discussion. The applicant currently holds a Farmer's Series Pouring Permit, which this commission approved and granted. The applicants were present (and participated in the public comment to answer questions)

Russ shared some thoughts about how Mill 77 has been working hard to bring this application forward and he thinks they addressed the abutters concerns.

John motioned to continue this hearing to a future meeting when all of the commission members can speak together, in person to review and hear any further concerns.

Russ seconded the motion.

The motion to continue this hearing to a future meeting date to be determined, passed unanimously.

Amesbury Gas and Convenience Inc. is a gas station with an attached retail store and leased restaurant located at 23 Rocky Hill Road. They applied for a new Section 15 Wine and Malt Beverages license, which was presented to the commission members for review and discussion. The applicant currently holds a Section 15 license for North Shore Gas and Convenience, which is located at 60 Haverhill Road in Amesbury.

Russ asked if this applicant had applied for a liquor license for this location previously. Edgard Fayad, said that he has been the property owner for two years, and in that time he has not applied. He is unsure if a previous owner applied.

No questions from the applicant, no other questions from the commission

John motions to approve the application for this license

Russ seconded the motion.

The motion to approve this application passed unanimously.

6. Adjournment –

The Liquor License Commission's next meeting has is tentatively set for 5pm, Monday July 7 at 5pm, in the City Hall Auditorium, so as to continue the hearing as soon as possible. Will be confirmed once all commission members are able to check their schedules – check the website for an agenda.

John motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:42 pm; Russ seconded the motion to adjourn.

The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Feger, Executive Assistant to the Mayor
Created on: July 1, 2025
Approved on: July 7, 2025