



April 17, 2009

Alcohol Beverage Licensing Task Force
City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 286-2221
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RE: Feedback on the Preliminary Report and Recommendations & Follow-up to April 16th, 2009 Public Hearing

Justice Louis Butler, Task Force Chair:

I commend the efforts by the Alcohol Beverage Licensing Task Force (ABLTF) in developing the 22 recommendations. It is in my opinion, that the recommendations show fairness for both potential and current licenses holders and the Licenses Committee.

As a follow-up to my comments made at the April 16th Public Hearing, below is a list of concerns, suggestions and feedback based on the recommendations made by ABLTF.

- **AWARENESS:** ABLTF has recommended that a pamphlet be created and published for licenses renewal application. ABLTF has also recommended an increase of 500 feet for notices.

I would also suggest **that hearing dates are published** and listed in all Licenses Committee promotional materials including **websites and the City of Milwaukee E-Notify system**. Information for the Licenses Committee **should be less than “two-clicks” away** from the City of Milwaukee home page on the internet.

- **CONFLICT RESOLUTION:** ABLTF has recommended that objections be substantiated in a form to be prescribed by the Common Council.

I would also suggest for contested hearings, **pre-meetings are scheduled with all involved parties** (license applicant, residents, Common Council and Police Department) to be held at the respective District Police Station. These meetings are to inform all parties of the objections and to decide if a written solution can be drafted to be presented at the licenses hearing.

- **HEARING SCHEDULES:** ABLTF has recommended that special attention be given to the scheduling of contested versus non-contested items.

I would also suggest that contested items have **hearing times that are conducive to the hours** (where applicable) of working residents, where residents have contested.

- **COMMUNITY INPUT:** ABLTF has recommended an increase of 500 feet for notices.

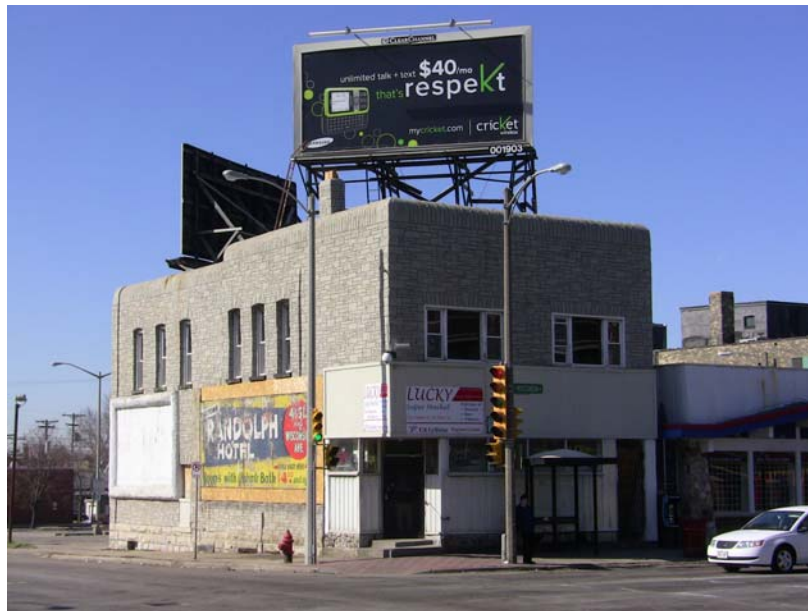
In recent years, communities have relied on the representation of the Common Council when supporting or denying a licenses applicant. Recommendations by ABLTF should **consider other ways communities are able to give input.**

For example, the Near Westside Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Common Council in 2004 details recommendations in revitalizing and improving the quality of life for communities. Such plans developed by many stakeholders should be a part of the “body of evidence” when the Licenses Committees is reviewing an applicant.

- **QUALITY BUSINESS OPERATIONS:** ABLTF has recommended the decision to schedule a renewal application be made administratively by the License Division and based solely upon information contained in a police summary. ABLTF has recommended that the Common Council establish criteria for determining when concentration is an issue based on land use. ABLTF has recommended that greater attention be paid to the “business plan” of the applicant.

From the start of the process to the license hearing, special consideration must be made on how applicants have maintained their business operations. Such “body of evidence” **should not be limited to police reports.** Licenses Committee should have the opportunity to review current business plans that address such issues as **code violations, security and façade treatment.**

Many licensed establishments within a few miles of City Hall for decades **have kept the lowest standards** for maintaining their property (see pictures).



Property located on 27th & Wisconsin continues to have code violations with little thought or care as to the aesthetics of the building or surrounding neighborhood.



The above liquor store located at 28th and Fond du lac Avenue has maintained a property and façade that includes trashy, old, scratched windows, exterior security grates, an over use of signage, a crumbling porch, broken fencing and host of other issues. Once again, not much consideration has been made on the aesthetics of the building or surrounding neighborhood by owner.

In keeping with quality business operations, City of Milwaukee **inspectors should inspect applicants' property** at a minimum of 60 days prior to a license hearing.

Such inspections are currently required by commercial and residential property owners and license applicant should have the same standards. Such “due diligence” by the City will help determine if applicant has operated as a quality business owner.

The Licenses Committee should consider concentration of liquor licenses where no other additional activity is taking place such as dining and/or entertainment. **Communities should not be seen as liquor depots** for the City of Milwaukee where the only available activity is to “buy liquor and stand on the corner to drink it”.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my feedback, suggestions and recommendations to ABLTF. It is not my goal to either deter business within the City of Milwaukee or “pick a fight” with any future applicants including the businesses stated in this letter. However, it is my goal to inform ABLTF, Common Council President Willie Hines and the Common Council on ways to improve the Licenses Committee proceeding that neither limits or adds too much weight to the process.

Regards,

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