



LATVIAN HOUSE OF MILWAUKEE, INC.

CITY OF MILWAUKEE 8845 West Lynx Avenue
2013 JUN -6 PM 12:17 Milwaukee, WI 53225 USA
(414) 353-9080

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

June 4, 2013

City Clerk
City of Milwaukee
City Hall Room 205
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

RE: **Objection of Licenses Committee Recommendation
Public Entertainment Premises License
Latvian House of Milwaukee, Inc
8845 W. Lynx Avenue**

Dear Members of the Common Council:

On behalf of the Latvian House of Milwaukee, Inc., I would like to formally object to the report and recommendation of the Licenses Committee on May 29, 2013. We respectfully request the Common Council to approve our application for our Public Entertainment Premises license based on the following:

1. The Latvian House of Milwaukee is a non-profit cultural facility that has hosted concerts, special events, plays and religious/cultural gatherings for the Greater Milwaukee Latvian community since 1972. The facility is the heart of the Latvian cultural community and was built by the hands of the original immigrants who came to Milwaukee after World War II. We take great pride in our facility.
2. We are very cognizant of our role in the neighborhood, particularly with respect to our residential neighbors (we have industrial uses on three sides and residential only on the north side of our property). We have been very responsive to any neighborhood concerns about our facility when we were made aware of them. Specific to noise or disruptive behavior, we have implemented a "double chaperone" policy during any "non Latvian" event which requires our full time property manager AND a member of our community (e.g. volunteer from the board, etc) to act as "hosts" for any weekend event that goes past 9 PM. While the complaint that

appears to be the source of our denial at the committee level was not related to noise, etc (which we feel is important to consider in and of itself!), we want the Council to fully appreciate how seriously we take our role in the neighborhood. We are doing this not in response to complaints, but to PREVENT complaints. And please note that the Police Department had no complaints about the entertainment function of our facility. In other words, we are doing a good job being good neighbors and running a responsible cultural hall.

3. In particular response to a statement at the committee that as a result renewing the Public Entertainment Premises license the Latvian House could allow our facility "to become an undesirable, full fledge night club like another similar business in the area," we may only respond that this is NEVER going to be the case. We only host private events and public cultural concerts, for which we occasionally charge admission (hence our understanding for the need for this license in the first place). We have no interest and it would be a violation of our Articles of Incorporation to become a nightclub. If this is the concern of the committee that lead to the negative recommendation, we can assure you that the Latvian House has been a cultural facility for the last 40 years and will ALWAYS remain so.
4. While we do not use this as an excuse (and we do take snow removal seriously), the sidewalk in question is essentially a dead end that goes to our facility (see attached). Frankly, we were not aware that anyone used this sidewalk aside from our own guests. Now that we know, we can commit to keeping this sidewalk clear at all times. We are willing to hire a professional snow removal service to accommodate this neighbor's concern. Again, we are not making excuses. We can easily address the concern about snow removal.
5. As it relates to garbage and carts, etc. Again, there is no excuse for ANY trash on our property. We have our property manager walk our premises as part of her duties. She is expected to keep the property tidy (and to the Board's knowledge, has always been conscientious of this duty). With that said, the Latvian House is next to Highway 145 and is plagued with continuous blowing trash from the highway and the neighborhood in general. She is continuously picking trash (and must continue to do so). As it relates to garbage carts, we recognize that these must be brought back behind our enclosure immediately after trash pick up and we have truly tried to stay on top of this. Quite frankly, the City's trash collection days are a little confusing and some days they pick up when is shown on the schedule and other days it is the day after. In both of these situations regarding trash, we will be MORE DILIGENT and enlist the help of additional Board members to pitch in. We are fully committed to doing do so.
6. As a non-profit, we rely on the good faith efforts of volunteers to maintain our books and run our operation. We would have attended the public hearing on May 29 to present our case in person, however, the agent for our tavern license (and applicant for this entertainment license) was out of town when the Notice of Public Hearing was sent. Again, this is not an excuse. The Board was not aware that a public hearing was being held and did not attend. We understand

that by not attending this public hearing it had an extremely negative impression on the committee and made it appear that we did not take this situation seriously. We assure you we do take this seriously and would never have missed the public hearing had we known about it.

7. Finally, this is a very serious situation for the Latvian House. In fact, it is a matter of staying in business. We have special events and weddings planned into 2014. We rely on these events to maintain our operation. Without them, we could not maintain our facility and remain the cultural hub of the Latvian community.
8. We want to be good neighbors. We have always been responsive to neighborhood concerns. For the last 40 years, our operation has not been a problem for the neighborhood. We would like to continue to be good stewards of this facility and operate it in a safe and responsible manner. We would like to take any remedial action and implement a plan to assure the City that we will address the concerns raised by the single neighbor that raised these concerns.
9. We respectfully request that the Common Council vote to RENEW our Public Entertainment Premises license for the Latvian House of Milwaukee located at 8845 W. Lynx Avenue.

Respectfully Submitted,

Latvian House of Milwaukee, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sig Strautmanis', written in a cursive style.

Sig Strautmanis
President

Latvian House of Milwaukee, Inc.
8845 West Lynx Avenue

