

MINUTES  
MONDAY, JULY 16, 2007  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM  
TOWN HALL  
6:00PM

## ALCOHOL BEVERAGE LICENSING COMMITTEE HEARINGS

### I. CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 6:00 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall. All members were present. Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were also present.

### II. QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

There were no questions.

### III. ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

The Board convened jointly with the Alcohol Beverage Licensing Committee (ABLC) for a public hearing on the applications for retail liquor licenses in Belmont.

#### ALL ALCOHOL (1) APPLICATIONS

Federal Wine - Belmont (Manager - Leonard Rothenberg)  
353-361 Trapelo Road

6:08 PM - Len Rothenberg appeared before the Board. He has been the owner of Federal Wine and Spirits of Boston for 22 years. Mr. Rothenberg was raised in Belmont, attended Belmont High School, and resides in Belmont with his family.

Mr. Rothenberg said his store downtown is small and has no parking and he needs more space. His business is half an Internet/delivery store and that would also be the model for the Belmont Store. He has sponsored wine dinners with neighboring restaurants and has also sponsored community programs.

There were questions about whether the parking for the proposed site would be sufficient. Mr. Rothenberg pointed out that his site has some parking and will dovetail nicely with the neighboring Dunkin Donuts because their business is mostly in the morning and his is mostly afternoon and evening. 75% of the business is fine wine and most of the liquor is single malt scotches. In Belmont the proportion of beer and liquor might be higher, but wine will still be the focus of the business. He intends to move his office functions to the Belmont location and be on the premises most of the time. There will be between 4 and 6 employees, but not all at the same time. The store will sell organic and biodynamic wines.

Grape Moments (Manager - Chris Lianos)  
353 Trapelo Road

6:35 PM - Chris Lianos appeared for C&J Liquors Inc. The proposal is for the same location as the previous applicant. There are in excess of 20 off-street parking spaces. Mr. Lianos is a graduate of Belmont High School and has been in the liquor business for 13 years. He opened a store in Waltham, then moved to Ball Square in Somerville for more space - Ball Square Fine Wines. The look of the Belmont Store would be similar. Because of his Greek heritage he

specializes in Greek wines. His employees are extremely experienced and knowledgeable. The Mayor of Somerville has stated that Mr. Lianos has been a good community partner.

Mr. Lianos said that in Waltham and Ball Square he took over stores with bad reputations and turned them around. 65% of the business is wines including organic and biodynamic wines. His store does wine tastings every Friday evening. He will be featuring a new software program which lets people make notes on the wine they have purchased for future reference. There will be 3 full time employees. Mr. Lianos hopes to expand his gourmet food offerings in the larger space.

Omni from Wine to Cheese (Manager - Kirk Der Avedisian)  
268 Trapelo Road

7:06 PM - Kirk Der Avedisian appeared before the Board. His location has 5300 square feet of space, has 200 parking spaces and an off-street loading area. The proposal is for an upscale food store as well as a liquor store.

Mr. Der Avedisian said he will offer wines, beers, and liquors including organic and gluten-free beers; deli meats and cheeses, premium salads, and fresh pasta, marinated meats, fresh sushi and ready-to-heat dinners. He has been selling beer and wine in New Hampshire and Massachusetts for 20 years. Wine will be 75% of the liquor aspect of the business, which will be 65% of the space. The foods will be prepared at his Weston store and brought in - no food preparation on site.

The Spirited Gourmet of Belmont (Manager - Christopher Benoit)  
448 Common Street

7:26 PM - Chris and Elena Benoit appeared before the Board. Elena grew up in Belmont and graduated from Belmont High School and her family still lives here. The location is 3600 square feet. The Benois have been very involved in the community in Winchester where their current store is. The business is 70% wine, 10% liquor and beer and 20% gourmet cheeses and gift baskets. They have won a number of awards and do carry many organic and biodynamic as well as local wines. They do cheese and pate tastings as well as wine tastings. There is a driveway in back of the site for deliveries.

The Board recessed at 7:52 PM and returned at 8:01 PM.

After hearing brief comments from the ABLC members, the Board began deliberations on the all alcohol license. There was general agreement that all the applicants' proposals were good ones. The Selectmen felt that the Spirited Gourmet proposal particularly would contribute to the revitalization of Cushing Square.

The Board moved: To award the all alcohol license to The Spirited Gourmet.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0). There was a brief recess.

#### WINE AND MALT LIQUORS ONLY (3) APPLICATIONS

Grigorian Brothers Corp. (Manager - Armen Grigorian)  
500 Common Street

8:20 PM - Armen Grigorian and Donald Becker for Grigorian Brothers. Mr. Becker acknowledged that the location is very close to the Spirited Gourmet location. The proposal is to remodel the central building of the CITGO station to accommodate a wine and beer store. There is plenty of parking. The store would be open from 10 AM to 10 PM. The business would integrate with the existing gas station and would be unlikely to increase traffic. The proposal is not a quick mart but a store with fine wines and cheeses.

Mr. Grigorian said he has been in the community for 22 years and his business is built on serving the community. There is parking for at least 20 cars. The store would offer 60% wines, 20% beers, and 20% cheeses and packaged foods. He would try to arrange deliveries during midday hours when traffic is light.

Belmont Wine and Cheese (Manager - Patrick McHugh)  
46 Leonard Street

8:37 PM - Patrick McHugh, Joe Godas, and Kathy & Rick Pauling appeared before the Board. McHugh and Rick Pauling will be the managers.

Mr. McHugh explained that he has been a resident for 17 years. Kathy is his sister-in law and co-owner, Rick her husband is the wine director and Joe Godas is the wine consultant. The location is the left side of the former "pink building." Mr. McHugh is a graduate of Harvard Business School and runs several businesses. This will be a wine and cheese shop - no beer in the store. The focus is on pairings of wine and cheese. The footprint is 400 square feet. The plan is to have a very robust delivery business so that people do not need to hand carry packages if they are continuing to shop in the center. Any wine tastings would not be visible from the street.

Rick Pauling said the store plans to focus on unique wines from emerging sources. The plan has focused on how to soften the impact of liquor on Leonard Street. Wine will be about 60% of the business.

Mr. McHugh said the business will be complementary with Dante's Restaurant going in next door. One of the managers will be on the premises at all times and the small size will mean it will not need a large staff to run it.

Joe Godas confirmed that over 50% of the wines would be organic or biodynamic.

Artichoq, Inc. (Manager - Carolyn Kemp)  
32 Leonard Street

9:06 PM Carolyn and Eric Broege appeared before the Board. Their site is the former Ritz Camera space. They own a wine store, Vintages, in West Concord. The space is a little over 1000 feet, the same size as their current store. They hope to create something very similar in Belmont. They pride themselves on their selection of wines. They live in Belmont and currently have three full time employees and one part time employee, all of whom live in Belmont. Their business is 95% wine.

The Board took a brief recess.

The Board began deliberation on the wine and malt beverage licenses. There are two licenses available, however one of the applicants is right near the Spirited Gourmet, and the Board feels that issuing a license in close proximity to another liquor business would be inappropriate. The other two applicants are also in close proximity to each other. The Board is therefore inclined to only issue one license.

The Board moved: To only issue one wine and malt liquor license at this time.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board noted Artichoq's successful track record and experienced personnel, and Belmont Wine and Cheese's attention to the issue of fitting alcohol into the Belmont Center community as well as their concept of pairings. The Board discussed which applicant might be best able to bring in business from other towns. Selectman Solomon pointed out that Artichoq's site has a driveway

for deliveries in back, which is an advantage given the difficulties of commercial deliveries on Leonard Street..

The Board moved: To award the wine and malt liquor license to Artichog.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved to other business.

The Board moved: To send a draft letter to the Governor supporting House Bill 21 to purchase the Uplands.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board signed the deed for sale of the Town property on Sherman Street.

The Board discussed an issue that arose about gathering signatures for political purposes in the library. The Board agreed that it does not want to allow this. Town Counsel will be consulted regarding the past activities of the Library Trustees and whether they constitute a precedent as suggested by Rep. Brownsberger.

There was discussion of the lack of progress on the Central Fire Station. Developer Burke is trying to get changes made to the conservation restriction and has not signed it, which is preventing him from getting a building permit. Chairman Firenze and Mr. Younger will meet with Burke at the beginning of August to discuss the Board's concerns.

The Board adjourned at 10:09 PM.

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Thomas G. Younger, Town Administrator