**Community Board 17**

**Commerce Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 18, 2022**

**Present: Guests:** **Excused:**

June Persaud Patrick Agard Marguerite Vigliante

Brie DaCosta Lasania Kelly

Sonia Clarke

Shana Evans

Ruby Harrisingh

Jorge Tait

Adele Bennett

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The **Commerce Committee Virtual** meeting was held on Tuesday, October 18, 2022 at 7:30pm.

**Ms. June Persaud** said called the meeting to order at 7:40pm.

**Roll Call**-June Persaud, Ruby Harrisingh, Sonia Clarke, Lansania Kelly, Patrick Agard, Brie DaCosta, Shana Evans

**Chairperson’s Report**

**Ms. Persaud** said she is working on trying to build back the committee and when there is a change in Chairpersons, there is usually a lapse in membership or attendance. Bear in mind, if they miss 3 consecutive meetings, they will be removed from the committee and not because they want to remove them, but because it is important that they keep a quorum so they can vote on the items in front of them. Without a quorum, it is hard to get any business of the committee done and that is very important. She asked the members if they would like to invite anyone to join the Commerce Committee, that would also be nice.

She does not want to invite guest speakers yet, due to the fact that attendance is so low. It would not be right to have guest speakers and they only have 5 people on the call and it does not make any sense and she wants to cater to a broader audience and for now she is going to hold off on the guest speakers.

She would like to propose an event for next March, which will be like a Networking Breakfast, which was discussed at last month’s meeting. They can invite fewer agencies and have a wider audience and have informative discussions. This is something they can work on in the coming months ahead. If anyone else has any other suggestions that they would like to throw out to the committee, she is willing to listen to that.

Today, she would like to discuss for the benefit of the members, and she is not sure if they are aware that the temporary permits that are being issued to liquor license applicants, and as of January this year, they are issuing the temporary permits while they are waiting for the permanent license to be processed, so they can actually be in business, operate and stay in compliance, since the license takes a long time. The temporary permit lasts for 90 days and it is renewable.

The next item on the agenda is the approval of the minutes for the Sept. 20, 2022 meeting. Unfortunately, they do not have a quorum and they are unable to approve the minutes. She really wants to enforce that having a quorum is very important.

**New Business**

She said the next item is Blazze Seafood, located at 1714 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11226. This is a new application for a restaurant, and they are seeking a full liquor license. Representing Blaze Seafood is Mr. Kelly, the owner.

**Mr. Lasania Kelly** said right now he is running a seafood and chicken restaurant and is trying to get a liquor license to do karaoke on the weekends.

**Ms. Persaud** asked what are the hours of operation?

**Mr. Kelly** said 11am to 10pm, Monday through Thursday, Friday from 11am to 11pm and Sunday, 12 to 8pm.

**Ms. Persaud** said there were no incidents at this location, due to the fact that it is a new liquor license.

**Ms. Brie DaCosta** asked what about the music and soundproofing. He mentioned karaoke, will there be parties and if there were any soundproofing between the apartments and surrounding businesses that might be impacted by noise?

**Mr. Kelly** said there is a check cashing place, but they close early and when they do the karaoke, they will be closed, and this will only be on weekends. The location is located on a commercial strip, but there is one apartment above him.

**Ms. Persaud** asked if he will be applying for a temporary license, because he did check that on the 30-day notice? This is something they have to disclose to the Community Board

**Mr. Kelly** said he will be applying for that.

**Ms. Sonia Clarke** asked what will the seating be and will they be bar chairs or table and chairs?

**Mr. Kelly** said he has 20 chairs, 4 bar chairs and tables.

**Ms. Persaud** asked what is the square footage?

**Mr. Kelly** said it is 500 square feet. The restaurant is **(INAUDILE)**  in the open area **(INAUDILE)**  The location is between Cortelyou and Clarendon Roads.

**Ms. Sonia Clarke** said parking is kind of challenging over there. She knows over there, people in those establishments double park and that can be a concern. She asked if that were a concern for him in terms of people coming and congregating and parking?

**Mr. Kelly** said there is parking on the side streets.

**Ms. Clarke** asked does the establishment have emergency exits? When the establishment is open, the emergency exits will not be blocked.

**Mr. Kelly** said yes, they have 2 emergency exits, one in the front and one in the back and they are not blocked.

**Ms. Persaud** said Mr. Kelly will have to attend the General Board meeting on Wednesday, October 19, 2022 at 7pm because that is where they will vote on his application. They do have all the members here tonight to do a recommendation.

The next applicant is Executive Lounge and Mr. Agard will be representing them. This application is for a renewal and they are located at 957 Utica Avenue, in Brooklyn, NY. They have a full liquor license and have been in business since 2010. The Police report states there are no incidents at this location.

**Ms. Brie DaCosta** asked what are the hours of operation for the Executive Lounge?

**Mr. Patrick Agard** said they are open from 4pm to 4am, starting on the days when they were giving out **(INAUDILE)**  with no problems. There have never been any incidents there. The closing is when the customers leave, but he is able to stay until 4am.

**Ms. DaCosta** asked do they serve food at Executive Lounge to offset any issues there might be with drinking?

**Ms. Agard** said yes, now that this is a NY State law. They have to serve food and they do have facilities not serving food at this location for the last 4 years.

**Ms. Adele Bennett** asked are the up to code with the Dept. of Health, the inspections that are required from the Dept. of Buildings and the Fire Dept. codes?

**Mr. Agard** said he is up to code with all of the agencies, with the Fire Dept. as far as the **(INAUDILE)**  systems and the **(INAUDILE)**  systems and the Dept. of Health. With the Buildings Dept., there is nothing against his business, but he is not sure about the building itself. At the meeting tomorrow, he can clarify that.

**Ms. Persaud** asked if he is not up to code, is it correct that he will not get the renewal?

**Mr. Agard** said yes, that is correct and if NYC has any issues with the agencies and the licensees, they have the right to step in. He will check that with the Dept. of Buildings on the permit itself.

**Ms. Persaud** said the next applicant is M & R Café & Lounge, located at 9008 Avenue A, Brooklyn, NY 11236. This is a new application and they are applying for a temporary retail permit as well. They are requesting a wine, beer and cider license. This is a restaurant with a full kitchen and full menu. The are no incidents at this location.

**Ms. Bennett** asked if they are up to code with the Dept. of Building, the Fire Dept. and the Dept. of Health?

**Mr. Agard** said the location is brand new. They recently completed the application for the Dept. of Health and were approved and they have not been inspected yet. As far as the Dept. of Buildings, they had the Expediters with the Dept. of Buildings looking into that to make sure that everything is compliant for the liquor license portion and they are doing beer, wine and cider. They technically tried to open just as the pandemic hit and they were on hiatus for the last 2 years and now they feel comfortable to move forward. The location is between Remsen Avenue and East 91st Street. They recently built their outdoor seating that NYC advised the restaurants to do. They wanted to do takeout during the pandemic, but that did not work out. With the seating, they can hold about 30 people inside and they are not sure how many tables and chairs will be in there, but they can go up to about 50 people, but they want to keep it around 30 people. They do have a backyard which will only be used during the summer months with no music outside and will be used for dining purposes only.

**Ms. Bennett** asked if they were up to the Fire code?

**Mr. Agard** said they will only get compliance with that once the inspection is done with the Health Dept. and then the Fire Dept. would come in after that and they don’t give a date for that, they just show up and inspect the kitchen and if that is in compliance, they will issue them the license from the Fire Dept. and they just have to wait on that.

**Ms. Persaud** asked if the backyard would be licensed so they can take their drinks outside?

**Mr. Agard** said that is on the plans for the liquor license to approve the backyard. The half of the block where they are located is half commercial and half residential.

**Ms. Clarke** said living in Brooklyn with a lot of night entertainment, there is always a problem with parking and she wants to make sure that the residents living in the area, do not have to keep calling the Police because people are blocking their driveways and if there is an emergency, they need to be able to get out of their driveways and the establishments need to be conscious of that.

**Mr. Agard** said he agrees with that. One of the things that they have learned to do is suggest for business owners, is that they leave a number where they can be reached at any time that any challenges arises and before it becomes a problem. They will be leaving their number and reaching out to the residents of the block. Also, in addition to that, they are a neighborhood establishment and they are not really relying on people coming from outside. There will be no guest artists coming in there on a regular basis or working with promoters. They are strictly looking to be a neighborhood restaurant, hopefully attracting people who can walk to the restaurant.

**Ms. Clarke** said this goes for all owners of these entertainment bars and restaurants, it is always a good idea for them to meet with the block associations within the neighborhood and they will know that they are coming and applying for a liquor license. There will be parking and alcohol consumption and that way they will have a better understanding of who is coming to the community and they will be appreciated and know that they have to make a living too and be considerate of the residents as well.

**Mr. Agard** said since Ms. Bennett lives in the area, if she knows of any block associations that this business would directly affect, she can share that with them, or he can get the information from Ms. Fraser and they can reach out to them.

**Ms. Persaud** asked does any establishment applying for a liquor license has to post a notice on the front of the establishment so the people who are passing are aware that they are applying for a liquor license?

**Ms. DaCosta** asked what is the Commerce Committee doing to attract businesses that are a little more diverse, typically what they see along Church Avenue or Nostrand Avenue? Would the networking event that was mentioned be an appropriate place to potentially invite local entrepreneurs who are looking to expand or people who are looking to open businesses or restaurants and kind of give them an idea of what is lacking in this community and maybe diversify the businesses a bit?

**Ms. Persaud** said the next Networking Breakfast will be open to the people she just discussed, people looking to open a new business and people who are already in business. There has been a little change in what they used to have on Church Avenue, back in the days, but there is always room for growth. They will be having people from the different agencies to help people who want to get into business as well.

**Ms. DaCosta** said she noticed recently that more storefronts are closed and she does not know what the affordability is like over here and if this is something they can discuss as well at the networking event.

**Ms. Persaud** said a lot has to do with COVID-19, for the past couple of years. Some landlords are trying to recoup their rent that they lost during COVID-19 by doubling the rents, making it unaffordable for people who have already been in business, and there a lot of factors involved in that and it can be addresses at that event.

**Ms. Bennett** said at the last couple of meetings before she took over, they were looking into some of the bad businesses in the area, especially the corner/deli stores and a lot of them do not have any certifications from the Dept. of Health for cutting meats and they are selling it. This seems to be the norm in this community and people don’t even question their own health.

**Ms. Persaud** said a lot of them come under the impression that they are opening a deli and they do these things and this is where enforcement comes in, so when they see something that is being done and should not be done, and needs to be addressed, then they can report it to the correct agency and let them enforce it.

She asked if there were any other issues they would like to address? Having heard none, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting?

**Ms. DaCosta** made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Mr. Tait** seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned.