

ALCOHOL CONTROL COMMISSION

Monday, May 16, 2016

The Alcohol Control Commission met at 5:00 p.m. this date in the Commission Chambers of City Hall, 601 Broad Street. Chairman Slack presided with Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Stevenson, Mr. Hyde, Mr. Redding, and Mr. Doss present.

Minutes – April 18, 2016

The minutes of the April 18, 2016 meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by an unanimous consent.

Stop & Shop, 1433 North Broad Street

The application of Mr. Abubaker M. Khan, manager of Stop & Shop, 1433 North Broad Street, was presented. Mr. Khan requested that a new Beer Package License be issued to him at that location. Mr. Khan was present, and all papers were in order. Secretary Smith reported that, while this is a new license, there have been other Beer Package Licenses issued at this site. Originally, it was J's Salvage, and there have been a few other businesses in that site since that time.

Mr. Khan stated that, while this will be his first time to hold an Alcohol License, he has worked in the alcohol industry for seven or eight years. He is familiar with the requirements regarding underage sales and the penalties if underage sales are found. This establishment will have approximately three employees, and their plan will be to ask for proper identification for all alcohol sales.

Commissioner Lee moved to approve the new Beer Package License request as submitted. Commissioner Stevenson seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

The Forum – Request to Amend the Alcohol Ordinance

Mr. Mike Bankston, Vice-President of Safari Hospitality, and Mr. Brent Poplin, manager of The Forum, were present. Secretary Smith briefly reviewed his May 13, 2016 memo to the Alcohol Control Commission outlining the request that will be made to the ACC at today's meeting by Mr. Bankston.

You may be aware that the Floyd County Commission has contracted with a management company, Safari Hospitality, for the future operation of the Floyd County Forum. Safari Hospitality will begin operation of The Forum on July 1, 2016. The Forum is interested in holding their own Alcohol Pouring License and, according to Mr. Mike Bankston, Vice-President of Operations for Safari Hospitality, and Jamie McCord, Floyd County Manager, alcohol sales will be a key component to the success of the future operation of The Forum. This will be the first time The Forum has held their own alcohol license. In the past, if alcohol

was sold at The Forum, it was typically through another location in Rome obtaining a “Temporary Off-Premise Alcohol Catering Permit”.

I do not know of any problems with Mr. Bankston obtaining a Beer, Wine, and Liquor Pouring License at The Forum, with the exception of the Food/Drink Ratio. Both Mr. McCord and Mr. Bankston acknowledged that the operating plan of The Forum would not allow them to meet Rome’s current Food/Drink Ratio requirement. This local ordinance requires that an establishment sell at least as much food as it does distilled spirits. Beer and Wine sales are not a factor in the Food/Drink Ratio. Since Mr. Bankston knows that The Forum will not be able to meet the Food/Drink Ratio, and that alcohol sales are a key component to the future success of the operating plan for The Forum, he will appear before the Alcohol Control Commission on Monday, May 16th to request that the ACC consider an ordinance change. Specifically, this ordinance change, that is being requested, is to allow the creation of a new category of Alcohol Licenses. Currently, restaurants, hotels, and private clubs can obtain a City of Rome Liquor Pouring License. Mr. Bankston will be asking that a new category be created titled Convention Center. The definition of this ordinance amendment would be specifically for The Forum. This ordinance amendment would specify that the convention center, like private clubs, would not be subject to the Food/Drink Ratio requirement. All other aspects of our alcohol regulations would continue to apply to the Convention Center.

Apparently, The Forum is one of the few facilities of this type that does not hold an Alcohol Pouring License. Mr. Bankston will address the ACC and comment on his experience with the operation of facilities of this type in the Atlanta area.

The proposal you are being asked to consider on May 16th would have no impact on any other alcohol establishments in the City of Rome. If there are any questions or comments regarding this matter, please contact me at the City Clerk’s Office at jsmith@romea.us, or 706-236-4460.

Mr. Bankston stated that he has never seen a facility similar to The Forum that did not have their own alcohol pouring license. He commented on the importance for the alcohol sales and the related profit being for the future operation of The Forum. Many events that Safari Hospitality plans to “book” at The Forum, will desire alcohol sales. Safari Hospitality wants the alcohol sales as part of their revenue stream in their attempt to reduce the operation loss being experienced by the Floyd County Forum. Mr. Bankston spent considerable time commenting on the marketing strategy for Safari Hospitality and The Forum. Currently, The Forum is viewed as large and cheap. Safari’s goal is to change that perception and remarket The Forum for new and more profitable events. There is SPLOST funding available that has been designated for upgrades at The Forum. Mr. Bankston stated that he does not plan to recommend that these funds be spent to upgrade the existing small kitchen at The Forum. Since The Forum will not be producing food in large quantities, it will not be possible for them to meet Rome’s current Food/Drink Ratio.

Mr. Bankston stated that, currently The Forum is used for many community events that do not generate as much revenue as other types of events that it potentially could.

After a short question and answer session between Mr. Bankston and the ACC, it was clear that the ACC members feel like the City of Rome would like to do what is possible and reasonable to help The Forum be more successful.

Mr. Hyde moved to recommend to the City Commission that Rome's Alcohol Ordinance be amended to create a new licensing category for publicly owned convention centers. The Forum would be the only facility in Rome that would fit this category. The Food/Drink Ratio would not be applicable for this new category of pouring licenses, although the other alcohol rules, regulations, and procedures would apply. Commissioner Lee seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

The recommended Ordinance Amendment will be sent to the City Commission for First Reading for their meeting on May 23rd. A Second Reading and a vote will be scheduled at the June 13th City Commission Meeting. If the recommended Ordinance Amendment is approved, Mr. Bankston will be back before the Alcohol Control Commission at their June meeting to officially apply for a Beer, Wine, and Liquor Pouring License at The Forum.

Police Report

Rome Police Major Rodney Bailey was present and presented the police report for the previous month. There was only one arrest that occurred at an alcohol establishment during this time. That arrest occurred at El Patron, 1803 Redmond Circle. This arrest involved an underage person charged with drunk and disorderly conduct. Security personnel at El Patron called the Rome Police Department to arrest this person who had likely been drinking prior to arriving at El Patron. There was no evidence of any underage service by El Patron personnel.

Adjourned

With there being no further business, Chairman Slack adjourned the meeting at 6 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk