

**September 4, 2024  
9200 Basil Court  
Largo, MD 20774  
Virtual Hearing**

**Present:**

Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms, Chair  
Armando Camacho, Vice Chair  
Dennis Smith, Commissioner  
Tammy Sparkman, Commissioner  
Terence Sheppard, Director  
Alecia Hughes, Assistant to Director  
Robert Clark, Chief Liquor Inspector  
Cristian Mendoza, Deputy Chief Liquor Inspector  
Leonard Vauss, Deputy Chief Liquor Inspector  
Patricia Bell, Administrative Manager  
Katrice James, Administrative Aide  
Keyanna Little, Administrative Aide  
Ariana Posada, Administrative Aide

**Start Time: 7:05 p.m.**

**Commissioner Bridgwaters-Simms:** At the Board of License Commissioners, we endeavor to be as efficient as possible in our virtual environment. Thank you for your patience. This is a public meeting subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act so a truthful, transparent, open, and honest dialogue and record is required. As such, there are some formalities that will take place that may appear redundant but nonetheless are important and required to ensure compliance with the law.

**Director Sheppard:** During a typical hearing, there would be an exchange between the Board and the attorneys to exchange information as exhibits. Because this hearing is now virtual, we have implemented a 10-day rule to give those individuals here today, 10-days from today's date to add to the official record. I would ask that you email myself or the administrative staff of the BOLC. You may add information to the record long as it is information that has been discussed in this hearing.

## REGULAR SESSION

1. **t/a Pleasant Liquors**, Gurpreet Bhinder, President, Class A, Beer, Wine and Liquor, AJR Group, Inc., 5704 Martin Luther King Highway, Seat Pleasant, 20743. – **Request for a Special Sunday Sales Permit.**

**Licensee does not have an attorney, acknowledge her right to an attorney and agree to move forward without an attorney.** Ms. Bhinder testified that she would upgrade lighting, the ceiling, shelves, replace refrigerators and the Point-of-Sale System for the store.

**Commissioner Camacho** reminds the licensee that she has one year to complete the changes or lose the right to apply again. **Commissioner Camacho** moved to grant a Special Sunday Sales Permit to **t/a Pleasant Liquors**, seconded by **Commissioner Sparkman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

2. **t/a Marlton Liquors**, Geetaben S. Patel, Member-Manager, Class A, Beer, Wine and Liquor, Marlton Spirits, LLC, 9518 Crain Highway, Upper Marlboro, 20772. – **Request for a Delivery Permit. Represented by Robert Kim, Esquire.**

**Mr. Kim** stated that the delivery application was filed on July 31, 2024. He has discussed Rule and Regulation #76 with the licensee, and he understand that third party delivery is not permitted.

**Commissioner Camacho** moved to grant a Delivery Permit to **t/a Marlton Liquors**, seconded by **Commissioner Sparkman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

3. **t/a Azteca Restaurant**, Diana Odett Bedolla Hernandez, President, Secretary, Treasurer Class B, Beer, Wine, and Liquor, NSPKH, Inc., 15101 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 101, Laurel, 20707. – **Request for a Special Entertainment Permit. Represented by Linda Carter, Esquire.**

**Corporal Hunt** from the Prince George's County Police Department testified that he has reviewed the rules and regulations with the licensee and found that the security plan to be adequate.

**Ms. Carter** proffered that she has also reviewed the rules and regulations with her client and the reason they are seeking an entertainment permit was at the request of customers. She also stated that the licensee will be on the premises Thursday through Sunday. The licensee is in the process of reducing the number of seats, at which time she will seek a Family Entertainment Permit. For now, licensee is requesting to have entertainment seven (7) nights per week but will only provide Thursday through Sunday.

**Commissioner Camacho** moved to grant a Special Entertainment Permit to **t/a Azteca Restaurant**, seconded by **Commissioner Sparkman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

4. **t/a Sonesta Select Greenbelt College Park**, Kanwal Mac Singh, Member Manager, Linda Carter, Member, Authorized Person, Class B(BH), Beer, Wine and Liquor, MAC Hotels, LLC, 6301 Golden Triangle Drive, Greenbelt, 20770. – **Request for a Special Entertainment Permit. Represented by Linda Carter, Esquire.**

**Corporal Hunt** from the Prince George’s County Police Department testified that he has reviewed the rules and regulations with the licensee and found that the security plan to be adequate. However, the Fire Capacity Certificate is still outstanding.

**Ms. Carter** proffered that the plan is to use the permit for the banquet hall to accommodate weddings, Bar Mitzvas, etc. The application submitted is true and correct. Licensee understands that the permit cannot be picked up until the Fire Capacity Certificate is received by the Board.

**Commissioner Camacho** moved to grant a Special Entertainment Permit to **t/a Sonesta Select Greenbelt College Park**, seconded by **Commissioner Sparkman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

5. **t/a Doubletree by Hilton/La Curva Bar & Grill**, Natacha Lyn Saint-Firmin, Authorized Person/Member, Class B(BH), Beer, Wine and Liquor, MHI Laurel West, LLC, 15101-15107 Sweitzer Lane, Laurel, 20707. – **Request for a Special Entertainment Permit. Represented by Linda Carter, Esquire.**

**Corporal Hunt** from the Prince George’s County Police Department testified that he has reviewed the rules and regulations with the hotel staff and found that the security plan to be adequate.

**Ms. Carter** proffered that La Curva used to be the hotel restaurant. However, it does not operate under the hotel license and will seeking its own U&O. The permit will only be used for the banquet facility.

**Commissioner Camacho** moved to grant a Special Entertainment Permit to **t/a Doubletree by Hilton/La Curva Bar & Grill**, restricted to the banquet facility, seconded by **Commissioner Sparkman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

6. Tanetta Merritt, Authorized Person, Susan Vogel, Authorized Person, **t/a La’Caj**, 4531 Telfair Blvd, Camp Springs, 20746, Class B(BLX), Beer, Wine and Liquor, is summonsed to show cause for an alleged violation of R.R. No. 37(E) of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County. "Change in Mode of Operation" Specifically, the establishment was having entertainment without an Entertainment Permit. "In the event a licensee decides to significantly alter the mode of operation contained in the original application approved by the Board, at the time of issuance of the license, such change must first be presented to the Board for approval. Changes in the mode of operation would include but not be limited to, entertainment, alteration of physical premises, and presentation of food, alcoholic beverages, seats, and/or physical environment both inside and outside of the licensed premises." To wit: On Wednesday, July 24, 2024, at approximately 9:15 PM, I, Inspector Kinney conducted a Routine Inspection at La'Caj, located at 4535 Telfair Blvd, Suite 109 and Suite 110, Camp

Springs, MD 20746. Inspector Kinney entered La'Caj and requested to speak with the manager who was identified as Tanetta Merritt. During the inspection, it was observed that the establishment was providing entertainment (Live DJ controlling board), after 9:00 PM, without the required Special Entertainment Permit or Family Entertainment Permit as required by Rules and Regulations and provisions of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The licensee has had no previous violations in the past two years. The licensee is subject to all potential penalties identified in the Alcoholic Beverage Article, Rule 26 of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County and any other provision(s) governing said license, which may include other violation(s) identified at the hearing.

**Licensee does not have an attorney, acknowledge her right to an attorney and agree to move forward without an attorney.**

**Inspector Brandon Kinney** testified before the Board regarding the violation that occurred on July 24, 2024.

**Ms. Merritt** stated that she's not opposed to Inspector Kinney's testimony. They are familiar with the rules and regulations and does adhere to them. On this particular day, time got away from them. She is aware that a Special Entertainment Permit is required if she wanted to have entertainment after 9:00 p.m. She is in the process of completing the application to apply for the SEP, waiting for the Fire Capacity Certificate and another document. Her DJ knows that there should be a hard stop at 8:50 p.m. Entertainment for is the community and to increase sales because of the drought in the food industry.

**Commissioner Camacho** moved to find t/a La'Caj in violation of Rule and Regulation #37(E) and assessed a fine of \$1,500 and mandatory training within ninety (90) days, seconded by **Commissioner Sparkman**. Ms. Vogel questions if both licensees should take the training and apologizes to the Board. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

7. Tanetta Merritt, Member/Authorized Person, t/a **Burgers@Apollo**, 4531 Telfair Blvd Suite 108, Camp Springs, 20746, Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor, is summonsed to show cause for an alleged violation of R.R. No. 37(E) of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County. "Change in Mode of Operation" Specifically, the establishment was having entertainment without an Entertainment Permit. "In the event a licensee decides to significantly alter the mode of operation contained in the original application approved by the Board, at the time of issuance of the license, such change must first be presented to the Board for approval. Changes in the mode of operation would include but not be limited to, entertainment, alteration of physical premises, and presentation of food, alcoholic beverages, seats, and/or physical environment both inside and outside of the licensed premises." To wit: On Wednesday, July 24, 2024, at approximately 9:23 PM, Inspector Kinney conducted a Routine Inspection at Burgers@Apollo, located at 4531 Telfair Blvd, Suite 108, Camp Springs, MD 20746. Inspector Kinney entered Burgers@Apollo and requested to speak with the manager who was identified as Dennis Green. During the inspection, it was observed that the establishment was providing entertainment (Karaoke), after 9:00 PM, without the required Special Entertainment Permit or Family Entertainment Permit as required by Rules and Regulations and provisions of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The licensee had one previous violation in the past two years for R.R. No.1 - Sale to Minor on July 19, 2023. The licensee is subject to all potential penalties identified in the Alcoholic Beverage Article, Rule

26 of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County and any other provision(s) governing said license, which may include other violation(s) identified at the hearing.

**Licensee does not have an attorney, acknowledge her right to an attorney and agree to move forward without an attorney.**

**Inspector Brandon Kinney** testified before the Board regarding the violation that occurred on July 24, 2024.

**Ms. Merritt** stated again that time got away from them. They have entertainment to survive and at the request of the community.

**Commissioner Camacho** moved to find **t/a Burgers@Apollo** in violation of Rule and Regulation #37(E) and assessed a fine of \$3,000, seconded by **Commissioner Sparkman**. **Commissioner Camacho** explains that the licensee could have received a fine of \$6,000 because of a prior violation within a 24-month period. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

8. **Mozuenorinmi P. Okolie**, Member-Manager, **t/a Calabar Kitchen and Lounge**, 3524 Crain Highway, Bowie, 20716, Class B, Beer, Wine, and Liquor, is summonsed to show cause for non-payment of fines related to of R.R. No. 1 – Sale to Minor of the Rules and Regulations of Prince George’s County. To wit: On Wednesday, March 13th, 2024, at approximately 8:30 pm, two female underage police explorers, (aged 17 and 18 years old) entered Calabar Kitchen and Lounge, located at 3524 Crain Highway, Bowie Md. 20716. Once inside the establishment, the underage operatives sat at the bar and ordered two (2) Margaritas from the server. After requesting to see the underage operative’s IDs, the server conferred with a second server regarding the birthdates on the identification. After a brief discussion, the server proceeded to take the order and served the margaritas to the underage operatives. The licensee is subject to all potential penalties identified in the Alcoholic Beverage Article, Rule 26 of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George’s County and any other provision(s) governing said license, which may include other violation(s) identified at the hearing.

**Director Sheppard** stated that the fine payment has been fulfilled.

**Commissioner Camacho** moved to dismiss the Show Cause against **t/a Calabar Kitchen and Lounge**, seconded by **Commissioner Sparkman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

9. **Darnell Dinkins**, Authorized Person, **t/a House of Comedy and Jazz**, 9430 Annapolis Road, Lanham, 20706, Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor, is summonsed to show cause for non-payment of violation fines related to violation of 26-1903 A licensed holder may not provide entertainment unless authorized to do so, of the Alcoholic Beverage Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and R.R. No. 37 (E) Change in mode of operation (Having entertainment without a permit), of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County. To wit: On Saturday, March 23, 2024, at approximately 9:15 pm, Liquor Inspector Clinkscale of the Board of License Commissioners, entered the House of Comedy and Jazz, located at 9430 Annapolis Road, Lanham, MD, to conduct an Entertainment Inspection. The inspection was generated from an anonymous tip that this establishment was providing entertainment without a permit. The licensee is subject to all potential penalties identified in the Alcoholic

Beverage Article, Rule 26 of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County and any other provision(s) governing said license, which may include other violation(s) identified at the hearing.

**Licensee does not have an attorney, acknowledge his right to an attorney and agree to move forward without an attorney.**

**Mr. Dinkins** stated that he will pay the full balance in the morning. Business has been slow, and he got behind on his bills. Received link to make payment. Will be a priority.

**Commissioner Camacho** moved to carryover the Show Cause until confirmation of payment, seconded by **Commissioner Sparkman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

- 10. Dandy Chukwuezi, Managing Member, t/a Base Restaurant, 5451 Annapolis Road, Hyattsville, 20710, Class B(DD), Beer, Wine and Liquor, is summonsed to show cause for an alleged violation of Section 26-208 of the Alcoholic Beverage Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and R.R No. 26 B (7) & (14) The Board may suspend or revoke any license issued under the provision of the Alcoholic Beverage Article of the annotated Code of Maryland for any action(s) which, in the judgment of the Board, does not promote the peace and safety of the community in which the business is situated. Such action(s) include but are not limited to (7) Repetitive disturbances or disorders occurring on or about the licensed premises. (14) The commission of any act by the licensee, his/her agents, or employees that constitutes a danger to the peace and safety of the neighborhood. To wit: On or about the following dates, July 22, 2023, June 10, 2024, July 7, 2024, and other dates throughout both years, the Prince George's County Police responded to the Base Restaurant, located at 5451 Annapolis Road, Hyattsville, MD 20710, for assault calls for service, shooting calls for service and other calls for service totaling approximately 42 calls for service. One shooting resulted with a bullet entering the wall of a private home. On another occasion, an altercation started inside the establishment, spilled over into the parking lot, and resulted with a female patron being shot. For these reasons, the licensee is being summoned regarding danger to the peace and safety to the community. The licensee is subject to all potential penalties identified in the Alcoholic Beverage Article, Rule 26 of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County and any other provision(s) governing said license, which may include other violation(s) identified at the hearing. **Represented by G. Emeka Onwezi, Esquire.****

**Corporal Hunt** from the Prince George's County Police Department testified before the Board regarding violations that occurred on July 22, 2023, June 10, 2024, July 7, 2024, and other dates throughout 2023 and 2024. This is still an active case; therefore, CPL Hunt was unable to present certain information.

**Corporal Proctor** testified that she worked with **Corporal Hunt** to conduct the site inspection for the establishment regarding a revised Security Plan. County Police Officers stopped working part-time at the establishment because this was an ongoing problem of not being paid.

**Senator Augustine, Bladensburg Mayor James, and Police Chief Collington** spoke about their concerns regarding the safety and welfare of the community.

Several character witnesses spoke on behalf of the licensee and how they feel safe patronizing Base Lounge. **Mr. Onwezi** stated that his client cannot solve all crimes in Bladensburg and that it's unfair to blame one entity. His request to have Bladensburg Officers work part-time at the establishment was denied by Chief Collington. He has produced employment and is active in the community. He has made recommended changes from the security plan and now has an officer agree to be at the location.

**Commissioner Camacho** moved to suspend the Alcoholic Beverage License until an acceptable Security Plan is approved by the Police Department, based on the severity of the documented incidents and the violation of R.R No. 26 B (7) & (14), **Commissioner Sparkman** recommends that a fine also be added. **Commissioner Camacho** moved to amend the motion to include a \$1,500 fine. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

11. Jamil Jamalnia, Managing Member, Mynor Hernandez, Managing Member, **t/a The Greene Turtle**, 15914 Crain Highway, Unit A, Brandywine, 20613, Class B(BLX), Beer, Wine and Liquor, is summonsed to show cause for an alleged violation of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County R.R. No. 1 – Sales to Or Possession by Underage Persons and R.R. No. 32 – Inspections: Uncooperative. To wit: On Thursday, July 25, 2024, at approximately 9:55 PM, Inspector Clinkscale, Inspector Kinney, and an 18-year-old underage operative (D.O.B. 05/10/2006) from the Prince Georges County Summer Youth Program conducted an Underage Compliance Inspection at the Greene Turtle, located at 15914 Crain Highway #A, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Inspector Kinney and the underage operative entered Greene Turtle and took a seat at the bar. Once seated, the underage operative ordered a glass of Strawberry Mojito. The bartender, Sharif Holt, proceeded to make and furnish the drink to the underage patron without asking for or checking her identification. The sale to the underage operative, witnessed by Inspector Kinney, was in direct violation of Section 6-304 and 26-2707 of the Alcoholic Beverage Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and Rule and Regulation #1: Sale to or Possession of Underage Person- A. a licensee or any of his/her employees or agents, may not sell, serve or furnish or allow the consumption or possession of any alcoholic beverages at any time to any person under the age of 21. Additionally, the manager (Ashley Hunter) became rude and uncooperative, as she refused to provide the Inspectors with a to-go cup needed to confiscate the evidence and refused the request by the Inspectors to take the glass used to serve the underage operative. Ms. Hunter was informed that she was in direct violation of R.R. No. 32 – Inspections: All license holders, their agents, and employees, must cooperate with representatives of the Board of License Commissioners, members of the Police Department, Fire Authorities, Health Department, Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement, Grand Jury, and representatives of other authorized agencies whenever any of these persons are on the licensed premises on official business and shall comply with any reasonable order of such authorities or other public authority designed to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the public at large. The licensee has had no previous violations in the past two years. The licensee is subject to all potential penalties identified in the Alcoholic Beverage Article, Rule 26 of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County and any other provision(s) governing said license, which may include other violation(s) identified at the hearing. **Represented by Robert Kim, Esquire.**

**Inspector Marcus Clinkscale** testified before the Board regarding the violation that occurred on July 25, 2024.

**Mr. Kim** does not dispute that a drink was served to a minor but disputes that there is no evidence that the manager was rude and uncooperative. She was not sure if it was allowed to let the alcohol leave the establishment and checked with the general manager, by phone, and he was also unsure. **Mr. Kim** pointed out that the “yes” box was as being cooperative on the Underage Sales Prevention Report 1858. Both the bartender and manager have already retaken TIPS Training.

**Sharif Holt** testified that Ms. Hunter was not rude and uncooperative. He agreed that Greene Turtle does not provide to-go cups because alcohol cannot leave the establishment. **Ashley Hunter** testified that she was on duty as the manager. She did not dispute the sale to minor but was surprised that the inspector asked for a to-go cup, as it has never been asked of her before. She was not disrespectful or combative.

**Mr. Kim** submits to the Board that this does not rise to the violation of being uncooperative. He knows that the Board will find them in violation of the sale to minor but ask that the Board consider waiving the additional training requirement since both have already been retrained.

**Commissioner Camacho** moved to find **t/a The Greene Turtle** in violation of Rule and Regulation #1 and assessed a fine of \$1,500, seconded by **Commissioner Sparkman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

**Adjourned 9:39 p.m.**