

**January 8, 2025
9200 Basil Court
Largo, MD 20774
Virtual Hearing**

Present:

Oretha Bridgwaters-Simms, Chair
Armando Camacho, Vice Chair
Tammie Norman, Commissioner
Dennis Smith, Commissioner
Jason Deloach, Esquire
Terence Sheppard, Director
Alecia Hughes, Assistant to the Director
Robert Clark, Chief Liquor Inspector
Cristian Mendoza, Deputy Chief Liquor Inspector
Patricia Bell, Administrative Manager
Katrice James, Administrative Aide
Keyanna Little, Administrative Aide

Start Time: 7:02 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 Blue Sky Liquors**, Brijeshbhai M. Patel, Member-Manager, Class A, Beer, Wine and Liquor, Blue Sky Liquors MD, LLC, 6430 Central Avenue, Capitol Heights, 20743. Request for a Delivery Permit. – Represented by Benjamin Carter, Esquire.

Licensee was represented by Linda Carter. Ms. Carter proffered that they have filed a request for a delivery permit. She has personally reviewed Rule 76 with the licensee. He is aware that he cannot use any third-party delivery services. That all deliveries have to be made by his employees that are regular employees, that are all alcohol awareness certified, and who are at least 18 years of age. He knows that he has to document every sale. He knows that he has to keep those documentations for no less than 18 months.

He also knows that at the time the delivery is made, he needs to confirm the age and identity of the recipient and he knows that he can only accept the six legal forms of identification.

We also reviewed the fact that while the county typically does not limit the distance requirements on licenses, but because he is fairly close to the University of Maryland, and not too far from Prince George's Community College, he knows that he cannot make deliveries to any college owned properties or nor to any student housing, whether they are officially sanctioned or just a fraternity house that happens to have the letters on the outside.

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

2. **t/a La'Caj**, Tanetta Merritt, Authorized Person, Susan Vogel, Authorized Person, Class B(BLX), Beer, Wine and Liquor, Apollo 109, LLC, 4531 Telfair Blvd, Suite 110, Camp Springs, 20746. Request for a Special Entertainment Permit. – Represented by Linda Carter, Esquire.

Corporal Hunt from the Prince George's County Police Department testified that he met with Ms. Merritt on December 4, 2024, to conduct a site inspection. He covered the rules and regulations of having a special entertainment permit, and she understood the rules and regulations. He viewed the live feed of her video cameras, and her security plan is adequate as proposed.

Ms. Carter stated that an application for special entertainment has been filed and she also review the rules and regulations with both licensees. Pursuant to the lease, they have to close no later than midnight. In most instances, the entertainment is actually going to end sometime right around 11, that gives them an hour to let people finish their meals and then leave. But in no instance, unless it's a very special occasion like perhaps New Year's Eve, will the landlord allow anything to occur on this property past midnight.

Commissioner Norman asked Ms. Carter, to explain what an authorized person is. Ms. Carter responded that with an LLC, under the law, LLCs typically don't have officers as we would think about it in corporate terms. So under the law, the LLC is entitled to designate people to serve as authorized persons and pursuant to the law, those authorized persons can be licensees.

Commissioner Camacho moved to grant a Special Entertainment Permit to **t/a La'Caj**, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

- 3. t/a Burgers @ Apollo**, Tanetta Merritt, Member/Authorized Person, Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor, Burgers @, LLC, 4531 Telfair Blvd, Suite 108, Camp Springs, 20746. Request for a Special Entertainment Permit. – Represented by Linda Carter, Esquire.

Ms. Carter stated that they would like to make an amendment to the application. She requested the application be amended from a Special Entertainment Permit to a Family Entertainment Permit. It is a very small establishment, and has less than 50 seats. It also has the same landlord as **La’Caj**, and they are required to close no later than 12 o'clock every night.

Commissioner Camacho moved to amend the application for Burgers @Apollo from a Special Entertainment Permit to a Family Entertainment Permit, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

Corporal Hunt from the Prince George’s County Police Department testified that he met with Ms. Merritt in regard to Burgers at Apollo on the same day. I just did both of them back-to-back. They discussed her possibly going from a Special to a Family Entertainment Permit. He reviewed both rules and regulations with her so that she would know the clear delineation between the two, and she fully understood. At this point, her security plan is adequate.

Commissioner Camacho moved to grant a Family Entertainment Permit to **t/a Burgers @ Apollo**, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

- 4. t/a Delicias La Chocita**, Maria Martinez Ponce, Manager, Class B(DD), Beer, Wine, and Liquor, Delicias La Chocita, LLC, 4800 Annapolis Road, Bladensburg, 20710. Request for a Special Entertainment Permit.

Licensee does not have an attorney, acknowledged his right to an attorney and agreed to move forward without an attorney.

Janet Salazar Martinez is sworn in as the interpreter for the licensee.

Corporal Hunt from the Prince George’s County Police Department testified that on the 31st he sat down with them and went over the rules and regulations of having a special entertainment permit. There was an issue with putting sworn security in place, but they finally got that hammered out. There was a little issue with the translation, but Janet came in and helped us out and got us straight. But as of now, their security plan is adequate as proposed.

Ms. Ponce testified that she previously had a Special Entertainment Permit but was unable to renew. She plans to provide entertainment from on Friday through Sunday. The hours for entertainment are Friday and Saturday are from 9:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. and Sunday from 9:00 p.m. to 2:00a.m.

Commissioner Camacho asked the licensee to clarify her Sunday hours, as the application stated 9:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. **Commissioner Camacho** moved to amend the application to reflect the Sunday hours of 9:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., seconded by **Commissioner Norman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

Commissioner Camacho moved to grant a Special Entertainment Permit to **t/a Delicias La Chocita**, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

- 5. t/a Old Town Inn**, Donnell Long, Member, Class B(R), Beer, Wine and Liquor, New Olde Towne Inn, LLC, 14745 Main Street, Upper Marlboro, 20772. Request for a Family Entertainment Permit. – Represented by Eddie Pounds, Esquire.

Board attorney Jason DeLoach recused himself from this case.

Mr. Pounds stated that nothing has really changed regarding OTI and their business operations and security plan. We missed the deadline for filing. OTI has proudly served the Upper Marlboro community, since opening its doors in September of 2007. As a family-friendly dining establishment, OTI has built a reputation for great food, excellent service, and a welcoming atmosphere. OTI has a full-service bar and carefully curated entertainment offerings, including DJ performances. From Thursday through Saturday and live jazz during Sunday brunch. Mr. Long is deeply committed to maintaining a safe enjoyable environment for its patrons and the broader Upper Marlboro community from its staff training practices to its crowd management procedures. OTI operates with a focus on responsibility and compliance with all licensing requirements.

Councilwoman Wala Blegay testified on behalf of OTI. She is definitely in support of the application on behalf of Old Town. Not only is Mr. Donnell Long one of her residents, but frankly, the OTI, as he said, for almost 20 years in the community, it has been a staple. One of the biggest concerns that our residents have stated is that they want to live, work, and play in Prince George's County. And while they can live here, they cannot play here because of limited options we have. OTI provides that option. It has been known in the community. Many of us have hosted events there. Have hosted fundraisers. I would do whatever I can to support an organization and establishment that had provided the family feel and that has been OTI.

Corporal Hunt from the Prince George's County Police Department testified that he met with the manager Melissa Pringle and reviewed the rules and regulations for a Family Entertainment Permit, and the security plan, which is adequate, as proposed.

Commissioner Camacho moved to grant a Special Entertainment Permit to **t/a Old Town Inn**, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

- 6. Hershon Funes**, President/Secretary/Treasurer, **t/a El Viajero Restaurant**, 1835 University Blvd. E, Suite 100, Hyattsville, 20783, for an alleged violation of Section 6-311, Purchase Alcoholic Beverages from Other than a Wholesaler, of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and R.R. No. 11 Other than a Wholesaler of the Rules and Regulations for Prince George's County. (Continued from November 6, 2024)

Licensee does not have an attorney, acknowledged his right to an attorney and agreed to move forward without an attorney.

Inspector North read the report for **Inspector Pascual** before the Board regarding the violation that occurred on September 4, 2024.

Mauricio Romero testified that he is a new manager and has been with the establishment for a year and a half. One of the old assistant managers unfortunately had given him some wrong information and he was following his lead since he had been with the establishment since it had opened in 2017. That manager is no longer with the establishment, and they have redownloaded and have a copy complete of the licenses and regulations. They are no longer taking the word of others in this regards. They have the physical documents in front of them.

Commissioner Camacho moved to find **t/a El Viajero Restaurant** in violation of Rule and Regulation #11 and assessed a fine of \$1,500 and mandatory training for all those serving alcohol in the restaurant within 90-days, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

7. Leho Poldmae, Member/Authorized Person, **t/a The Greene Turtle (College Park)**, 7356 Baltimore Avenue, College Park 20740, for an alleged 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.

Licensee is represented by David Mister, Esquire.

Inspector Tredway testified before the Board regarding the violation that occurred on November 8, 2024.

Mr. Mister stated that his clients are admitting to the violation. They did actually inform the Board on the original application that they were in fact going to have live entertainment. Unfortunately, they did not submit a request for the live entertainment and that's a fault on his part for not following up with the clients. They are in the process of applying for such privilege with the Board. The only thing they are waiting on at the moment is the amendment or the modification to the use and occupancy permit. They have a security plan, but are going to review that again and then seek to review that with the Prince George's County Police Department to see if it's adequate before they even take it further with the Board. Immediately upon the inspector advising of the violation, the DJ was just about to stop anyway. They ceased any further entertainment of any form and have not resumed it since the time of this event. It's our hope that the Board will take into consideration the fact that this is obviously a first violation. I know It came early on, but they are good citizens throughout the state of Maryland do not have a track record of problems or violations.

Commissioner Camacho moved to find **t/a The Greene Turtle (College Park)** in violation of Rule and Regulation #37 and assessed a fine of \$1,500, seconded by **Commissioner Norman**. **After Board vote, motion carries.**

Adjourned: 8:20 p.m.