

CITY OF MCKEESPORT
WORKSHOP MEETING

WEDNESDAY

6:30 P.M.

JANUARY 4, 2023

Public Hearing regarding the Approval of Transferring A Liquor License R-15673 in the City of McKeesport from the Township of Moon

Solicitor Elash asked if anyone was present to speak on this issue.

Someone spoke and said we are here.

President Dellapenna said come up to the podium and please state your name, your address and your intentions here.

Eddie Sharma for Sarabjit and Nelam Holdings LLC regarding the Liquor License transfer request. My personal address is Moon Township. We have locations in Homestead, 2 in downtown, 1 in Dormont, 1 in Squirrel Hill. We have 6 shops, beer distributors, T-Mobile stores and Cold Store Creameries. Here what we want to do, we of course want to put a beer license there but more of an emphasis would be doing a deli, sandwich shop, some hot dogs, so people can come on their office break, whatever, enjoy a sandwich, grab a beer, stuff like that.

President Dellapenna asked are you going to be an actual bar or just Mr. Sharma said not a bar at all. Everything that we serve is to go, nothing on premises.

President Dellapenna asked if anyone else had any questions.

Mayor Cherepko said I do and asked, just for the record, a concern of ours, from a Council standpoint, I am the Mayor, we have not had a chance to meet, is once we get these Liquor Licenses into town, often times someone may have a change of heart of what they intend to do and the next thing you know we are dealing with a nuisance bar or something like that. I will say, that's a major concern of ours right now.

Mr. Sharma said I completely agree and I 100% understand. We had the same thing when we did the Homestead store transfer. They had the same concerns but knock on wood, this is our second year and we've had no trouble, nothing, no nuisance. We don't let people linger around, hang out in front of stores, nothing

like that. We are strictly, strictly just a bottle shop, with food and beer to go. I promise you we are going to be a good addition to the McKeesport neighborhood.

Mayor Cherepko said I like the comment about the eatery and everything, someone to grab a sandwich, etc. I think there is going to be a need for that.

Mr. Sherma said a lot of times in our Homestead store we have a majority of people coming in are people from the Borough or the Fire Department or Police Station. They come there have a beer on their break, have a sandwich, get some pasta from next door, things like that.

Mayor Cherepko asked, just out of curiosity would you be looking to do the same thing here as in Homestead?

Mr. Sharma said yes, Homestead and the Squirrel Hill, we have a location in Squirrel Hill as well.

Mayor Cherepko said I would like to visit one of those locations.

Mr. Sharma said of course, anytime you are welcome.

President Dellapenna asked where is your Homestead store?

Mr. Sharma said right at the intersection of 200 and East 8th. It's right across the street from the Borough and the Police station. There's another brewery going up across the street from us.

We were hoping once we are here we are going to attract other people to come into McKeesport. So like you know get the business community here rolling as well.

Mayor Cherepko asked have you reached out to our Community Development at all regarding zoning and occupancy, things like that.

Mr. Sharma said we unfortunately didn't get a chance to, I wanted to, but I think it already got pushed like 4 months and once we got our green light from you guys of course we would approach them. Our concern is to 100% make sure the safety of our employees, the safety of the community, everyone who is going to be working there would be ram certified so we want to make sure everything we are doing to grow the community.

Mr. Soles asked what would be your hours?

Mr. Sharma said for right now I think we are going to start from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and not go too crazy but we will see how it goes. I think after 8:00 p.m. things tend to slow down here a little bit.

Mr. Soles asked 7 days?

Mr. Sharma said Saturdays, maybe on Sundays if the Superbowl or anything comes.

Mayor Cherepko asked Jason would there be any issue if we table this and let them go through the process getting in touch with Mr. Tedesco and our Community Development and we could always do final approval next month?

Solicitor Elash said generally you have a certain period of time from the time they submit an application and they have been waiting. There is some gray area as to exactly when they applied because they never formally filled out an application but I think, I mean I haven't reviewed our Zoning Ordinance, I am not even sure if it is zoned for that.

Mr. Sharma said it is zoned for restaurant.

Solicitor Elash said so you contacted them?

Mr. Sharma said we did not my attorney did before we signed anything I wanted to make sure we would not run into any zoning issues and it is zoned for a restaurant yes. But, if you want I can get in touch with them.

Mayor Cherepko said I will be honest with you I would love to see you open a sandwich shop and do 6 packs to go. The one thing about me is you don't ever have to guess where I am coming from. I put my cards on the table. I am very straightforward. I would just like to make sure that we have zoned for it, make sure it is all good, I know you said, I know you have not contacted our office nor did anybody in regard to that. So, I think there might have been some sort of brief conversation with Jason at one point but they didn't get into that. I would have absolutely, as long as it's going to be a go, I have no problem recommending, Council is going to do their own thing but as Mayor I would feel more comfortable recommending this a month from now, letting them go

through everything, see everything, see the plan and you guys, I don't think that would really push you back, would it?

Mr. Sharma said it wouldn't but we've just been waiting almost 4 months to get to this point so I want to, by the time summer rolls around I want to make sure we are open before summer, because then again.

Mayor Cherepko said if you didn't have your Liquor License over the next month but you moved forward doing everything as if you did, would it push you back?

Mr. Sharma said no.

Mayor Cherepko said what I am going to tell you is if what you are saying is I go visit your Homestead store.

Mr. Sharma said we have Homestead, Squirrel Hills, 2 in downtown, we just opened another one downtown, and we are looking to open a couple more places. We also have the Cold Stone Creamery and we also have the beer store.

Mayor Cherepko said I will visit them all.

Mr. Sharma said I will come with you, maybe that will be afterwards.

Mayor Cherepko said absolutely. I won't drink, I'll have a water, but what I am telling you that I am giving you my word that I would feel more comfortable once I visit a couple locations, not that I don't believe you, but once I visit a couple locations I would feel much more comfortable. So, I think, zoning, I am not sure if there will be parking issues, other issues, things like that. This is Mr. Tedesco, our Community Development Director.

Mr. Tedesco said you are saying it will not hold you back but you still need an Occupancy anyway.

Mr. Sharma said we still need to apply for Occupancy, but we can do them parallel, we can do the Liquor License and everything else, all the permitting at the same time.

Mr. Tedesco said that should have been your first step to apply for Occupancy.

Mr. Sharma said before we go to apply for Occupancy I want to make sure the municipality allows us to get the Liquor License here because if they won't allow us it won't really help us.

Mayor Cherepko said I understand the way you look at that. Just from our perspective I would like to see what you are applying for and then I would've come in here and been much more comfortable saying ok. But what I will tell you is I believe what you are saying so I mean, I think I would recommend Council tonight table this and he can get in contact with everyone and get the ball moving and I would have our meeting the first February, February 1st, so it's literally like you are not waiting, you are literally 4 weeks away.

Mr. Sharma said ok, thank you.

Mayor Cherepko said we can give you final approval if you meet with them and like I said I really do, I want to visit.

Mr. Sharma said happy to show you guys.

Mr. Tedesco said only if there are any Conditional Uses or Variances that are needed.

Mayor Cherepko said oh, it might delay that, but the Liquor License isn't delaying him. That's all I am worried about.

Mr. Sharma asked if there were any other questions but there were none so he thanked everyone.

President Dellapenna said thank you and then asked if there was anyone else present to speak for or against Bill No. 4? Anyone else here to speak for or against Bill 4?

That concludes the Public Hearing.

Work Session.

The Work Session portion of the Council Meeting was called to order on the above-stated date by President Richard Dellapenna.

Secretary James read the following proposed Bills:

Bill #1 – Introduced by Timothy Brown – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Establishing Regular Meetings of City Council for the Year 2023 and January 2024.

President Dellapenna asked for any questions or comments on Bill 1 but there were none.

Bill #2 – Introduced by Luethel Nesbit – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Enter Into a Grant Agreement for \$25,000 with the PA Department of Community and Economic Development to be Used for Facility Improvements at McKeesport Fire Station Number 2.

Mayor Cherepko said we are just resubmitting this. Senator Brewster helped with our firemen, upgrading some of the things out at Fire Station #2.

President Dellapenna asked for any questions on Bill 2 and there were none.

Bill #3 – Introduced by Jill Lape – An Ordinance of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Enacting the Provisions of Act 57 of 2022 Waiving Additional Charges for Real Estate Taxes if Certain Conditions Apply.

Solicitor Elash said this is a law passed by the Commonwealth of PA, it gives people a form they fill out if they transfer a property mid-year that they only pay taxes on the pro-rated share of the taxes.

President Dellapenna asked if there were any other questions on Bill # 3 but there were not.

Bill #4 – Introduced by Keith Soles – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Approving the Transfer of Restaurant Liquor License R-15673 into the City of McKeesport from the Township of Moon.

Mayor Cherepko said as we talked about my recommendation would be to have Council table that. I like what they were saying if they have all these other establishments I think that gives them a lot of credibility. I will, without question, will check out a hand full over the next month.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor. Any questions on Bill #4 but there were none.

President Dellapenna then asked for Council Reports.

Council Reports

Mrs. Nesbit – I don't have anything at this time.

Mr. Evans – nothing.

Mr. Barry – yes, I have a few things I want to go over tonight. First of all I would like to thank the McKeesport Police Department. They, in conjunction with the Allegheny County Police and the PA State Police, did two shops with a cop events for our kids at the LaRosa Youth Club. We were able to serve 29 kids and the premise around the event is that young people get to see the human side of a police officer. So they shop with them for like 1-1/2 hours; they have snack with them, a little lunch; and it was done at Walmart. One was done in North Huntingdon and one was done in North Versailles and McKeesport Police Officers attended this with our kids, which is important for that whole community thing and the whole community Policing thing. Both events went off without a hitch. Each child got to spend \$150 on a gift card for themselves or their family which is tremendous and a lot of the kids we chose were based on need so it was nice. It was a wonderful thing that I want to give Chief Alfer and Officer Gochenour for putting all the kudos for putting that together.

Second thing is we had some trees fall down on Ravine Street that were impeding traffic, some branches, and the City crew was out there, Steve's guys were out there and they got them up and I just can't thank them enough for taking care of that and taking care of it right away.

Last, but not least, I have been getting a lot of feedback regarding the closing of the Corpus Christy Church here in McKeesport. For those of you who don't know where it's at, it's a catholic institution, part of the Mary, Mother of God Parish on Versailles Avenue and the Catholic Diocese and the local powers to be in the Catholic Church decided to close that church. The last mass will be there this weekend and there is a lot of pressure and a lot of support on keeping that church open and I think it's important for us, even though it's a gray area when you are talking City government and a political, a religious organization, but that would be a tremendous loss to the City of McKeesport if they were to no longer hold masses there and if there is anything we can do as a governing body to try to petition the powers to be or, influence them in any way, it would be greatly appreciated. That's all I have.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mr. Barry.

again called for Council Reports.

Mr. Soles – nothing at this time.

Mr. Brown – nothing Mr. President sir.

Mrs. Lape – nothing.

President Dellapenna asked Mayor Cherepko if he would like to speak and Mayor Cherepko said I am going to hold off because I don't have much and I would really like to get Council in the back for a personnel couple things to talk about.

ADJOURNMENT:

President Dellapenna said the Work Session portion of the meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette James
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

APPROVED:

Richard Dellapenna
President of Council