

MINUTES

HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL

LIQUOR LICENSE TRANSFER HEARING

SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

Council met in special session regarding the transfer of a liquor license on Wednesday, September 12, 2018. Gavio called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Council President Bob Gavio, Council Vice President Allison Barletta, and Council Members Jean Mope, Anthony Colombo and James Perry were present. Also present were Attorney Sean Logsdon representing the law firm of Karpowich Law on behalf of the Applicant.

This hearing was conducted to receive public comments and discuss the transfer of restaurant Liquor License #R-3521 from Lucky J Sportsbar, Inc. from the City of Wilkes-Barre to the City of Hazleton for use at 116-118 West Broad Street, Hazleton, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.

John Pujols, 28 West 4th Street, Hazleton, presented as translator for Maria Medina, applicant requesting Restaurant Liquor License. Mr. Pujols stated he is requesting the license, from Wilkes-Barre, PA, to the Hazleton, PA, community. He said it will be a restaurant/sportsbar on Broad Street targeted towards the students and the surrounding Hazleton Community. Barletta asked what the restaurant/bar hours will be. Pujols said the hours of operation would be from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m. Mope asked how many people the restaurant/sportsbar will hold. Pujols stated he needs to wait for the Hazleton Fire Department to determine the facilities occupancy. Mope asked if he has off-street parking. Pujols said he has off-street parking. He asked the business, across the street (Second Base), to park in their establishment. He said he will be going to the Hazleton Chamber of Commerce to request a permit. Mope stated he needs to come to the City of Hazleton for a permit.

Perry asked if this is two establishments. Pujols stated it is two establishments that needs to be converted into one establishment. He said the building needs some repairs. He said if the license is not approved, he will not invest any money into the building. Colombo asked if the building needs to be brought “up-to-code”. Pujols said yes. Pujols said he needs to get his license, and has requested permits. He said he needs to find out, from the Code Department, what repairs need to be done. Mope asked if this will be a restaurant/bar or a nightclub. Pujols said it is too small to be a nightclub. Perry asked if he has an anticipated opening date. Pujols said he is waiting on the City to get the license approved. He said the building needs a kitchen and handicapped bathrooms. Barletta asked what days of operation he would be open. Pujols said he has a chef that is preparing a menu for Thirsty Thursdays or Tuesday Tackles. He said they would be open five days a week. Colombo asked if it will be Monday-Friday. Pujols said it will be Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. He is not sure of the other days. He said he will gauge how the public responds to the opening.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton, stated she owns a building at 44 West Broad Street. She said the City owns an excessive amount of liquor licenses. She said Knotty Pines Restaurant is more of a restaurant than a bar. She said bars do not have a good history in Hazleton. She said there is no parking on Broad Street. She said she needs to pay for her parking. She said all the spaces in the Can Do building parking lot are reserved. She said it is not safe to have a bar close to a community college or the churches. She said the churches hold services at night. She said the bar environment is not good for downtown Hazleton. She said the hours of operation from 12:00 midnight to 2:00 a.m. is not attracting the right crowd. She said having another bar, in the City, is not the way to go.

Antonio Rodriquez, 718 Muir Ave., Hazleton, asked what will be the name of the business. Gavio stated it will be named Lucky J. Sportsbar. Perry said the license is coming from Wilkes-Barre, PA. Gavio said it is a transfer from Wilkes-Barre, PA to 116-118 West Broad Street, Hazleton. He said the bar will be named Lucky J. Sportsbar. Rodriquez asked if there will be a security guard at the door during the evening hours. Pujols said there will be security officers at his facility. Rodriguez asked if he will be open overnight. Pujols said it depends how the business will go. Rodriquez said the Hazleton Police Department is very good. He said the city needs the business.

Pujols stated he noticed that the bars are more secure than the schools and churches. He stated, "how can the interaction in the city bring harm to the community". Mope asked if he will have entertainment. Pujols said he will have a live chat to interact with the community. He said it is easier for kids to use drugs than to have a good time. He said he will give the kids a choice. He said there will be television, food, games and sports. He said his establishment will be in a nice community. Barletta asked if his establishment will be more of a nightclub or a restaurant/bar. Pujols said it will be a restaurant. He said there is not enough space for a nightclub. He said he is trying to do something different that is not in the area. Perry asked if this will be a sports bar. Pujols said yes.

Gavio adjourned the hearing at 6:00 p.m.