

**Woburn License Commission
Regular Meeting
City Council Chamber
Thursday, October 20, 2022 – 6 p.m.**

Voting Members present: Chairman Thomas Skeffington, Commissioner David Gilgun
and Commissioner William Pappalardo

Also present: Mayor Scott Galvin, Woburn Police Capt. John Murphy, Woburn Fire Lt.
Joseph Foley, Woburn Firefighter John Nee, Deputy Treasurer/Collector Alex Dizio, and
Building Commissioner Thomas Quinn

Chairman Skeffington convened the meeting of the License Commission at 6:04 p.m.

- 1. Annual renewal meeting with liquor and innkeepers license holders:** Mayor Galvin said he would like to thank the License Commission, Commissioner Quinn, Capt. Murphy, Lt. Foley, and Deputy Dizio for attending the meeting. He said this year has been a lot better. He said he would like to thank the licensees for generously donating to different charities. He told them to keep up the good work. He said if there is anything they need, they can call his office. Chairman Skeffington said the License Commission has adopted new regulations that require anyone who serves alcohol to be certified by Tips or a similar entity. He said anyone who serves food must be certified by ServSafe or a similar entity. He said this is new this year. He said the ABCC's retail renewal form must have a November date. He said the ABCC requires any application for renewal that is submitted after the deadline to be filed as a new application. He said the license renewal fees have not changed this year. He said the ABCC requires social clubs to submit a list of officers. He said there are blank forms in the packages that were distributed to the clubs. He said outdoor dining is expected to end on April 1, 2023, and it is unlikely to be extended by the state legislature. He said anyone wishing to retain outdoor dining should plan on filing an application for alteration of premises by January. He said take out alcohol service ends on May 1, 2023, and it will also probably not be extended. He said anyone who wants extended hours on Thanksgiving or New Year's Eve should send an email to the clerk in plenty of time for him to notify the Woburn Police Dept. He said the commission will not require anyone to come to a meeting to request extended hours on New Year's Eve or Thanksgiving. Capt. Murphy said he will be coming out to inspect the premises with liquor licenses. He said every establishment with a liquor license is required to post the appropriate signage regarding underage consumption of alcohol. He said the signs must be posted where they are visible by patrons. He said they cannot be posted in the office. He said if an establishment has a standup drinking license, it must show the area where standing and drinking is allowed. He said any licenses issued for the premises have to be displayed. He said the big thing is to make the packet with the forms available when city officials come to conduct their inspections. He said they will try to get out the first week of November. He said they can't inspect in October. He said there is one piece of paper they will be looking for and it is imperative that it is available. He said the application form is what they will be looking for and it should be left at the bar. He said everything else can be send to the

corporate office but the application form can be retained. He said the inspectors want to do everything fast and efficiently. He said managers should advise their employees what's going on. He said the rules and regulations for various establishments are posted on the city's website. He advised the manager to download those forms and keep them handy. He said compliance checks will be conducted. He said there are only certain forms of identification that can be accepted. He said an establishment serves alcohol to a patron with an out-of-state license, the liability lies with the establishment. He said managers should study the current identification requirements. Chairman Skeffington said the city inspectors make the renewal process effortless. He said managers should be ready for inspections. He said the city can't make the renewal process any easier. Commissioner Quinn said the city's job is to make things easy on liquor license holders. He asked for the managers to make the forms readily available. He said there is a short window to conduct inspections this year. He said they have 12 days to inspect 75-77 restaurants. He said occupancy loads need to be posted. He said the most important document is a 110 inspection document that allows legal operation of the premises. He said he will be doing most of the inspections himself. He said if the paperwork isn't there during his first trip, he will not go back. Lt. Foley said the Fire Dept. will be coming around in November. He said he can't emphasize it enough to have the form on location when inspectors show up. He urged licensees to put the application form at the bar tonight. He said he will conduct an inspection and sign the form right then and there. He said he will conduct a full fire inspection. He said there are only two chances to conduct a full fire inspection, in November and in March. He said they will be looking to see if kitchen hoods have been properly inspected and are current. He said this is a very simple thing to do. He said he does not want to see storage of combustible items. He said one license holder was storing combustibles in the kitchen area. He urged the license holders not to lie to him. He said if a license holder forgets to have a hood cleaned, they should tell him. He said most of the license holders do a good job. He said he wants safe places to eat and drink. Deputy Treasurer/Collector Dizio said there should be a tax form in everyone's packet. He said this form is separate from the application form. He said the license holders should make sure they fill out the form completely. He said the forms that aren't filled out completely go to the back of the file. He said anyone who needs help should ask. He said there have to be original signatures on the form. He said there should be a phone number of someone who is familiar with the process. He said applicants should include on the form any other property they own in the city, including residential. Chairman Skeffington asked if any of the license holders have any questions. There were no responses. Chairman Skeffington said the completed application forms should be brought to the clerk. He said the commission wants to keep an open line of communication. He said the members of the commission live in Woburn. He said they are here to help. He said if there are any issues, call the clerk. He asked the representatives from the hotels to stay after the licensing tutorial for the next agenda item. Motion made by Commissioner Gilgun and seconded by Commissioner Pappalardo to take a 5-minute recess; approved, 3-0. Chairman Skeffington recessed the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

- 2. Report from Capt. Murphy regarding police activity at hotels:** Motion made by Commissioner Gilgun and seconded by Commissioner Pappalardo to return to the regular order of business; approved, 3-0. Chairman Skeffington reconvened the meeting at 6:34

p.m. Motion made by Commissioner Gilgun and seconded by Commissioner Pappalardo to take from the table the matter of police activity at hotels; approved, 3-0. Chairman Skeffington said there have been problems at the local hotels. He said Capt. Murphy has prepared a report listing the number of police responses to local hotels from January 1, 2022, to July 13, 2022. He said the number of responses to the hotels are as follows: Extended Stay – 52; Red Roof Inn – 50; Crowne Plaza – 48; Hilton – 25; Best Western – 20; Comfort Inn – 12; Fairfield Inn – 12; Marriott 700 Unicorn Park – 12; Holiday Inn – 111 Marriott 300 Presidential Way – 7; Sonesta – 3; Hampton Inn – 1. He asked if anyone from Best Western is in the audience. There were no respondents. Chairman Skeffington instructed the clerk to invite Best Western to the next meeting. He said the commission cannot allow the volume of phone calls to police to continue. He said the number of calls creates a strain on the Woburn Police Dept. and the Woburn Fire Dept.'s ambulance services. He said first responders are walking into hotels blind. He asked who the hotels are accepting as guests. He asked if guests are being vetted. He said the situation is changing tonight. He said there have been drug overdoses, and assault and battery incidents. He said Capt. Murphy went to Extended Stay to speak with the manager about some of the issues there and he was told there was no manager on-site. He said he thought the Red Roof Inn was heading in the right direction a year ago. He asked what has happened since because the number of incidents is increasing again. He said 52, 50, or 48 calls is unacceptable and drains city services. Commissioner Pappalardo said it is disheartening to see the number of calls to police increasing, particularly after the commission seemed to make progress last year. Chairman Skeffington said the commission adopted a schedule of fines last month as follows: 0-10 calls, no fine. He said a call volume between 0-10 is not a problem. He said a call volume between 11-15 will result in a \$100 fine per call. He said a call volume of 16-40 will result in a fine of \$500 per call. He said if a hotel makes more than 40 calls, then the premises may face revocation of the innkeepers license. An audience member who did not identify himself asked what happens if a guest calls police. Capt. Murphy said the response system will be monitored like the fire department monitors alarms. The same audience member asked what happens if there is a motor vehicle accident and the hotel is asked to call police. Commissioner Pappalardo said each hotel is getting 10 free calls and the number of accidents should not exceed that. Commissioner Gilgun said the commission is more interested in responses to criminal behavior like drug use and prostitution. Jofre Nieto, with Extended Stay, said there are instances when hotel personnel have to contact police. He said if someone commits suicide in the hotel, they have to contact police. He said he is not sure that should be considered a call. He said they want to limit calls to police, but when they call it is out of a concern for the safety of guests and employees. He said they can't say no to a guest who presents a proper ID. Commissioner Gilgun said there are an array of problems at Extended Stay, including unregistered cars in the parking lot. He said the commission isn't talking about minor problems like barking dogs. He said Capt. Murphy went to speak to the manager a few years ago and he was told the manager didn't have time for him. He said the manager needed to make time for him. He said if management doesn't make time for police inquiries, there will be consequences. Capt. Murphy suggested the hoteliers arrange for an email group where they can share ideas about what works and what their problems are. He said the police do not want to keep going back to the hotels. He said someone should take the lead. He said they should start

communicating, start taking responsibility and share resources. He said the onus is on the hoteliers. He said he is not a hotel manager. He said his responsibility is to ensure the safety of the public. He said he tries to minimize the possibility of putting police in harm's way. He asked the hoteliers to be a little more alert. He suggested holding quarterly meetings. He said there is meeting space at the hotels. He urged them to share information. Chairman Skeffington said there were 11 calls to the Holiday Inn and asked how many emanated from the parking lot. A representative from Holiday Inn who did not identify himself guessed there were two calls from the parking lot. Chairman Skeffington asked Mr. Nieto of the 52 calls from Extended Stay, how many were from the parking lot. Mr. Nieto said he did not know. Chairman Skeffington said there were no calls from the parking lot. He said the License Commission needs the cooperation from hoteliers. He said he lives in the city. He said he drives around. He said Commissioner Gilgun isn't lying about the number of unregistered vehicles. He said the hoteliers need to be more pro-active. He said if they see 15 guys loitering in the parking lot, they should be able to police it themselves. He said cooperation will go a long way. Commissioner Gilgun said he thinks everyone in the audience gets the commission's point. Chairman Skeffington asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the commission about the agenda item. Ward 3 City Councilor Jeffrey Dillon said he is a member of the City Council's Public Safety & Licenses Committee. He said it is his fourth year as an elected official. He said there have been discussions about the situation at the hotels in the city even before he was elected. He said he came here tonight loaded for bear. He said his concern is two-fold. He said he is concerned for the safety of the men and women of the Woburn Police Dept. He said 52 calls is too many. He said it is a matter of time before a member of the police or fire departments gets killed. He said one of his saddest days was watching the funeral procession for Officer Maguire. He said when only one call emanates from a hotel over seven months, it means the hotel is doing it the right way. He said when there are 50-52 calls, he worries about people getting hurt. He said he does not want to see prostitution, drugs, etcetera, flourishing in the city. He said he wants to thank the commission, Capt. Murphy, the Woburn Police Dept., and the Woburn Fire Dept. for addressing this issue before it becomes a really bad problem. Gwen Lytle, the manager of Homewood Suites/Hampton Hotel on Washington Street, said the priority of hoteliers is the safety of their guests and the community. She said the hotel staff has to make judgment calls. She said she agrees the hoteliers in the city have to work together. She said they need to make sure they're doing things the right way. She said they do not want clientele that damages the hotels or their reputation. Capt. Murphy said he is willing to attend the meetings but he cannot organize the meetings for them. Ricky Patel from Red Roof Inn said he would be happy to help organize a meeting. Mr. Nieto from Extended Stay asked the hoteliers to leave their business cards and he would organize an email group. Chairman Skeffington said he would be happy to attend any meetings with Capt. Murphy. He said if the hoteliers organize the commission will be all ears.

- 3. St. Charles Borromeo Parish, 8 Myrtle St., application for a special 1-day liquor license for a dinner dance on Saturday, November 19, 2022, from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.:** Representing St. Charles Borromeo Parish were Fr. Raphael Pinto and Moira Pesotti, 8 Myrtle St., Woburn, MA. Ms. Pesotti said St. Charles is seeking a special 1-day license to serve beer and wine at an annual dinner dance. Chairman Skeffington asked if the alcohol

will be arriving the same day as the event or if a storage day is needed. Fr. Pinto said the alcohol will arrive the same day as the event. Chairman Skeffington asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the board in regard to the petition. Ward 3 City Councilor Jeffrey Dillon asked the commission to approve the petition. He said Fr. Pinto and the congregation have done a great job in the past running this event. Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to grant the special 1-day license and waive the application fee; approved, 3-0.

4. Annunciation of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church, 70 Montvale Ave., application for special 1-day liquor licenses for church events on Saturday, October 29, 2022, from 2-7 p.m.; and Saturday, November 12, 2022, from 11 a.m. – 8 p.m.:

Representing the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church was Taki Lambropoulos, 70 Montvale Ave., Woburn, MA. Mr. Lambropoulos said the church is holding these events in part to raise money to pay bills. Chairman Skeffington asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the commission in regard to the petition. Ward 3 City Councilor Jeffrey Dillon said the Greek Church is an important part of the community. He said there have never been any problems with events at the church. Chairman Skeffington said the application submitted by the Greek Church is great. He said all the servers are Tips certified. Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to grant the special 1-day liquor license; approved, 3-0.

5. Bertucci's, hearing under MGL Ch. 138, Section 77 – re: cessation of operations:

Representing Bertucci's was Attorney Tyler Henseler, Upton, Connell & Devlin LLP, 112 Water St., Boston, MA. Attorney Henseler said Bertucci's has been a good business citizen in Woburn since 1987, but due to economic difficulties it could not keep the restaurant open any longer. He said this hearing will start the 6-month clock on the disposition of the liquor license. Commissioner Pappalardo asked if Bertucci's is asking to hold onto the license. Attorney Henesler said they have six months to decide what to do with the license. Commissioner Pappalardo asked if that would be considered a pocket license. Commissioner Gilgun said it doesn't. Commissioner Skeffington said the 6-month disposition period should start when the restaurant closed on Sept. 21. Attorney Henseler said he is of the belief the ABCC starts the clock on the date of the hearing. Chairman Skeffington said usually the commission does not allow pocket licenses, but the according to the City Solicitor said the license is the property of the license holder. He said from his point of view, the license belongs to the city. He said the commission frowns upon the sale of liquor licenses. He said if the license is sold it is still incumbent on the commission to approve the transfer. Attorney Henseler said Bertucci's understands that. Chairman Skeffington said he is sad to see Bertucci's go. Motion made by Commissioner Gilgun and seconded by Commissioner Pappalardo to grant Bertucci's a 6-month window to determine the disposition of the license beginning on September 27, 2022; approved, 3-0.

6. Jake & Joe's Sports Grille, 230 Mishawum Road, request for extended hours for UFC events on Saturday, November 12, 2022; Saturday, December 10, 2022; and Saturday, January 21, 2023: Representing Jake & Joe's Sports Grille was Brian

Guglielmo, 230 Mishawum Road, Woburn, MA. Mr. Guglielmo said Jake & Joe's is seeking permission from the commission for UFC events on three dates. He said Jake & Joe's will abide by the alcohol service restrictions that have been implemented in the past – last call at 12:30 a.m., all drinks off the table by 1 a.m. and closure of the premises by 1:30 a.m. or the end of the last bout on the card. Chairman Skeffington said Jake & Joe's does a great job with these events. Chairman Skeffington asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the commission in regard to the petition. There were no respondents. Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to grant the request for extended hours for UFC events on Saturday, November 12, 2022; Saturday, December 10, 2022; and Saturday, January 21, 2023; approved, 3-0.

7. **Samosaman/SMEF LLC, 342 West Cummings Park, application for transfer of common victualer's license:** Representing Samosaman/SMEF LLC was Fuad Ndibalema, 342 West Cummings Park, Woburn, MA. Mr. Ndibalema said he is an executive chef. He said Samosaman will be occupying a space formerly occupied by Subway. He said there is a demand in the community for this type of restaurant. Chairman Skeffington asked if all employees who handle food will be ServSafe certified. Mr. Ndibalema answered affirmatively. Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to grant the transfer of the common victualer's license; approved, 3-0.
8. **Plearn Park, 383 Main St., application for transfer of common victualer's license:** Representing Plearn Park was Phichet Srisaiyon, 383 Main St, Woburn, MA. Chairman Skeffington asked what kind of cuisine will be served. Mr. Srisaiyon said the restaurant will serve Asian food. Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to grant the transfer of the common victualer's license; approved, 3-0.
9. **Approval of meeting minutes from September 8, 2022, and September 15, 2022:** Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 8, 2022, and September 15, 2022; in favor, 3-0.
10. **Any other matters that may be legally before the Commission:** None
11. **Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to adjourn; approved, 3-0.** Chairman Skeffington adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD

Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees

