

## **Open Work Session**

### **Letter of Support for the Holder of a Class A Beer, Wine and Liquor License to sell Beer, Wine and Liquor on Sundays from 6:00 a.m. to Midnight**

**February 16, 2021**

Ms. Christine Travis, Administrative Assistant for the Wicomico County Board of License Commissioners, and Mr. John Psota, Acting County Executive, came before Council. Mr. Dodd clarified, Mr. Psota asked for this to be on the Agenda as a Work Session.

Mr. Psota said he was approached by the Chamber of Commerce with a recommendation that the three liquor dispensaries in question be allowed to sell liquor on Sundays, which at this time they are not able to do. He said his Office reached out to Ms. Travis, and she can fill in the rest of the details.

Ms. Travis said it appears that their three liquor stores for a very long time have not been allowed to sell distilled spirits on Sundays. She said, doing plenty of research, the entire Eastern Shore is allowed to sell distilled spirits to go on Sundays, as well as many Counties on the Western Shore, including the State of Delaware. She said she believes, with some precision guesswork, that this probably stems from the blue laws many moons ago when a lot of businesses had to be closed on Sundays. She said the only way they can open up on Sundays is a change in Legislation changing a six-day license from Monday to Saturday to a seven-day license from Monday through Sunday.

Mr. Hastings asked if currently their liquor stores are closed on Sundays, to which Ms. Travis responded, the privately owned ones are closed. She clarified, the Dispensary is a completely separate entity with their own Board and they are allowed to set their own hours of operation, and about two or three years ago they chose to open up on Sundays. She said they have their own entity and own Board and just use the County name as a dispensary system. Mr. Hastings asked if the times will change in the proposed changes, to which Ms. Travis responded, no, it will be 6:00 a.m. to midnight.

Mr. Holloway said Wicomico County liquor stores are currently open on Sundays and they have been for the past three or four years, so this has to do with the private liquor stores that are operating. He clarified, he was addressing Mr. Hastings' question.

Mrs. Acle said one question she has heard from the Lower Shore Delegation is, when there have been matters forwarded to them for enabling Legislation, it was not discussed at the Delegation meeting, so they were hesitant to put it forward. She said, at this time, they have not discussed this with them, to which Mr. Psota responded, that is correct, but he is finding that this is not a unique case. He clarified, they are finding that this has happened quite a few times in this Legislative Session where he has been on many calls for Legislative priorities and there have been things put forward that he was unaware of; however, this was brought forward a couple of weeks ago by the Chamber of Commerce in regards to these three licenses, and this is a concern they had. He said it is his understanding that, if they can get a letter of support to Delegate Anderton's Office, they can move forward with this proposed Legislation. Mrs. Acle said, when the Lower Shore Delegation explained why they could not put certain Legislation forward, her understanding was because it was not discussed in a Lower Shore Delegation meeting. She said she just does not want this to go to Annapolis and they say they cannot do it because it was not discussed in a meeting. Mr. Psota responded, in his Office's communications with Delegate Anderton's Office, if they can get a letter of support forwarded to them, then this Legislation can move forward. He said it appears to be simple and straightforward dealing specifically and only with Sunday sales.


Mr. Holloway said whatever gets approved up there seems to be dependent on what it is.

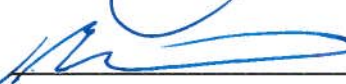
Mr. Cannon said he would like to see this move forward so they get into the new century.


Mr. Dodd asked for a consensus; Mr. Hastings said he is good with it, and Mrs. Acle said yes. Mr. McCain said he is not necessarily a fan of this, but he is not going to get in the way of it. Mr. Dodd said he agrees. Mr. Davis and Mr. Holloway were fine with the letter. There was no further discussion.


  
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Larry W. Dodd, President, District 3

  
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Joe Holloway, Vice President, District 5

  
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John T. Cannon, At-Large

  
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William R. McCain, At-Large

  
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Ernie Davis, District 1

  
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Nicole Acle, District 2

  
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Josh Hastings, District 4

  
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Laura Hurley, Council Administrator