



## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ADVISORY BOARD

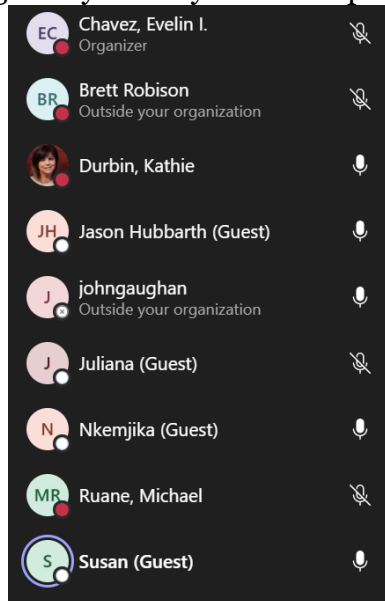
Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Meeting  
Tuesday, May 11, 2021  
Alcohol Beverage Services  
201 Edison Park Drive, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

### Minutes

*Members and Staff Present (virtually through Microsoft Teams):* John Gaughan, Chair; Brett Robinson, ABAB Member; Juliana Levitt, ABAB Member; Jason Hubbarth, ABAB Member; Dr. Nkemjika Ofodile, ABAB Member; Susan Heltemes, BLC; Evelin Chavez, ABS; and Kathie Durbin, ABS Director.

*Absent:* Lt. Michael Ruane, Montgomery County Police Department



John Gaughan called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. A motion was made to approve the March meeting minutes by Ms. Levitt, seconded by Ms. Heltemes, and unanimously approved by the members present.

### General Discussion:

Mr. Gaughan asked Mr. Hubbarth, the newest member on the board to provide the members with a brief bio. Mr. Hubbarth expressed interest to be on the ABAB team about a year ago and

is excited to be a part of the group. He was previously employed in the restaurant business for about 20 years before he left about 10 years ago, and is now in the real estate investment business but is still very active and has a lot of friends in the restaurant business, which is of what led him to this board.

Ms. Durbin informed the board members of ABS' COVID accelerator program. This program is available for licensees to help them make payment plans for their licenses. Currently, the state comptroller's office is not holding licenses due to tax holds.

*Evelin Chavez, ABAB Update:*

Ms. Chavez did not have any updates.

*John Gaughan, ABAB Member:*

Mr. Gaughan introduced the new board member, Jason Hubbarth, and had no other updates for the board members.

*Kathie Durbin, ABS Update:*

Ms. Durbin was Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich's nominee to serve as the new director of the County's Department of Alcohol Beverage Services (ABS). She was confirmed by the County Council about two weeks ago. Ms. Durbin's appointment makes her the first woman to lead the department and one of the few women to lead a similar department in the country.

The Montgomery County's department of Alcohol Beverage Services will have its first female director to lead the department, which operates 26 wholesale alcohol retail stores.

Ms. Durbin joined Montgomery County's Department of Alcohol Beverage Services (formerly the Department of Liquor Control) in 2002 as a Community Outreach Manager. In 2007, she accepted the position of Division Chief of Licensure, Regulation and Education supervising alcohol licensing, policy, education and compliance. Durbin has spent more than a decade working as an advocate for legislative initiatives that support the County's hospitality businesses.

Ms. Durbin has served as acting director for ABS the last four months. Prior to her work in local government, Ms. Durbin, who is a lifelong County resident, served as the executive director of the Montgomery County Restaurant Association, where she worked closely with the business community, local agencies and the executive board to craft meaningful alcohol legislation to benefit small businesses.

Ms. Durbin currently is the president of the Maryland Alcohol Licensing Association and a member of the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association Regulatory Committee. She is a longtime board member of the Responsible Hospitality Institute and the Responsible Retailing Forum, national organizations that work to support nightlife. In 2016, Durbin was recognized by the National Alcohol Licensing Professional Association for Innovation and Leadership and again in 2017 by the Center for Alcohol Policy as Regulator of the Year. Ms. Durbin was congratulated by all the ABAB members.

Ms. Durbin was asked if someone would be replacing her current position and at this time, she does not believe anyone will be taking over temporarily. ABS is currently in the process of hiring a Human Resource person to help with all the positions that need to be posted.

Ms. Durbin also provided a brief history on her professional work experience and shared a few ideas she has in mind for the department.

Ms. Durbin gave a few legislative updates. She talked about MC 30-19 Community Performing Arts Facility Special Event Permit created by ABS, Senate Bill 205 - Sale or Delivery for Off-Premises Consumption and explained there are still a few bills that have not been signed.

Susan Heltemes, BLC Update:

Ms. Heltemes updated the board members on the last BLC hearing that took place last week. BLC has been busy catching up now that it appears there is an upswing in business and things are becoming more normal. The board has been inundated with new applicants, transfers, etc.

One interesting thing that happened during the last meeting is that the County Executive visited. He was very direct with what his plans are for the County going forward and indicated he is going to be supportive of the board enforcing the law. He also believes everyone needs to follow the rules, no exceptions.

At this time, licenses are in the renewal process and that goes through mid-June. Almost every case heard last week had a tax hold. Ms. Heltemes shared that ABS has new inspectors which is great because they were short staffed for a while. She also expects compliance checks are going to start soon. In addition, she shared a personal experience on one of her recent outings. The restaurant was complying with the rules which she believes was impressive.

Lt. Michael Ruane, MCPD:

No updates.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the ABAB is scheduled for Tuesday, July 13, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment:

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:51 a.m.