



ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ADVISORY BOARD

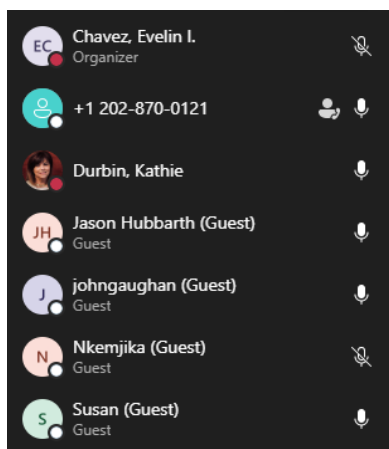
Marc Elrich
County Executive

Meeting
Tuesday, November 9, 2021
Alcohol Beverage Services

Minutes

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

Absent: Adam Currie, Montgomery County Police Department



John Gaughan called the meeting to order at 9:08 am. A motion was made to approve the September meeting minutes by Mr. Robinson, seconded by Dr. Nkemjika, and unanimously approved by the members present.

General Discussion:

Board members asked if it was possible to select an applicant for the ABAB vacancy from the pool of candidates that were interviewed during the last vacancy announcement. Unfortunately, the candidate they had in mind is not a licensee and therefore does not qualify for the open vacancy.

Board members would like to have a representative from the Police Department attend the next meeting since we haven't had someone present for the last two meetings.

Mr. Robinson commented on inflation. He provided an example from one of the reps he works with apologizing in advance because he is aware of three or four different things that will be converging at the same time. It's getting to the level where it's impacting day-to-day operations.

Board members asked about the supply shortage. Ms. Durbin informed the board members that supply shortage is an issue everywhere, not only in Montgomery County, and that ABS is getting more products than some of the other surrounding jurisdictions. The reason ABS is getting more products is because ABS has an agreement with Diageo and whatever they bring into the state of Maryland, ABS automatically receives at least 10% of those products.

Evelin Chavez, ABAB Update:

The ABAB vacancy announcement was extended to the public for another month since only one applicant expressed interest to fill that spot last month. She also informed the board members that Lt. Michael Ruane retired at the beginning of the month and Adam Currie will now be taking over.

John Gaughan, ABAB Member:

Mr. Gaughan announced that he will not be attending the next meeting in January 2022.

Susan Heltemes, BLC:

Ms. Heltemes expressed her frustration with alcohol in the parks and shared a personal experience she recently had during one of her daily walks at Gwendolyn Coffield Community Center park. There were empty liquor bottles and cases of empty beer bottles in a park that is not on the list of parks that allow alcohol.

Ms. Heltemes informed board members that Michelle Graham Hicks was appointed to serve on the Board of License Commissioners replacing Commissioner Greg Wims who was previously on the board.

Ms. Heltemes explained that there is frustration from some of the board members that ABS has not had underage compliance checks. Compliance checks haven't been done in a long time and with the holidays coming up, the board members have some concern.

Ms. Heltemes talked about the ongoing noise issue and said she knows Ms. Durbin and her staff are working on trying to address this issue happening in Silver Spring and Pike and Rose in Rockville.

Kathie Durbin, ABS Update:

Ms. Durbin announced that Montgomery County's Department of Alcohol Beverage Services (ABS) opened a new retail concept and flagship store, Oak Barrel & Vine, in the Cabin John Village Shopping Center in Potomac. The store had its grand opening from 10 a.m.-9 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 27.

The Cabin John Village Shopping Center is located at 7913 Tuckerman Lane in Potomac (between the Giant and Starbucks retail stores). The store features more than 2,000 handpicked items with a focus on spirits and locally produced products. It also has a dedicated tasting area and event space that will be used to drive business for Maryland Made distilleries, wineries, and breweries.

On the grand opening day, and in the days that follow, some rare and allocated items will be available for purchase. Each specific highly allocated item will be limited to one bottle per customer and no more than two highly allocated bottles can be purchased per customer, per day.

ABS is hoping to renovate four (4) stores with the new branding and may be signing a lease on 2 properties.

Due to the supply issue with alcohol, ABS has revamped its iStore. The iStore is a pretty cool program that was developed in house and it's for the businesses that are ordering alcohol. Alcohol licensees can order online through iStore instead of calling in orders any longer which is what they would do in the past.

iStore allows ABS to show licensees if we were out of a product and give the businesses similar products to choose from, or what other people are ordering instead of that type of product.

Ms. Durbin believes that the Pandemic experience is probably going to change the way we think of brands. ABS is dedicating a whole wall to Maryland local products in the new stores. This program started a few years ago and it's really gotten off the ground. It has been interesting to see the wonderful products that are coming out by local manufacturers and allow ABS to highlight the products in its retail stores. These products are also featured on iStore for licensees to purchase.

Ms. Durbin informed board members that Amy Samman is the new Licensure, Regulation & Education Division Chief. Ms. Samman is taking over Ms. Durbin's previous role in which she served for fifteen years. Ms. Samman worked with intergovernmental relations for the County, so she was a lobbyist for alcohol. Ms. Samman also worked with Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and a couple other agencies. ABS is thrilled to have her and will make sure Ms. Samman attends the January meeting so the board members can get to know her.

Ms. Durbin briefly touched base on some of the issues happening in the Silver Spring area. ABS is offering virtual ALERT trainings in Spanish and English. ABS is working with the directors of Wheaton and Silver Spring Regional Services and their staff to try to get the word out to folks and reiterate what was found with the pandemic. A lot of people that returned to work ended up in some of these businesses and many don't have the knowledge or experience of working in the hospitality industry. ABS inspectors are also working with the police late at night to help resolve some of the issues going on.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the ABAB is scheduled for Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment:

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:49 a.m.