



ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ADVISORY BOARD

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Meeting
Tuesday, January 11, 2022
Alcohol Beverage Services
201 Edison Park Drive, 1st Floor, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Minutes

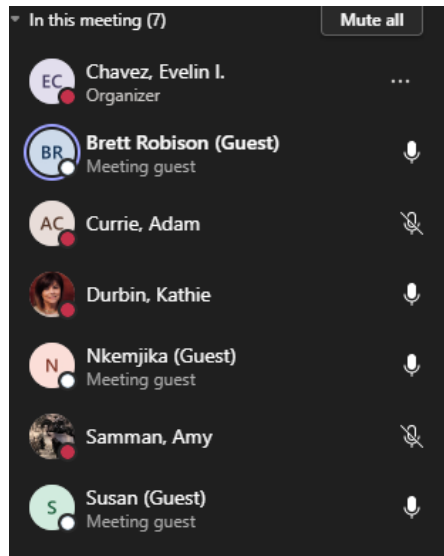
Members and Staff Present (virtually through Microsoft Teams): Brett Robinson, ABAB Member; Dr. Nkemjika Ofodile-Carruthers, ABAB; Susan Heltemes, BLC; Lt. Adam Currie, Montgomery County Police Department; Evelin Chavez, ABS; Amy Samman, Chief of Licensing, Regulation and Education; and Kathie Durbin, ABS Director.

Absent: John Gaughan, Chair

Meeting Summary

Total Number of Participants	8
Meeting Title	ABAB Meeting
Meeting Start Time	1/11/2022, 8:57:47 AM
Meeting End Time	1/11/2022, 10:16:24 AM
Meeting Id	3fc82ca3-f4ce-4848-b707-e8071a3f5c9f

Full Name	Join Time	Leave Time	Duration
Samman, Amy	1/11/2022, 8:57:47 AM	1/11/2022, 10:16:20 AM	1h 18m
Durbin, Kathie	1/11/2022, 8:57:52 AM	1/11/2022, 10:16:20 AM	1h 18m
Currie, Adam	1/11/2022, 8:58:54 AM	1/11/2022, 10:16:23 AM	1h 17m
Chavez, Evelin I.	1/11/2022, 9:00:26 AM	1/11/2022, 10:16:22 AM	1h 15m
Nkemjika	1/11/2022, 9:01:04 AM	1/11/2022, 10:16:22 AM	1h 15m
Susan (Guest)	1/11/2022, 9:01:29 AM	1/11/2022, 10:16:24 AM	1h 14m
Brett Robison (Guest)	1/11/2022, 9:01:33 AM	1/11/2022, 10:16:22 AM	1h 14m
Rawat, Jocelyn	1/11/2022, 10:06:34 AM	1/11/2022, 10:06:41 AM	6s



Brett Robinson called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. A motion was made to approve the November meeting minutes by Ms. Heltemes, seconded by Dr. Nkemjika Ofodile-Carruthers, and unanimously approved by the members present.

General Discussion:

Dr. Nkemjika Ofodile-Carruthers asked what if the premise of the argument on proposed Bill 966 (a) was the concern on the number of retailers that are providing alcohol to the public, (b) trying to preserve a particular subset of retailer (i.e., small business) to ensure they don't run out of business by the large business, or (c) are we essentially monitoring to control excessive drinking that we believe would occur if additional stores were added?

Ms. Durbin explained that it's really the state's perspective and the prevention community has created a strong coalition after the last two Bills were introduced. It depends on the advantage point. It depends on what the community looks like and the competition.

Ms. Heltemes made a comment stating that she believes if people drink more and drink responsibly (privately owned or not) it wouldn't be a problem. Mr. Robinson made a comment saying that Maryland is unique. There are things that happen at the State and Local level that apply very differently. The impact of a law such as the grocery store one, would have different implications for different counties.

Ms. Heltemes expressed her concern with alcohol in the parks. She believes alcohol in the parks is a major concern and has contacted different people in the County about this issue. Ms. Heltemes has also taken pictures of the beer bottles/cans that are all over the park. They cannot do signage and it's very disturbing when people are doing this while children are out playing.

Evelin Chavez, ABAB Update:

Ms. Chavez updated members on the ABAB Board vacancies. The vacancies were reposted last month.

Brett Robinson, ABAB Member:

Mr. Robinson asked all members to vote for a department tour at ABS. Ms. Heltemes and Dr. Nkemjika Ofodile-Carruthers both were in favor and hope to meet in-person for the next meeting in March.

Kathie Durbin, ABS Update:

Ms. Durbin talked about the closure of the Walnut Hill and Poolesville Liquor and Wine Stores. The Poolesville store of Montgomery County's Department of Alcohol Beverage Services (ABS) will remain closed today, Tuesday, Jan. 11, due to a staffing shortage. The store did not open on Monday for the same reason.

Montgomery Alcohol Beverage Services (ABS) will temporarily reduce hours in all retail stores starting Wednesday, Jan. 12, due to staffing shortages. Beginning Wednesday, Jan. 12, all 26 retail stores will reduce their hours, due to COVID-related staffing shortages. The temporary business hours will be noon-8 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Sunday hours will remain noon-5 p.m. The Poolesville store, which closed on Monday and Tuesday due to staffing shortages, will reopen on Wednesday, Jan. 12

Ms. Durbin informed members that ABS has been posting new jobs but had a difficult time recruiting. Even though the County offers a great package, its hard to hire people. The department is hopeful it will get good industry people in the stores.

Anthony Jones is ABS' newest Human Resource Liaison. He is no stranger to ABS. Before joining ABS, Mr. Jones was with the Office of Labor Relations. The HR position at ABS has been vacant for over a year and the department is happy to have him join the team.

Ms. Durbin talked about the Alcoholic Beverages – Class A Licenses – Retail Grocery Establishments (Healthy Food Accountability Act of 2021) Sponsored by Delegate Qi.

Status: In the House - Withdrawn by Sponsor

Synopsis: Establishing a certain exception to the prohibition against issuing certain retail alcoholic beverages licenses for use in conjunction with or on the premises of certain establishments; requiring a local licensing board to issue a Class A beer or beer and wine license for use in conjunction with or on the premises of certain self-service or delivery-based grocery establishments located in certain priority funding areas; prohibiting a local licensing authority from transferring a Class A license under the authority of the Act; etc.

Amy Samman, ABS Update:

Ms. Samman introduced herself to the members. She has been with the County for over 8 years. She has worked closely with Ms. Durbin and spent a lot of time in Annapolis working on Legislative Bills.

Mr. Samman talked about House Bill 966 food desserts and how it did not sit well with the entire Economic Matters Committees. She spent a lot of time in Baltimore city working on this because the density is so high there and of course they have a tremendous food dessert problem there. It was not the best way to go about it. The delegates themselves pushed hard against it. She is uncertain whether or not she will see the food desserts tied to the Bill this year. Last year, there were parameters in the bills in the past. In theory, everyone could apply and wouldn't be surprised if we see different forms of the same bill.

Susan Heltemes, BLC Update:

Ms. Heltemes informed the Board members that there is an increase number of alcohol license applicants. The Board is still concerned about the lack of compliance checks. There is a difficulty in hiring people that are younger than 21 years of age to participate in the compliance checks. There is now a new hiring process for volunteers which requires them to go through the County HR process. Ms. Heltemes will make certain to share the hiring information once she gets it.

Ms. Heltemes said Alcohol License renewals would take place in April. And requested that ABS provide the Board members with physical copies of the new 2022 ABS calendars. Ms. Heltemes stated that the Board is trying to be more tough with licensees and issue more suspensions when they come before the Board for violations because overserving is an on-going issue.

Lt. Adam Currie, MCPD:

Lt. Adam Currie introduced himself. He explained he was in the Wheaton district for a while and familiar with the department.

Due to COVID the Police Department worked with 20%+ less officers. During week 8 there were 21 DUI arrests (21 alcohol DUIs) 3 arrests were crash related. So far there has been a total of 284 DUI arrests (280 alcohol DUIs, 4 drug-only DUI) 32 arrests were crash related.

- 6 handgun arrests,
- 2 stolen vehicle recovery/arrests,
- 3 impaired drivers arrested while transporting minors, several drug arrests, armed robbery case closure (through Gaithersburg PD), and
- several team members made multiple arrests in a single night.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the ABAB is scheduled for Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment:

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.