

**Minutes**  
**Alcoholic Beverage Licensing (ABL) Committee**  
**Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6A**  
**January 20, 2015**

Pursuant to notice duly given, a meeting of the Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Committee (“Committee”) of ANC 6A was held commencing at 7:00 pm on January 20, 2015 at Sherwood Recreation Center, 640 Tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) Street NE, Washington, DC 20002.

**Committee Members Present:** Jay Williams (Co-Chair), Christopher Seagle (Co-Chair), Michael Herman, and Roger Caruth.

**Committee Members Absent:** Adam Healy, David Oberting.

**Commissioners Present:** Phil Toomajian.

**Community Members Present:** Matt Weiss (Me & My Supermarket), Joe Englert (various), Devin Gong (Copycat Co.), Brittany Urse (Copycat Co.).

**I. Call to Order**

Co-Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. The meeting having been duly convened was ready to proceed with business with a quorum. There were no additions or edits to the agenda as published.

**II. Community Comment**

None.

**III. Old Business**

Co-Chair Williams announced that the ANC had reached Settlement Agreements with Pizza Parts and Service as well as Copycat Company and would thus be withdrawing its protests of those licenses.

**IV. New Business**

Co-Chair Williams noted that nobody from Andy Lee Liquor was present, and suggested that the Andy Lee Liquor discussion be moved to after the discussion of Me & My Supermarket in case a representative arrived late. There being no objection, the agenda was modified.

**A. Discussion of request by Me & My Supermarket (at 914 H Street NE) for an exemption from the Ward 6 Singles Ban.**

- Co-Chair Williams introduced Mr. Weiss, who is an owner of Me & My Supermarket.
- Mr. Matt Weiss introduced himself and stated that he owned and operated the establishment with his wife, Emily. They are new owners of the store.
- According to Mr. Weiss, since opening the store has made many upgrades and shifted its focus to offering different products, healthier food options, organic products, and improve the quality of its beer and wine offerings.
- Mr. Weiss stated that he has added over 300 craft beers/microbrews and the store has attracted many new customers.
- Mr. Weiss stated that he is not interested in selling “traditional” singles, such as malt liquor, 16 ounce cans, etc. Instead, he wants to sell larger-format beers, ranging in price from \$8.00 to \$32.00, and ranging in size from a pint to the size of a bottle of wine.

- According to Mr. Weiss the large-format beers are the most common thing customers are requesting that he does not carry.
- Mr. Weiss stated that he understands the reason for the singles ban in Ward 6, but that he was aware of other stores in the Ward selling singles, such as Schneider's and Hayden's.
- Co-Chair Christopher Seagle stated that the Committee had a similar discussion last month when 1101 Convenience Mart had the same request and similar reasons. He stated that he was concerned that if the ban is lifted for any one store, others nearby would demand a similar exemption. Mr. Seagle also stated that he believed it was hard to justify banning cheaper singles in favor of more expensive singles.
- Mr. Weiss argued that the current ban was written without considering larger format beers, and that the law should probably be amended to take into account the changes in what types of beers are being manufactured. He suggested the possibility of a Settlement Agreement that would allow an exemption but limit to a certain price point.
- Co-Chair Williams stated that he was uncomfortable about setting a price point for singles, because that could lead to accusations of discrimination.
- Committee Member Michael Herman said that he recalled the ANC rejected another establishment's request for an exemption based on price point.
- Mr. Joe Englert said it was a problem that other establishments in Ward 6 were already allowed to sell singles, but Mr. Williams and Mr. Herman pointed out that those stores were in different ANC's and not in the immediate area.
- Commissioner Phil Toomajian asked Mr. Weiss if he had considered offering growler fills, and Mr. Weiss said that he had, but that it takes a lot of effort to maintain the equipment, and was not an immediate plan of theirs.
- Co-Chair Williams stated that this is an issue the ANC may need to address on a broader level, and that he was hesitant to support exemptions to one establishment that could set off a domino effect in the ANC.
- Mr. Weiss stated that time was of the essence for this request, because he wants to continue growing and evolving his store.
- Commissioner Toomajian suggested that the solution was to push for legislative changes and clarify the law, not grant individual exemptions that would lead to other establishments demanding the same.
- Co-Chair Williams asked if anyone had suggestions for ways to grant a limited exemption that would still meet the goals of the singles ban. Mr. Devin Gong suggested a limitation by ABV because most craft beers are higher ABVs.
- Mr. Weiss stated that the exemption was putting him at a competitive disadvantage, and he's having customers leave his store disappointed.
- Committee Member Roger Caruth stated that he agreed with the other Committee members who were opposed to a piecemeal approach to granting exemptions.
- Mr. Weiss expressed concern that if the ANC opposed and he went forward with the request, the relationship would become adversarial. Co-Chair Williams stated that he would represent the ANC's stance at a hearing, but he would not hold any hard feelings or be overly adversarial. Co-Chair Williams expressed a willingness to continue working with Mr. Weiss even after a hearing.
- Commissioner Toomajian stated that he would not be comfortable as Chair of the ANC signing a settlement agreement with a price point requirement, because it might be considered discriminatory. He also stated that if the new Whole Foods in

ANC 6C is granted an exemption for singles, he expected that the ANC might reconsider its position.

Mr. Williams moved/Mr. Seagle seconded that the ANC oppose the request by Me & My Supermarket for an exemption from the Ward 6 singles ban. Motion carried 2-1, with Mr. Caruth abstaining.

**B. Discussion of request by Andy Lee Liquor (at 914 H Street NE) for an exemption from the Ward 6 Singles Ban.**

- Co-Chair Williams confirmed that nobody from Andy Lee Liquor was present. He then suggested that the Committee have a vote nonetheless in case the establishment submitted this request to the ABC Board.

Mr. Williams moved/Mr. Herman seconded that the ANC oppose the request by Me & My Supermarket for an exemption from the Ward 6 singles ban. Motion carried 3-1.

**V. Adjourn**

The Committee adjourned at 7:46 pm.