



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
(301) 952-3887

Vice Chairman
THOMAS E. DERNOGA
Council Member, 1st District

July 24, 2009

Franklin D. Jackson, Chairman
Board of License Commissioners
Liquor Control Board
5012 Rhode Island Avenue,
Hyattsville, Maryland 20781

Re: Rio Sports Enterprises, Inc, t/a Rio Sports Bar and Grille (13501 Baltimore Avenue, Laurel, Maryland 20707)

Dear Mr. Jackson:

I am writing concerning the application that has been filed by *Rio Sports Enterprises, Inc, t/a Rio Sports Bar and Grille*, (13501 Baltimore Avenue, Laurel, Maryland 20707), to transfer its Class B Beer, Wine and Liquor License from *Sung H. Lee Enterprises, Inc., t/a Rio Bar and Grille* to *Tak Yoon, President/Secretary/Treasurer, Cornel Greene, Recording Secretary*. After reviewing the application and the history associated with this establishment and this address, I believe that it is imperative that a Class B Beer, Wine and Liquor License application not be approved at this address.

As you are aware, this establishment is located at the same address as Club Amazon and before that Dinosaur Night Club. Dinosaur and Club Amazon had a long history of criminal activities occurring on or near the establishment, culminating in the shooting of a patron in April 2006. Prince George's County residents, particularly in Councilmanic District 1, have long been concerned and dismayed that this type of establishment was so near their homes and businesses. They have feared for their safety.

As you recall, on June 14, 2006, there was a "show cause" hearing precipitated by the alleged violation of the local rules and regulations of the Board of License Commissioners, specifically "unauthorized entertainment, exceeding capacity limitations agreed to in conditions/restrictions loitering around the premises and patrons sitting in their vehicles on the parking lot; live band; change in the mode of operation without authorization; insufficient security to maintain control of a crowd and violating the provision of the Board by utilizing the outdoor space."

County Administration Building
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

The Board of License Commissioners found that Amazon owner was not a proper person to hold an alcoholic beverage license. Mishonda Baldwin, Amazon's attorney, proffered that Amazon desired to close for 90 days during which time it would seek a purchaser. The Board agreed that the business/operation would no longer exist at 13501 Baltimore Avenue, that this license could be transferred, and that the grandfathered rights regarding CB-49-2005 did not transfer with this address. In September 2006, the Board of License Commissioners reviewed and approved the transfer of Club Amazon's Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor License to Rio's Sports Bar. The transfer of this license occurred over the objection of many elected officials and Prince George's County residents. The Board of License Commissioners and the County residents have stated repeatedly that they wanted a "family-friendly sit down restaurant," and, that they were concerned that this would not be the case. After much discussion, the elected officials, community members and the City of Laurel agreed to support the transfer of this license with the following conditions:

- The Board of Licensed Commissioners has its inspectors make more frequent inspections of the establishment for the first 90 days.
- For the first year, the applicant shall provide additional security of at least two (2) off duty police officers on Friday and Saturday nights and whenever having any special events
- There be no live entertainment either inside or outside the establishment with the exception of a DJ
- There would be no dancing be allowed and no dance area or floor would be provided; that no nudity, suggestive clothing, that the staff be modestly clothed.
- No weddings or wedding receptions would be booked on the premises
- Additional lighting in the parking lot would be installed
- No exterior speakers would be allowed
- The hours of operation would be 11:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 2 a.m., Friday and Saturday and 12:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Now, once again my constituents and I are faced with another Class C Beer, Wine and Liquor transfer application at this location. When it comes to this site, based on prior incidents, and based on incidents at similar establishments in the area, community leaders fear for the safety of our community. Recently several of my constituents who are active leaders met and reviewed the application. After much thought and discussion, they voted to oppose Rio Sports Bar's liquor license transfer. They cited the fact that they have long been asking for a "family-friendly restaurant", and, that the various owners have ignored requests. They discussed the fact that neither Mr. Yoon nor his attorney has been in contact with them. In an effort to be open, these residents reached out to Mr. Yoon, through his attorney, to meet and discuss the application. As of today, they have not heard back neither from the applicant nor his attorney.

Four things are of paramount importance to my constituents: (a) no DJs, MCs or live performance **of any kind** be allowed; (b) the hours of operation be limited even more than the conditions set by the Commissioners in 2006, specifically that Rio's **closes no later than 11:30 P.M.** Friday and Saturday in order to ensure *genuine* conformance with the Liquor Board's order that "the operation be that of a family friendly sit down restaurant"; (c) patrons not be allowed in the back room, which is an area not readily observable by security or wait staff; and (d) Rio Sports Bar must sell more food than alcohol which also ensures that this operation is in *genuine* conformance with the Board's order that Rio's be that of a

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"family friendly sit down restaurant". I support my community's request that all other conditions previously set by the Board of License Commissioners be transferred with the license. In addition, I would like to remind the Board of License Commissioners that, as I stated at the June 16, 2006 Amazon hearing, when Rio's reopens it will still be a nonconforming use.

Finally, I would like to add that I am aware of Prince George's County code violations including a "Stop Work" order issued by the Department of Environmental Services on June 19, 2009 for an unapproved deck renovation. There are two (2) other citations from 2007 which document that the new property owner, JH & Contee LLC, was cited for improper storage of motor vehicles and display of a non-permitted sign. I am concerned that the property owner appears to display a flagrant disregard for rules and regulations.

In the best interest of my constituents in District 1, I must ask that you not approve this license transfer. I have seen a continued disregard for rules and regulations and I am not any more comfortable now than I was in 2006 when the license was transferred to Rio's. If the Board feels that it must transfer this license, then I strongly request that, in the best interests and wishes of my constituents, you transfer each and every condition that had been previously attached to this address. I am concerned for the public safety of my constituents and for Prince George's County residents. I am concerned that granting this license transfer will adversely impact and/or unduly disturb the peace, safety and harmony of the neighborhood. Given the violent history associated with this location and the true intended use, the Board of License Commissioners should think very carefully before approving this license transfer request. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Dernoga

CC: Douglas J.J. Peters
Major Dwayne Preston