

ALCOHOL CONTROL COMMISSION

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

The Alcohol Control Commission met at 5:00 p.m. this date in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall, 601 Broad Street. Billy Cooper, Steve VanMeter, Harold Morgan, Doug Phipps, and Commissioner McDaniel were present. Taylor McMichael was absent (Mr. Phipps and Ms. McMichael are new members). Also present were Rome Police Major Chris DeHart and Assistant City Attorney Stephen Moseley.

Select Chairman

Mr. VanMeter recommended Mr. Cooper serve as the new chair of the Alcohol Control Commission. Mr. Cooper suggested that Mr. VanMeter serve as chairman. After brief discussion, it was determined that Mr. Cooper will serve as the new chairman of the Alcohol Control Commission.

Minutes –May 1, 2023

The minutes of the May 1, 2023, meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by unanimous consent.

Hop 2, 109 E. Main Street

The application of Mr. Salim Sadruddin Sundrani, owner and manager of Hop 2, 109 E. Main St. was presented. Mr. Sundrani requested a new beer package license be issued to him at this location. Secretary Smith reported that for several years, this site has been the location of the Lexus Lounge. The Lexus Lounge has held a beer pouring license. Smith also reported he has contacted the owners of the Lexus Lounge who indicated they have closed that business.

Mr. Sundrani explained that he plans to operate this establishment initially with himself and one additional employee. He plans to be open from approximately 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. each day. Mr. Sundrani also indicated that he has cameras at this location and is familiar with the City of Rome and the State of Georgia alcohol regulations. He plans to have six to eight coin operated amusement machines.

After a typical discussion by the Alcohol Control Commission members, Mr. Sundrani was instructed to provide documentation that he and his employees have completed the ServeSafe or other type of alcohol training offered through online venues.

Mr. VanMeter moved to approve the license request subject to all final inspections and approvals by the appropriate city officials and with the submission of the alcohol training documentation. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Café Alfresco, 603 Calhoun Avenue NE

The application of Mr. Mit Jatinkumar Patel, owner and manager of Café Alfresco, 603 Calhoun Avenue NE, requested that a new beer, and wine pouring license be issued to him at this location. Secretary Smith indicated that this will be first time that an alcohol license has been issued at this site (to the best of his knowledge). Mr. Patel was questioned regarding his specific operation at this location as this site has recently appeared to have two very dilapidated structures that seem to be in no condition for a pouring establishment. Mr. Patel indicated he is planning to rehabilitate the existing structures and not build new buildings. He stated that this will be an entertainment type venue with beer and wine, pool tables, cornhole games, and other entertainment of these types. He plans to have six employees and security personnel at all times. He will be open Monday – Friday each week and his capacity is expected to be between 100 – 200 patrons.

There was the typical discussion regarding how Mr. Patel will train his employees at this pouring establishment. Patel indicated that he plans to use the ServeSafe or other online training and will supply that documentation to the City Clerk’s office.

Mr. Patel was informed that this establishment, with a seating capacity in excess of 100 persons may require a sprinkler system per the local and state fire regulations, which are administered by the Rome Fire Marshall.

Mr. Morgan moved to approve the pouring license request, as submitted, subject to all final inspections and approvals by the appropriate city officials and with the submission of the alcohol training documentation for all employees. Mr. VanMeter seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Jim N Nick’s Bar-B-Q, 36 Shorter Avenue

The application of Mr. James Barber, manager of Jim N Nick’s Bar-B-Q, 36 Shorter Avenue, was presented. Mr. Barber was present, and all papers were in order.

It was explained that this is a new newly constructed building which will house this business at 36 Shorter Avenue and the request is for a beer, wine and liquor pouring license. Mr. Barber offered detailed information regarding the operation of this business and the training of the 90 or so staff members. Each staff member will be subject to the corporate training program, including information in the employee handbook. As well as daily reminders and signoffs regarding the service of alcohol. Mr. Barber also commented on ID checks that will be required for alcohol sales.

Mr. VanMeter moved to the license request as submitted, Mr. Morgan seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Barber was thanked for being so thoroughly prepared and communicating the corporate polices to the Alcohol Control Commission.

7 Hills Food Mart, 1024 N. Broad Street NE

The application of Mr. Nileshekumar Patel, manager of 7 Hills Food Mart, 1024 North Broad Street NE, was submitted. Mr. Patel requested that a new beer and wine package license be issued to him at this location. Secretary Smith explained that this was the former location of Troy's Bar-B-Que near the Five Points intersection. Mr. Patel was not completely comfortable communicating with the Alcohol Control Commission members and had a counselor with him who assisted with the communications. Mr. Patel plans to be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with four employees in addition to himself. This is the first time Mr. Patel has been a licensee at an alcohol establishment. Upon being questioned by the ACC members, he reported he will have 8 coin operated amusement machines, and these will not be located in a back room.

There was considerable discussion regarding the training for his employees. He reported that there will be a system where IDs will be scanned at the time of alcohol sales. He also commented on the training that the employees will receive, both from himself and from an online training program.

Mr. VanMeter moved to approve the license request, as submitted, subject to all final inspections and approvals by the appropriate city officials and with the submission of the alcohol training completion by each of his employees. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Big H Food N Gas, 127 E. 12th Street

The application of Ms. Cassandra Leigh Davenport, manager of Big H Food N Gas, 127 E. 12th Street, was submitted. Ms. Davenport requested that a new beer package license be issued to her at this location. Secretary Smith explained that there has been a license at this location for many years in the past and that this property is located at the intersection of 12th Street and Walnut. Ms. Davenport explained that they plan to reopen the sale of gasoline at this location, and she will be open 7 days a week, from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. at night. In addition to herself, there will be four employees at this facility.

The Alcohol Control Commission explained the importance of employee training to Ms. Davenport, and she indicated she understands and stated that she has extensive experience in running convenience stores. While there are not coin operated amusements machines on site at this time, that possibility was not ruled out.

Mr. Morgan moved to approve the request for the license as submitted subject to all final inspections and approvals by the appropriate city officials and with the submission of evidence of alcohol training completing by each of the employees. Mr. VanMeter seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Ken Wright

Mr. Ken Wright was present to address the Alcohol Control Commission and spoke regarding the 2023 Pride event that is scheduled to take place in Rome on June 23rd, 24th and 25th of 2023. Mr. Wright commented on some of the violations that he reported had occurred during the 2022 event, primarily at Heritage Park. Both, the display, and perhaps sale, of adult products as well as other violations of Rome's adult entertainment ordinance were reported. There was also report of the entertainers interacting with children during this event.

Mr. Wright strongly encouraged the City of Rome to ensure that all ordinances are enforced during the 2023 event.

Special Entertainment Request – The Vogue, 247 Broad Street

Mr. Steve Smith, representing The Vogue, 247 Broad Street, was present to request permission for special entertainment at this facility on Friday, June 23rd. Mr. Smith explained that the Pride event in Rome wishes to have an event at The Vogue. This event will include a drag show.

Secretary Smith reminded the commission that any special entertainment outside of normal bands, DJs, and patron dancing, require prior ACC approval.

There was lengthy discussion with Mr. Smith and Mr. Hal Floyd, who was present with Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith and Mr. Floyd explained that they are aware that there were issues with the Pride event in 2022 and Mr. Floyd assured the Alcohol Control Commission that steps have been taken to ensure there is not a repeat of those type of violations or any other type of violation during the 2023 event. Mr. Floyd reported that the children's drag queen story time would not be repeated at the 2023 Pride festival. Secretary Smith explained that Rome has three ordinances related to adult entertainment and sexually oriented businesses and that there are numerous provisions in these ordinances that are enforced if the definition of adult entertainment or sexually oriented businesses is met by any establishment or entertainment venue. If adult entertainment does not occur, then the conditions that exist in these ordinances are not in effect. Specifically, the display of certain anatomical body parts or certain behavior, along with the display or sale of certain products, are typically the activity in which adult entertainment is created.

There was also discussion regarding the service of alcohol at both The Vogue event, which only those 21 and older will be allowed to attend, and the service of alcohol in Heritage Park during the Saturday, June 24th Pride festival.

The Alcohol Control Commission and those in attendance continued to discuss this matter and it was made clear that there will be swift action and appropriate consequences if there are violations detected by the Rome Police Department.

With the discussion concluded, Mr. VanMeter moved to approve the request for special entertainment at The Vogue, 227 Broad Street on Friday June 23rd. Mr. Morgan seconded motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Police Report

Rome Police Major Chris Dehart presented the police report for the period since the last Alcohol Control Commission meeting. Mr. DeHart outlined three events that took place in Rome. There were two females arrested at Broad and 3rd for public drunk and disorderly conduct. There were also two reported incidences that took place at Peaches, 325 Broad Street. The first incident involved one patron being assaulted by another patron with a beer bottle. The offender left the premises before the police arrived and was not apprehended by the police department. The second incident at Peaches, occurred with patrol officers witnessing a verbal altercation in front of Peaches, which later turned into a physical fight. Two males were arrested.

There was follow-up discussion regarding the food/drink ratio and the consumption of alcohol in Rome, especially as it relates to individuals being overserved. There was discussion regarding potential ways of reducing occurrence of overserving, however the ACC members realize how difficult that goal can be considering all of the variables that can be involved.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Chairman Cooper adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk