

Minutes of the May 22, 2018 meeting of the City of Chelsea Licensing Commission.

Location: Chelsea Public Library 569 Broadway Chelsea, MA 02150

Meeting opened at 6:09 p.m. by Mark Rossi (Chair)

Commission members present: Mark Rossi (Chair), Michael McAteer (McAteer), Vice Chair Jim Guido (Guido) and Roseann Bongiovanni (Bongiovanni)

Also present: Officers Christopher Troisi, Nicole McGlaughlin, Jason Farden, Ryan Ostler, Det. Carlos Vega and Capt. Keith Houghton, on behalf of Chelsea PD, Strephon Treadway on behalf of Chelsea Law Dept. and Licensing Administrator Jenny Builes.

Guido moved to adopt the minutes of the April 24, 2018 meeting. Bongiovanni second. McAteer-yes. Chair Rossi- yes.

Clerk's Update/New Business:

Licensing Admin read all communications to the commission and to all members of the public. Captain Houghton comments regarding Las Pupusas Del Chino and explained that CPD was inspecting licensed establishments. Las Pupusas video surveillance was not available for the incident that occurred involving the waitress stabbing. Second attempt for the video was for the inspection. Third attempt CPD chose a random day for video surveillance. Det. Vega observed a glitch in the system. CPD required all licensed establishments to show footage of one hour prior to closing and one hour after closing hours. Bongiovanni motioned to schedule a public hearing for Las Pupusas Del Chino. Guido second. McAteer-yes. Chair Rossi- yes. All other communications were accepted and filed.

Conference: Ventura Taxi, Inc. 19 Fourth Street

Jose Ventura of 19 Fourth St in Chelsea appeared as the owner of Ventura Taxi, Inc. Mr. Ventura explained that the driver was in training for a couple of hours for a few days. Captain Houghton spoke and mentioned that Detective Guido wrote a report and described that the taxi driver was hearing voices to step on the gas and hurt people. This incident occurred at the FBI building. Mr. Ventura mentions that he tries out drivers then proceeds to hire them. He also mentions that this is the first time he has tried this method. Rossi explains that everyone must have a hackney driver license before they start driving for any taxi company. Ventura provides the commission an example of a W-9 and a copy of a driver's license of what he keeps for his employment records. Ventura Taxi has seven taxi carriages and ten drivers, but he did not bring any records to this meeting. Captain Houghton mentioned that the Sargent in the trafficking division have a list of licensed drivers in Chelsea. Chair Rossi comments on whether the commission would like to suspend or revoke the license. Treadway reminds the commission that this is a conference and not a public hearing. Chair Rossi recommends Ventura to bring a translator with him to the next meeting. He mentions that most of the commission members speak Spanish but cannot speak it at a public hearing. He requests Mr. Ventura to submit any employee records to the Law Dept. and have a proposed solution for the next hearing. Bongiovanni motioned to schedule a public hearing on this matter in June. McAteer second. Chair Rossi-yes. Guido-No.

Public Hearing: Banning the sale of nips less than 100mil

Chair Rossi opened the public hearing to consider banning the sale of nips (50mil) Section 15 Licensed establishments in the City of Chelsea. Chelsea Police Department provided a presentation involving the nips causing litter all over Chelsea. He mentions that the 200mil or also known as quarter pints are the biggest problem. Houghton demonstrates that a quarter pint has four times the alcohol than a nip. The pricing for a 50mil is usually between \$1-2 and for a 200mil it is about \$2.25. He added that Protective custody cases were 18.8, 23.7, and 20% of Chelsea Police Department arrests in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Alcohol related arrests outnumbered opioid-related arrests by a ratio of 9 to 1. Captain Houghton said that while opioid arrests are decreasing, alcohol arrests are increasing. The statistics Houghton gave do not include those for alcohol-related crimes. Chelsea Police received well over 1000 calls involving alcohol. 733 intoxicated people were transported to the hospital in 2016; 781 in 2017 and 215 by April 19, 2018. Houghton mentions that in some cases, people have been arrested for drinking in public still wearing hospital bracelets from previous incidents. Those who have been arrested, 90% have a 50 ml or a 200mil alcoholic beverage because it is easy to conceal. Some of the people involved have been civilly committed. Houghton believes that the cost of a call for intoxication typically costs the city \$121 for each police cruiser and about \$300 for a fire vehicle to respond. He also mentioned that about 80% of these incidents occur in the Downtown area but that the problem exists throughout the City.

Officer Nicole McLaughlin spoke and mentions that her shift is 3:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., five days a week. She has at least two or three interactions everyday with persons too intoxicated by alcohol to give their names and be sent to the hospital. These people often lacked identification. The very popular alley she knows is behind 200 Cherry St, where she would check underneath stairways to see if anyone will need medical attention. As a resident, she feels that the liquor stores do not consider who to sell to and the amount of litter she sees in the downtown area is overwhelming.

Chair Rossi mentions that the liquor stores are a part of the community as well as the residents and it is the licensing commission's responsibility to balance both.

Bongiovanni comments and how liquor stores can see overly intoxicated people but, individuals do ask for others to buy liquor for them.

Officer Farden stated he has visited all liquor stores with pictures of common users and lists of names to avoid selling to these individuals. Officer Ostler testified that 30-40 individuals consistently fall into the pattern described by other police witnesses. Chair Rossi opens the public speaking portion.

Gladys Valentin of Community Action Programs Inter-City, Inc. ("CAPIC") spoke and mentions that her agency provides services to many of the people who are committed as described by Captain Houghton. She can obtain free beds from the Department of Public Health, but this is only a short term solution. Some people are undocumented and often no services are available for them. Valentin mentions that 44 individuals received services from CAPIC on 641 occasions over the past year and a half. One of these individuals received services 42 times.

Roy Avellaneda of 122 Bellingham Street spoke and mentioned that he initially sent the letter to the licensing commission asking for a public hearing to ban the sale of nips and thanked the board to have this opportunity. He is even more shocked listening to the numbers that CPD and CAPIC have collected involving public intoxication. For 40 years Chelsea has always had a public drinking and litter problem.

He remembers as a 6 years old boy witnessing the intoxicated people as he walks by the downtown area. Banning the sale of nips is going to make a great impact on the city, but single cans of beer are also the problem. He mentions that in Wegman's you cannot buy one single can of beer. Avellaneda would like this change into the downtown area as well as push this change into Prattville.

Emanuel Tellez lives next to 180 Broadway which is Chelsea Liquor Mart is concerned of only banning the 50mil beverages. He is surprised of the amount of taxes that are being spent to help these intoxicated individuals. He suggests that the commission consider including the 200mil to ban as well. Lottery tickets are also the big problem of litter. He believes that wealthy companies are making money off of the lower income communities.

Juan Gallego of 29 Franklin Street mentions that Prattville is suffering as well. Most people hangout everyday outside of the liquor stores and around the area. He is in support of the ban city wide.

Mimi Graney the Downtown Coordinator strongly supports the ban. There was a statistic from Portland, Maine which decreased the sale of nips from \$3000 per week in revenue to \$1260 in gross revenue.

Mike Sandoval Community Services Administrator at the Department of Public Works spoke and mentions that he has been living for 30 years in the city and more trash is accumulating. He finds discarded nip bottles throughout the City. Sandoval showed photographs of examples. He is part of the community team who see and clean the trash to beautify the city.

John Gunning of 62 Beacon St witnesses' individuals passed out on the streets and pedestrians step over them when walking on the sidewalks of Chelsea. He has also seen liquor stores selling mass quantities to customers and loading them into minivans. To ban the sale of nips would be very helpful way to avoid litter. He suggests that the trash cans be painted over, so that people can see it. He would like to see more trash cans near Fernandez Brothers liquor store.

Faye Dookharan of 39 Cherry spoke and believes that DPW is doing a great job. She herself even picks up at least 10-15 nips or single cans a day.

Chair Rossi appreciates all of the feedback from the residents of Chelsea.

Marian Conley of 150 Captains Row is speechless of all of this information she has learned. She thanks CPD and Gladys from CAPIC for their hard work. Chair Rossi then closed the public speaking portion.

Bongiovanni motioned to address the public nuisance throughout the City caused by extreme public intoxication and excessive litter by banning the sale of nips of 100mil or less immediately and set a public hearing to ban up to 250mil of liquor and single can/ bottle of beers. Guido second. McAteer-yes. Chair Rossi-yes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Adoption Date: 6/26/2018



Mark Rossi, Chair



James Guido, Vice Chair



Michael McAteer, Director ISD



Roseann Bongiovanni, Member