

LICENSE HEARING MINUTES
Kitty's Corner 2 Inc d/b/a Kitty's Corner 2, 1530 Sherwood Avenue
December 16, 2021, 2:00 p.m.
Remote Hearing
Room 330 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Boulevard West
Nhia Vang, Deputy Legislative Hearing Officer

In light of the COVID-19 health pandemic, a remote hearing was held by telephone or other electronic means. It was called to order at 2:08 p.m. A roll call was made to confirm attendees.

Staff Present: Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) Licensing Staff Ross Haddow and DSI Zoning Staff David Eide; Nhia Vang, Hearing Officer, Dominique Archibald, Recording Secretary. [Kristin Koziol did minutes for the hearing 1/18/2022.]

Licensee: Amna Kiran, Owner, Kitty's Corner 2 Inc (License ID #20160000243), d/b/a Kitty's Corner 2, located at 1530 Sherwood Avenue.

License Application: Add a Malt Off Sale license to the existing Gas Station and Cigarette/Tobacco licenses.

Other(s) Present: Lisa Theis, Executive Director of Greater East Side Community Council.

Legislative Hearing Officer Nhia Vang made introductory comments about the hearing process: This is an informal legislative hearing for a Class N license application. This license application required notification to nearby residents and businesses, including the affected District Council about the application and provide them with an opportunity to submit comments. The City received correspondence of concern/objection within the notification period, which triggered this hearing.

The hearing will proceed as follows: DSI staff will explain their review of the application and state their recommendation. The applicant will be asked to discuss their business plan. Members of the community will be invited to testify as to whether they object to or support the license application. At the end of the hearing, the Legislative Hearing Officer will develop a recommendation for the City Council to consider. The recommendation will come before the City Council as a resolution on the Consent Agenda.

There are three possible results from this hearing: 1) a recommendation that the City Council issue this license without any conditions; 2) a recommendation that the City Council issue this license with agreed upon conditions; or 3) a recommendation that the City Council does not issue this license but refer it to the city attorney's office to take an adverse action on the application, which could involve review by an administrative law judge. The City Council is the final authority on whether the license is approved or denied.

Minutes:

Ross Haddow, Licensing Inspector for the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) gave a staff report for licensee Kitty's Corner 2 Inc (License ID #20160000243), d/b/a Kitty's Corner 2,

located at 1530 Sherwood Avenue, to add a Malt Off Sale license to the existing Gas Station and Cigarette/Tobacco licenses located at 1530 Sherwood Avenue

DSI is recommending the following condition for the Second-Hand Dealer – Auto Vehicle license:

1. Temporary window signs placed between the height of four (4) to seven (7) feet above grade shall not cover more than thirty (30) percent of this window space area and cannot block views into the clerk or cashier station.

Mr. Haddow stated that there was one letter of opposition received from the Greater East Side Community Council/District 2 Planning Council. Building review is not applicable; Zoning is recommending approval; and Licensing is recommending approval with conditions.

David Eide, Zoning Inspector for the Department of Safety and Inspections stated that Zoning did review the application however since liquor licenses are in the licensing code and not the zoning code, there was nothing additional for Zoning to review.

Ms. Vang next asked Ms. Kiran to testify. She asked her to talk about the business: history, hours of operation, number of employees, floor plan etc.

Ms. Amna Kiran gave a brief description of the business. She stated that this business is open seven days a week, Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and weekends from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. There are currently three employees at this location. Ms. Vang asked about her history of owning businesses like this. Ms. Kiran said that she and her ex-husband have other locations and she currently manages a location in Fridley. This Saint Paul location’s license has always been in her name, but she is taking over everyday management of it. She is also a licensed teacher, though she is not currently teaching. She will be splitting her time between the Fridley and Sherwood Avenue locations. When she is not on site, there is another manager on site. This would be Ms. Kiran’s first liquor license. Ms. Vang asked if Ms. Kiran understood the current license condition and the penalty matrix that accompanies the condition, including agreeing to the condition.

Ms. Vang next asked for more information about staff training and how they would handle unruly costumers or difficult situations. Ms. Kiran explained that staff goes through training when they are hired, they have an emergency button at the register, and tell staff to wait for the Police and not get involved directly. If a situation occurs that is unusual, the staff will sit down and talk about it. Ms. Kiran gave an example of recent upgrades to the store in response to a robbery incident. She also walked through the recent camera upgrades to the store for the interior and exterior of the store. She is planning to increase the number of cameras from 8 up to potentially 16. Ms. Vang next asked about the parking lot areas including the lighting. Ms. Kiran said she recently had the lot restriped and that the lighting had been replaced in the past year. There have been no complaints about the lighting, and she feels it is at the appropriate level to not be intrusive and still allow the cameras to capture clear images.

Ms. Vang asked for more information about the trash complaints/illegal dumping and wanted to know the frequency of the garbage pick-up for this location. Ms. Kiran said the hauler comes

once a week on Mondays. The dumpster has a lock on it and now people have begun leaving trash next to the dumpster. She hopes that having a camera directed toward the dumpster will help resolve the illegal dumping or allow her to find out who is responsible for the extra trash being left. Ms. Vang next asked about snow clearing; Ms. Kiran said they have a contract with someone to plow the lot and clear the sidewalks around the property.

Ms. Vang next invited Lisa Theis to provide any comments on behalf of the Greater East Side Community Council. Ms. Theis noted that she is unable to overrule the Board’s decision, but she believes that the upgrades that Ms. Kiran is doing would make the Board happy. Ms. Theis also invited Ms. Kiran to reach out to her directly if she has questions about the neighborhood or the District Council.

Next, Ms. Vang read the letter from the Greater East Side Community Council that outlined their reasons for opposing the application. Those reasons had to do with safety and security around the building and the previously mentioned illegal dumping. Because Ms. Kiran was not at their meeting to discuss those concerns, they voted not to support the application. Ms. Kiran explained that due to separating from her ex-husband she was not receiving mail to the correct address and states she would have been at the meeting had she been made aware of it.

Ms. Theis asked a question about a concern from a Board member regarding loitering or panhandling. Ms. Kiran said that they do not tolerate loitering and are comfortable with telling customers that they cannot hang around. Ms. Theis emphasized that the Board would be very supportive of all of the safety measures Ms. Kiran is taking and that they would be happy to hear about the staff training and protocols that she has as well. Ms. Kiran also said she would be putting up no loitering signs as a result of this conversation.

Ms. Vang closed the public hearing. Ms. Vang will recommend to the City Council that they approve the license condition being recommended by the Department of Safety and Inspections and see no new conditions being added at this time. The license condition is as follows:

1. Temporary window signs placed between the height of four (4) to seven (7) feet above grade shall not cover more than thirty (30) percent of this window space area and cannot block views into the clerk or cashier station.

The hearing adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

The Conditions Affidavit was signed on October 7, 2021 and submitted on January 4, 2022.