To: Ross Haddow
City of Saint Paul
Department of Safety and Inspections

Ross,

We began our process of trying to obtain an outdoor sidewalk license to be added to our existing liquor license for Emerald Lounge back in April.

After filling out the application and sidewalk plan, my business partner, Amanda, and I set out to meet our neighbors and ask them to sign our petition for sidewalk seating outside our restaurant.

We did, however, face some challenges through this process. We decided to go on four different days at four different times of the day, with the hopes that we would be able to catch people no matter their schedule. Each day we went out, we went to every single address that we didn't have a signature from yet. The biggest challenge we ran into was reaching people. Many people did not answer the door. I'm not sure if this was due to Covid or people just unwilling to talk to people they don't know.

Even after going out all these times, we only got a hold of less than 40 during our total of 10+ hours walking the neighborhood. With a good portion of the list of addresses being rentals, we had a hard time reaching/finding owners of the buildings and some renters felt uncomfortable signing our petition *because* they were just renters. We were also unclear about what was required during this process, with our understanding that we only needed 33 signatures (60%) and then we would be eligible to be presented to the council members for next steps.

Only 3 of the 90 doors that we knocked on said no when we asked for their support and unfortunately, were uninterested in having a conversation about it. Previously, when first trying to get our liquor license, we were met with concerns about parking, noise and the want for something other than alcohol in our space. We do hear these concerns, and we know that we are nothing without the neighborhood that we exist in.

Despite having a tough time reaching people, the neighbors that we did reach were excited at the idea of a small patio seating with our offerings within walking distance of their homes! It was fun to meet neighbors that we had never met before and to talk to them about our small business. Ultimately, we found that our neighbors are wanting to do anything they can to support the small businesses that make up their community. Many people didn't bat an eye when we told them who we were and what we were doing

knocking on their door on a summer evening. We met one neighbor, David, who shared with us the history of our building and all of the things he has seen in his years living nearby. He invited us to join in his community meetings with the Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association. On another night canvassing, we knocked on the door of our neighbor, Peg. After telling her about the challenges we had with people not answering the doors, she sat down with us in the neighborhood garden, texted her neighbors and together we walked to their houses, met new neighbors and got even more signatures. We met other neighbors who were just outside the radius of addresses who also wanted to sign and do whatever they could to support us. We had neighbors coming in and asking to sign the petition because they heard what we were doing.

One of my favorite things about owning Emerald is meeting the neighbors. It makes my day having someone come in and tell us how much they love having us in their neighborhood and how the neighborhood "needed something like this". So many of our patrons are neighbors who walk over, multiple nights a week. Majority of our "regulars" are our neighbors. Over the summer, I felt that we lost a lot of business with not having any outdoor seating. We had a lot of people asking if they could just stand outside with their drink or if we could throw out a couple of tables. Minnesotans have so few patio days each year, it's really hard on a business when they can't offer patio seating for their people to enjoy.

While we were unsuccessful in reaching everyone, it was still a beautiful thing to walk around and meet people and hear how excited people were to have us in their neighborhood. At the end of the day, we just love this neighborhood and want to see it thrive.

Thank you for your help and consideration for us to have sidewalk seating.

We look forward to hopefully moving forward with this process.

Best,

Molly Bard
Owner
Emerald Lounge