



December 17, 2025

ATTN: John Rupp  
The University Club of St. Paul  
d/b/a The Commodore  
79 Western Avenue North  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

## CORRECTION ORDER

### VIOLATION OF LICENSE CONDITIONS (LIC. ID #43940)

Mr. Rupp,

The Department of Safety and Inspections ("Department") has determined The University Club of St. Paul d/b/a The Commodore ("Commodore"), located at 79 Western Avenue North ("Licensed Premises"), is in violation of license conditions currently imposed upon its Liquor On-Sale 181-290 Seats, Liquor On-Sale Sunday, and *Limited* Entertainment (B) licenses ("Licenses"). As a result, the City of Saint Paul ("City") has paused the continued processing of your application for an (non-limited) Entertainment (B) license until the violations have been remedied.

Your application for a Class N Entertainment (B) license was submitted to the City on July 11, 2025. In accordance with Saint Paul Legislative Code ("SPLC") § 310.02(2)(d), public notification of the application was sent on July 18, 2025, providing an August 2, 2025 deadline for public comment or objection to issuance of the license. Objections were submitted resulting in the matter being referred for a hearing before a legislative hearing officer pursuant to SPLC § 310.02(2)(f). The hearing was held on August 14, 2025.

Testimony given at the hearing resulted in a referral from the legislative hearing officer for the Department to investigate possible non-compliance with certain conditions imposed upon the Licenses noted as:

- **Condition 2:** Install storm windows to reduce noise penetration on windows facing Holly Avenue, and install locking mechanisms to ensure these windows cannot be opened during events with music or entertainment, within six months.
- **Condition 3:** Install drapery capable of absorbing sound, reducing sound penetration, and preventing strobe light penetration on windows facing Holly Avenue, within six months.
- **Condition 4:** Secure the south (Holly Avenue) door and install a crash bar and sounding device to ensure the door is used as an emergency exit only. This condition must be met immediately.

- **Condition 9:** Maintain a phone line to allow residents to contact Commodore staff directly during all events.
- **Condition 10:** Designate a smoking area that is agreeable to the residents association. Smoking in and around other entrances and/or exits is prohibited.

The Department conducted an inspection of the Commodore in your presence on November 5, 2025, resulting in the discovery of license conditions violations described in the enclosed Inspection Report.

The Department is willing to discuss potential remedial action to resolve the license condition violations and to discuss potential adjustments to the Commodore's license conditions for recommendation to the Legislative Hearing Officer to consider in their preparation of a report and recommendation to City Council regarding your applied for Entertainment (B) license.

Should you choose not to discuss potential remedial action and adjustment to the license conditions with the Department, or alternatively not fully correct all violations listed in the Inspection Report on or before January 15, 2026, the Department will recommend appropriate adverse licensing action be taken through the City Attorney's Office.

The Department reminds you that you may only use The Commodore's licensed premises in the manner allowed by your current licenses and without violating the city code or your license conditions. Use of the Licensed Premises in a manner that violates city code may result in additional adverse action.

Please contact me should you decide to arrange a meeting with the Department.

Respectfully,



Eric Hudak  
Licensing Manager, Department of Safety & Inspections  
(651) 266-9132  
[eric.hudak@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:eric.hudak@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

Enclosure (1)

CC: John Rupp, 366 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55102  
John Rupp via email – [jrrupp@cwcos.com](mailto:jrrupp@cwcos.com)  
Dan Niziolek – Deputy Director, DSI  
Monica Shaffer – Assistant City Attorney, CAO  
Nhia Vang – Legislative Hearing Officer, LHO



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## INSPECTION REPORT – LICENSING

Inspector's Names: Eric Hudak and Tom Ferrara – Department of Safety and Inspections

Inspection Date and Time: 11/5/2025 @ 2:00 p.m.

Business/DBA Name: The Commodore

Business Address: 79 Western Avenue North, Saint Paul, MN 55012

Business Representative Present: John Rupp

Reason for Inspection: Referral from Legislative Hearing Office

Inspection Summary: Establishment found in violation of sum total of 3 of 5 license conditions

Action Taken: TBD

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### INSPECTION DETAILS:

This inspection was conducted in response to a Legislative Hearing Office referral to DSI for investigation of possible non-compliance with specific licensing conditions previously imposed upon the business licenses issued to The University Club of St. Paul for the operation of The Commodore at 79 Western Avenue North. The conditions investigated from the referral were noted as numbers 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10. This inspection was completed on November 5, 2025. Owner John Rupp provided full, unfettered access to the establishment and was present throughout the inspection.

#### **Condition #2:**

*“Install storm windows to reduce noise penetration on windows facing Holly Avenue, and install locking mechanisms to ensure these windows cannot be opened during events with music or entertainment, within six months.”*

#### **Inspection Result: Non-Complaint and Compliant**

**Inspector Observations:** Only primary windows were installed – no secondary “storm windows” existed. The windows appeared to be relatively new, in good condition and were equipped with locking mechanisms that prohibit opening without a key. This condition was imposed more than six months ago.

**Summary of Mr. Rupp’s comments:** Locks have been installed, storm windows not needed based upon previous professional noise testing results.



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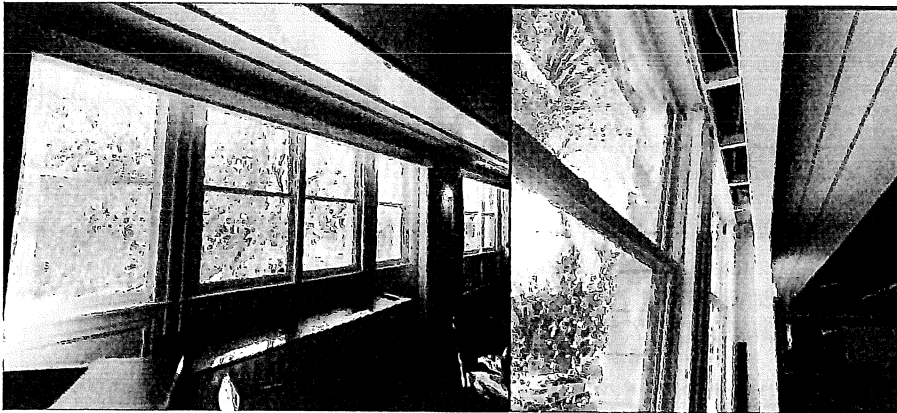
**Condition #3:**

*“Install drapery capable of absorbing sound, reducing sound penetration, and preventing strobe light penetration on windows facing Holly Avenue, within six months.”*

**Inspection Result: Non-Compliant**

**Inspector Observations:** Windows were not equipped with drapes, shades, blinds, or any other type of window treatment. This condition was imposed more than six months ago.

**Summary of Mr. Rupp’s Comments:** Drapes not needed; cost \$30,000. No complaints of sound or light. If ever a complaint about light the Commodore would install blackout shades. Suggested this condition be changed to require compliance with Noise ordinance and if complaints are made, allow the Commodore to determine how to mitigate light and/or noise.



**Condition #4:**

*“Secure the south (Holly Avenue) door and install a crash bar and sounding device to ensure the door is used as an emergency exit only. This condition must be met immediately.”*

**Inspection Result: Compliant**

**Inspector Observation:** South (Holly Avenue) door was equipped with crash bar and sounding device to alarm when opened. Basic hand-written sign posted noting door as a “Fire Exit Only”.

**Summary Mr. Rupp’s Comments:** none



**Condition #9:**

*"Maintain a phone line to allow residents to contact Commodore staff directly during all events."*

**Inspection Result: Non-compliant**

**Inspector Observation:** Mr. Rupp was asked to show this condition was being met and responded he was in process obtaining a cell phone and service.

**Summary of Mr. Rupp's comments:** A dedicated cell phone and phone number were in process of being obtained and would soon be implemented.

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**Condition #10:**

*"Designate a smoking area that is agreeable to the resident's association. Smoking in and around other entrances and/or exits is prohibited."*

**Inspection Result: Non-Compliant and Compliant**

**Inspector Observation:** Mr. Rupp was asked where the designated smoking area was and responded it was not necessary as the entire establishment is smoke free. No designated smoking area was determined to exist. Two (2) sizable signs were prominently displayed on each side of the main entrance to the establishment reading, "This Establishment is smoke-free Smoking in & around other entrances and/or exits or parking lots will be prohibited"

**Summary of Mr. Rupp's comments:** Mr. Rupp explained that smoking was not allowed in or near the premises and customers who ask to smoke are directed by staff to do so on a public sidewalk.



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**Additional Observation:** A second door allowing access to Holly Avenue is located on the western-most side of the ballroom left of the stage that is not equipped with an alarm or designated as an emergency/fire exit. This door was apparently not part of the originally licensed premises and therefore not included in the original conditions to be designated as an alarmed emergency exit:

