

**LICENSE HEARING MINUTES**  
**Cinema Ballroom LLC, dba CB Event Center, 1560 St Clair Avenue**  
Monday, January 13, 10:00 AM  
Room 330 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Boulevard West  
Nhia Vang, Legislative Hearing Officer

The hearing was called to order at 10:00 AM

Staff Present: Jeff Fischbach, Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) Licensing Inspector; Frances Birch, DSI Zoning Inspector (remote participation); Greg Weiner, Executive Assistant

Licensee: Eileen Arcilla, Applicant/Owner

License Application: Dance or Rental Hall license

Legislative Hearing Officer Nhia Vang made introductory comments about the hearing process: This is an informal legislative hearing for a license application. This license application required a Class N notification to inform neighbors and the District Council about the application and provide them with an opportunity to submit comments. The city received correspondence of concern/objection, 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; the City Council is the final authority on whether the license is approved or denied.

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 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.

Minutes:

Jeff Fischbach, Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) - Licensing, gave a staff report for licensee Cinema Ballroom LLC, (License ID# 20240002005), d/b/a CB Event Center, located at 1560 St Clair Avenue. The application is for a Dance or Rental Hall license. DSI is recommending approval without license conditions.

The District 14 Macalester Groveland Community Council submitted an email acknowledging receipt of the application. They did submit a letter in support of the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) before the Planning Commission. They have a new staff person there, who also indicated to me that they are supportive of the license application. Building conditions, N/A; License approved; and Zoning approved.

When this business opened in 2013, they had the same license. During that time, the zoning designation changed to a classification that required a CUP for this use. Had they kept the license active, they would have able to continue without a CUP under a legacy of the previous ordinance. However, they cancelled their license in 2020 due to COVID. When they went back for this license to reestablish the use, they needed a CUP.

Eileen Arcilla: The zoning change happened due to the changing nature of the intersection at Snelling Avenue and St. Clair Avenue.

Fischbach: It might be related to the installation of a bus rapid transit line. The zoning change affected a large area.

Arcilla: Yes. It was the area around the intersection.

Frances Birch, Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) - Zoning, gave a staff report. The area is zoned T2 – Traditional Neighborhood. This is a permitted use. There are no parking minimum requirements for this application. Any changes to their parking plan will require zoning approval. They have been granted their CUP. The only conditions are those that are standard for all CUPs.

Hearing Officer Vang asked the applicant to talk about the business: history, hours of operation, number of employees, etc.

Arcilla: I am one of the co-owners of this business. We currently operate as a ballroom dance studio under Cinema Ballroom of Saint Paul Inc. It's a different business entity than CB Event Center. As a dance studio, we mainly teach partner dancing to adults and sometimes to kids. We are trying to expand to the rental hall use for things like weddings, corporate events, and bar/bat/b mitzvahs. We hosted those types of events when we had this license before COVID. The rental hall will be for Saturday evenings only, open for use as early as 5pm and until midnight only. Friday, Saturday daytime, and Sunday are reserved for dance events. We are very strict about when rental events can be because of our dance studio and our location right across the street from residential homes. The maximum allowed time for teardown is one hour, so the place would be locked by 1am at the latest, though they would usually take no more than 5 or 10 minutes. Our capacity would be limited by our fire capacity.

Hearing Officer Vang: Did you need new fire permits?

Arcilla: No.

Hearing Officer Vang: What is your maximum fire capacity?

Arcilla: I need to look that up.

Greg Weiner: Our property database, STAMP, lists it as 266.

Hearing Officer Vang: The plan you listed is to accommodate about 210 people, including a head table.

Arcilla: That's correct.

Hearing Officer Vang: You indicated a catering workspace in the site plan. Would they handle food and drinks?

Arcilla: There is a separate area for serving drinks, where a beverage caterer would be. The food caterer would be in that labeled area. It's just for preparing food and is not a full kitchen. Food must be cooked offsite.

Hearing Officer Vang: Where are beverages located?

Arcilla: There's a bar area kind of towards the north end of the building.

Hearing Officer Vang: By the men's bathroom?

Arcilla: Yes.

Hearing Officer Vang: Is this only available during these types of events?

Arcilla: Yes. They would also need to be licensed to serve alcohol and have liquor insurance.

Hearing Officer Vang: Are these caterers from a list that you recommend or is it from one of your clients?

Arcilla: It's from one of our clients. We currently don't have a required list, but we do have requirements about who can serve. It can't just be a relative.

Hearing Officer Vang: Will you be hiring additional staff for events?

Arcilla: Yes. We will hire 4 or 5 people. I will manage or have a manager present. One person will be there the whole night. The rest will be there for setup and anything like a transition from a ceremony to a reception. Cleanup will be Sunday morning. We have someone who comes in every Sunday to clean the building. They will take care of anything aside from what we require of renters and caterers.

Hearing Officer Vang: Will you provide security, or will the customer be required to provide it?

Arcilla: If it's a 200+ person event and they are serving alcohol, we will be providing security. It will not be required for smaller events.

Hearing Officer Vang: Are the walls soundproofed?

Arcilla: Yes. The building used to be a movie theater from 1920s. The doors are always shut too because of our heating and air conditioning, so no sound ever gets out.

Hearing Officer Vang: Is the dance studio operational every day of the week?

Arcilla: Yes.

Hearing Officer Vang: Will you be using both floors of the building?

Arcilla: Yes. There is a lounge upstairs that could be used for a dressing room.

Hearing Officer Vang: Are doors always locked by 1am?

Arcilla: Yes. Renters are out by 12:30am and our staff are out by 1am.

Hearing Officer Vang: Are there any other similar uses nearby that could have a competing interest?

Arcilla: No. most neighbors are restaurants or coffee shops.

Hearing Officer Vang: Though we no longer have minimum parking requirements, do you have plans for where guests will park?

Arcilla: We have secured parking in The Grove Apartment's parking lot, because parking was required back when we had the license the first time. Our contract with the dry cleaner there at the time required them to provide parking to us, and that is still the case. We also have 9 designated spaces in the parking lot behind 272 Snelling Avenue South, where Chip's Clubhouse and other businesses are.

Hearing Officer Vang: Will security provide guidance on leaving respectfully?

Arcilla: Yes. They will make people aware of what can be brought outside, proper disposal of garbage, smoking, and noise.

Hearing Officer Vang: Will underage drinking be monitored?

Arcilla: That will be required of whoever is serving alcohol.

Hearing Officer Vang: You had the studio and rental uses from 2013 to 2020. Are there any instances worth sharing where you dealt with unruly customers?

Arcilla: None that I know of. There was an incident in the street that didn't relate to us. Police asked us for video footage, and I gave it to them.

Hearing Officer Vang: Do you have cameras throughout the building? If so, are you responsible for them or is the owner responsible?

Arcilla: Yes, there are cameras throughout the building. We own the building as Cinema Ballroom LLC. We rent to the dance studio, Cinema Ballroom of Saint Paul Inc. We will also be renting it for events. We have control of the space.

Hearing Officer Vang: In the packet in front of you is the STAMP Activity report, which shows you what types of incidents have been reported over time. Complaints you see might be related to garbage or snow. How will you handle snow?

Arcilla: Our staff are responsible for clearing snow in the front and back. The back is only used for access to the alley or dumpster, or for accessibility needs since the front entrance has stairs.

Hearing Officer Vang: Do you handle graffiti removal? We have a waiver where the City takes care of it, but it is one color of paint and may not match your building.

Arcilla: We handle it, but it's been difficult. Things have taken so long to get staffed up to this point. The dance studio is the primary use, so we focused first on getting that up and running.

Hearing Officer Vang: Do you have a shared garbage arrangement?

Arcilla: We have our own dumpster.

Hearing Officer Vang: In your packet you will also find a Police Incident Report, just to inform you about the type of police calls to your address.

Hearing Officer Vang next read into the record the letters of objection from Juliana Tillema, 274 Brimhall St, St Paul, 55105. She expressed concerns about parking and safety, particularly regarding street parking on Brimhall Street. She then gave the applicant the opportunity to respond.

Arcilla: Because we are two businesses away from the major intersection, I'm not sure about the issue specifically. I sometimes have to park in Brimhall, and others might as well. For illegal parking, maybe people park too close to an intersection or in front of a fire hydrant. I'm not sure.

Hearing Officer Vang next read into the record a letter of support for the CUP from the Macalester Groveland Community Council and stated that Fischbach earlier indicated they were also in support of the license.

Hearing Officer Vang stated that after reviewing the records and considering the testimonies from all parties, she will recommend to the City Council that they approve the license without conditions.

The hearing adjourned at 10:33 AM.