

From: [Mya Honeywell](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_LH-Licensing](#)
Subject: Billy's/Gather Licensure-Public Safety Hazard
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 5:02:14 PM

Hello All,

I am writing regarding the licensure for Wes Spearman at the Billy's location as he pursues Gather.

Under Wes's watch, enough adverse action has crossed the DSI desk to revoke licensure. The third strike was being processed by your department and then due to "FUCKERY" and "back table dealings"-per my contact at SPPD the DSI case just disappeared.

Since then, on Good Friday, my bedroom window was shot out at 790 Summit minutes after a fight in the alley behind Coldwell Banker-821 Grand Ave-2 clips were emptied at my son's bus stop.

I have been a realtor at that office since 2004. I can assure you that the fight was not between realtors. It was patrons of Billy's. It is also not Coldwell Banker patrons that leave empty alcohol bottles in the street, rev their cars at all hours, smoke pot, scream profanity and flash gang signs.

Most recently it was the bar itself that took gunfire-proving what we all know-the violence is being brought to this location. We don't live near a strip mall or a warehouse building or a night club row.

We live and pay extraordinary taxes while helping restore our city.

We deserve protection. Please help us.



Mya Honeywell | Coldwell Banker Realty President's Club | *Top 2% of Agents*
651-329-3619 | 177 Snelling Ave N. | Saint Paul | Minnesota
www.socialresponsiblerealtors.com

Wire Fraud is Real Before wiring any money, call the intended recipient at a number you know is valid to confirm the instructions. Additionally, please note that the sender does not have authority to bind a party to a real estate contract via written or verbal communication.

From: dr.ruhland@gmail.com
To: *CI-StPaul_LH-Licensing
Subject: Dear Legislative Hearing Officer and the City of Saint Paul
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 5:24:29 PM

My name is Dr. Eric Ruhland

I live at 790 Summit Ave, St Paul, MN 55105. I have lived in Saint Paul for almost 20 years. I have been a homeowner and business owner in Saint Paul for over 12 years. I have lived at 790 Summit Ave for the past 9 years. My phone number is 651-238-6815.

I ask that the City of Saint Paul deny the new proposed liquor license for Mr. Spearman at 857 Grand Ave.

Over the past 2 years I have been a neighbor to the new managers that have taken over operations at Billy's bar on Grand Ave 857 Grand Ave. I have been watching the irresponsible actions of this new management team and how those actions are impacting local crime and creating a 'hot spot' of violence. This crime, specifically late night increases in gun violence is leaving a once peaceful and prosperous neighborhood reeling with fear and confusion. Homeowners selling their houses, business owners scared to let their employees walk to their cars, residents fearful to walk past Billy's past dark, children told to not walk past Bill's bar. All out of fear. Why? A liquor license is not a right. It is a privilege that is given to those who know how to responsibly hold it, and in fact this owner should have already had theirs revoked, if the city would follow its own statutes.

On April 7th, 2023 my home was hit with automatic gunfire at 11:40 PM, a bullet coming through my bedroom window. It would only later be found out that this was the effect of a gunfight that broke out as an altercation that began in the alley behind Billy's parking lot. This does not surprise me, as we watch every weekend, late night drunk individuals can be heard fighting, revving their engines, swearing, and littering around the business.

On May 6th, a late night drive by shooting riddled the front of Billy's with bullets.

When will this end?

We are asking for your help please. Please help our community and our families.

Sincerely.

Dr Eric Ruhland

--

Dr. Eric Ruhland *Owner*
St. Paul Pet Hospital

Cell: **651-238-6815**
Office: **651-789-6275**
Fax: **651-225-0869**

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Jean Dooley Johnson](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_LH-Licensing](#)
Cc: [kevin johnson](#)
Subject: License application Billy's on Grand
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 5:40:07 PM
Attachments: [May 19 comment to Leg Hearing Office on Billy license app179971.docx](#)

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Legislative Hearing Officer
310 City Hall
15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Re: DWD Group LLC License Application

Dear Mr. Fischbach,

I'm writing in opposition to the request by DWD Group LLC for a liquor license without restrictions application for Gather Eatery & Bar at 857 Grand Avenue, St. Paul.

My name is Jean Johnson. My husband Kevin and I reside at 51 S Avon Street St. Paul.

After our most recent Summit Hill Association meeting that included Mr. Wes Spearman, I tend to agree with him. The gun violence issues faced at the Billy's location on Grand Ave. were occurring before he took ownership. The homicide that my husband and I heard and witnessed was the result of bar at that location serving alcohol for four hours after food service had ended, and two hours after other bars had closed, and did occur before DWD took ownership. In essence, it is not a proper place for alcohol service after 11:00 PM, and a Midnight closing time. Without these, and other restrictions, the violence, criminal activity and "bullets" issues will continue at this location.

Billy's has a parking lot adjacent to their property; in reality, the number of patrons far outnumber the allotted parking lot space. In practice, Billy's patrons park their vehicles on Grand Ave, essentially making Grand the de facto parking lot for Billy's.

The shootouts that occur in Billy's de facto "parking lot" occur frighteningly near community members homes, and doors and windows, that have been directly in the line of fire

These recurring shootouts at this location, managed by the DSW group who are requesting their own license, is testimony to the fact that they have been unable to run this business in a way that does not pose a threat to public safety. A license to this group without restrictions, to include alcohol service ending at 11:00 PM and a 12:00 AM closing, means this bar at this location, will continue to be a chronic threat to the neighborhood and the immediate neighbors and the community as a whole.

Our Councilperson (CP) Rebecca Noecker, stated it well in the Pioneer Press on February 14, 2018, to Harry Erkenback, owner of El Alamo, a bar in CP Noecker's neighborhood, whose license was revoked for criminal activity nearly identical to what we have experienced from Billy's on Grand.

CP Noecker's statement to Mr. Erkenbrack:

“We’re talking about bullets, and I can’t be understanding when your business is such a threat to the community that I represent (and live in) ... I really believe... the chronic and repeated history of criminal activity in and around the bar – and frankly, the public health threat to the neighborhood and the immediate neighbors and the community as a whole – justify this (revocation).”

We are confident CP Noecker has the same commitment to the health, wellness and safety of her constituents in Summit Hill as she had for the people living in her neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and commitment.

Regards,

Jean Johnson

51 Avon St. S, #23
cell# (J) 320-224-7779 (K) 320-224-4533

From: [Matt Crellin](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_LH-Licensing](#)
Subject: Billy's License Application
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 5:49:01 PM

I understand that there is opposition to Billy's license application. I am not one of those who will blame Billy's for every bad thing that has happened or will happen in this neighborhood. The flyers opposing the new license, distributed to houses in my area (featuring an artist's very realistic depiction of bullet holes in broken glass) try to connect Billy's with this dangerous, and unfortunately more common, trend of random gunshots ringing out in our city. We have heard gunshots near our apartment as well so this dangerous trend is certainly real. But, the use of this issue in this licensing question, to frighten people into thinking denying this application will somehow stop this alarming behavior in our neighborhood and our city is cynical and a cheap shot to say the least. This gun issue is city wide, is happening everywhere, and, denying this license application will not begin to solve the problem.

I currently live at 734 Summit Avenue and lived within two blocks of Billy's at other locations for at least 30 years of my life in Saint Paul. When Billy's last changed management, several years ago now, my wife and I introduced ourselves to the new manager and he showed us through the building, telling us of all of the plans he had for improving the restaurant and bar. This included several different rooms with varied types of service, included several differing menus and much more concentration on the restaurant side of the business. He seemed like a very experienced manager and had some great plans. The COVID emergency delayed those plans for years. As we all know, for a long time, the public was not comfortable eating in sit-down restaurants and I can only imagine the red-ink those COVID days caused to Billy's as it did many other businesses on Grand Avenue. With rent and other fixed costs not taking a holiday, and what had to be large shortfalls in income for many, many months, it is easy to understand why all of those hoped for improvements to increase the restaurant side of the business did not happen. The current plans for renovation and improvement are not the result of current licensing trouble but an attempt to finally accomplish the renovation and change in operation that the management of Billy's had planned to do several years ago, until COVID came along to delay them.

Maybe the neighbors, and the city, should ask how they could help. When the Iron Ranger ran into financial challenges, the city and the neighborhood came to the rescue with a new liquor license and they seem to have turned the corner in profitability and have been able to do several noticeable improvements. In the Minneapolis paper the other day there was an article about serious issues in the Dinkytown area with crime near the bars in that area. The City of Minneapolis and the neighborhood there are not blaming the many bars in that neighborhood. What they are doing is working with them in what seems to be a cooperative effort, to make the area safer. That is what our neighborhood should be doing. The Billy's management seems to be made up of good, experienced people and COVID has hindered their plans to improve their business. As long as they are willing to work with the neighborhood, I hope the neighborhood will work with them in an even handed way, as they have worked with other eating and drinking establishments along The Avenue.

I support granting this business a new liquor license with a reasonable closing time, no earlier or later than other similar businesses on Grand Avenue.

Matt Crellin

734 Summit Avenue

From: [sarah garner](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_LH-Licensing](#)
Subject: License 20230000453 Objection
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 10:07:38 PM

Legislative Hearing Officer,

I object to DWD Group LLC, doing business as Gather Eatery and Bar, previously known as Billy's on Grand, obtaining business license 20230000453.

My family and I live at 853 Lincoln Ave, so very close the Billy's. We have heard gun shots and numerous occasions where their patrons are either outside of Billy's on the sidewalk or in their parking lot fighting. Sometimes when our young children get woken up they start asking questions about what's going on. It's incredibly hard to keep lying to them to protect their sense of safety. We certainly never moved to St Paul and this neighborhood almost eight years ago to deal with a bar that attracts violent criminals and have to be scared of gun shots and possibly being in the wrong place at the wrong time and have a stray bullet hit my family or I. This is supposed to be a safe neighborhood and is why we decided to pay a ton of money to live here. A business, such as Billy's, should never take priority over us residents. It's only a matter of time before someone gets shot, again. There are still neighbors that live on Grand Ave that witnessed the young man get shot during a drive-by shooting and it still haunts them. Or the people that have had stray bullets go through their windows. It could have hit one of them. How many chances can you possibly give them. Changing their name and all the rest of their strange ideas will not help and it has't. Please think about all of us that live here and our children while making your decision. We certainly don't deserve this and our safety should take priority.

Sincerely,
Sarah Garner
853 Lincoln Ave
St Paul, MN 55105

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kayla Thao](#)
To: [Greg Weiner](#)
Cc: [*CI-StPaul_LH-Licensing](#)
Subject: FW: Billy's on Grand liquor license
Date: Monday, May 22, 2023 2:53:50 PM

FYI

-----Original Message-----

From: Kathy Larkins <kathylark77@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 20, 2023 9:39 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Billy's on Grand liquor license

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Rebecca,

Billy's on Grand liquor license needs to be revoked immediately or there HAS to be strict conditions on how they operate their business.

Conditions:

1. Close NO LATER than 11pm
2. Security cameras placed inside, multiple cameras outside, on the building AND in the alley. The City of St. Paul needs to also keep the mobile surveillance unit across the street where it currently stands.
3. Spearman and his associates must IMMEDIATELY turn over camera footage requested by the police. No excuses!
4. Spearman HAS to have a security team monitoring the place inside and outside.
5. Noise ordinances MUST be put in place.

Spearman appears to not be able to control his clientele that come later at night. Our neighborhood will not tolerate this! We have NEVER had bullets go through the homes of our residents. People are angry, frightened every day and many talk about moving. Our lovely neighborhood has turned into a hot spot for violent crime.

Vote either no liquor license or a not later than 11 pm license with strict conditions. Also, why is it that if Spearman loses the liquor license, there can't be another one for a new owner for 15 years? How did that happen? I know many people, Mark and I included, would love to go to that space for a nice meal and drink, but we want to feel safe enough where frisking after 9pm isn't a routine or necessary policy for everyone! I've NEVER been frisked in my lifetime going into a bar or restaurant! This neighborhood doesn't want a nightclub! Grand Avenue is not the right place for a nightclub!

Especially one where disputes and fights end with shootings! Good people will not want to live here anymore! SOMEONE WILL GET KILLED!

Please help our neighborhood and make the right decision!

Kathy Larkins

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Roddie Turner](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_LH-Licensing](#)
Subject: Publishing names and addresses
Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2023 2:06:36 PM

Hello Greg,

I wrote pertaining to the licensing for Billy's on Grand. I was dismayed to discover that you'd published the letters with names, addresses and phone numbers. That might be your protocol, but is it really when the Gang Strike task force is involved? These patrons have no problem shooting guns into neighbors bedroom windows. This has caused me sleepless nights. It's not paranoia. It's a grave error on the part of the city to out their citizens at risk. I certainly don't want to show up and be targeted a second time at the hearing. I have spoken to others who feel similarly.

There must be a solution to this issue so that testimony can be heard.

I understand the Sheriff was irate when he learned of this. It's behind irresponsible of the licensing bureau.

Sincerely,
Roddie Turner

Sent from my iPad

From: [Tasha May](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_LH-Licensing](#)
Subject: Billy's on Grand
Date: Wednesday, May 24, 2023 6:30:52 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

This email is in regards to Billy's on Grand and their application to renew their operating licensing. In September of last year, we decided that the Crocus neighborhood is exactly where we wanted to be. Not only are there multiple places to walk to on Grand, the sense of community was the most enticing part of moving to the area. The feel of the small town, family atmosphere, while still enjoying the perks of big city living. With that said, even within the last year, the neighborhood has felt uncomfortable as the rise in incidents at Billy's continues to happen. Just a few weeks ago, we thought we either heard fireworks or gunshots late at night, to find out the next day while at dinner at a different restaurant in the area, that the neighbor down the street had a bullet come through her window. As a female who frequently needs to take the dog out after dark, it's unfortunate that when I hear commotion in the neighborhood - then I should instantly look at Billy's.

I am a mixed race, female, who loves to support local and especially local black-owned businesses, but safety should be the priority in this matter. As someone who has personally met the wonderful staff at Billy's, their clientele that carried over from the previous owners do not 'vibe' with the neighborhood.

While, I believe that this can change, unfortunately, I believe the first step is denying their opportunity to serve alcohol. Hopefully, while they close to remodel, they can work on rebranding to create a new atmosphere that can function similar to the other bars on Grand. No one wants to see a business go out of business, but we do want to see a bad crowd gone so a good business can survive.

Thank you,
Tasha May