

From: Mejken Thompson
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 10:23 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3 <Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Opposed to new liquor license changes

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

Dear Council Member Tolbert,

When I reached out to your office last spring, upon first hearing about a request to change the liquor licensing restrictions, I was told that this was a proposal and "not even on the council agenda". Imagine my surprise, at finding out today that you would be voting on this issue tomorrow. I know Covid has put restrictions on meetings, but I did ask your assistant to have someone reach out to me about this issue. Because I hadn't heard anything, I assumed it was not on the table. Could you please let me know where you stand on this issue and why, before voting on the matter? I would very much like to have a discussion.

My husband and I purchased the Wine Thief and Ale Jail three years ago and consequently moved into St Paul to be a part of the neighborhood, personally and professionally. We work hard to run a clean shop and invest in the community around us.

I ask you to consider Thomas Keim's letter to change the law. As much as it purports that he wants a "one of a kind shop", it seems that he is just as happy supporting big box retail as he is the small shops in the Twin Cities. In particular, it seems he does not care for Morelli's, which would be the shop most affected by changing the law because it is closest to his proposed shop. To that end, I ask you to read the comments he makes in this forum. <https://www.wineberserkers.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=91192&start=105> They seem to hint that he considers driving smaller businesses, like Haskell's (a Highland institution and tax paying business) bankrupt, in favor of Total Wine to be acceptable. If you vote for this change, there is nothing to stop big box retail from coming into our neighborhoods. More over, additional access does not equal more consumption or more revenue, but, it will change how much of that money stays in our community. There is a reason St Paul limited licensing by density, and there are still licenses available elsewhere.

Additionally, it seems illogical to say that the pandemic would "shut [them] down," when nowhere does it say they have invested any money in creating the stated "event center". Why not delay the construction of an event center until normal life resumes? I believe current law allows restaurateurs harmed by Covid to sell closed bottles of wine and beer. We firmly support this. We are doing everything we can to support the restaurants near us. This "change to the restaurant scene" will be shutting down many current businesses. Are you prepared to change the laws for all of them?

Finally, I would ask you to consider the character of the petitioner. There is a bit of talk in the community about his past business. While I was not around at that time, nor have I met Mr. Keim, I decided to search the web to see if there was an actual source of verifiable information surrounding rumors in the community. What I found was an account by Mr. Keim himself. He admits to

"putting in phony purchase orders from local retailers to make sure that breweries were to get paid (with the promise that they would make more money on the next beer shipment's purchase order) -

only to have the brewery not ship the goods under my direction.” Full self account here
<https://www.beeradvocate.com/community/threads/pretty-things-beer-and-ale-project-in-mn.34084/>

It is not my job to judge the character of this man, but I ask you, is this the kind of person we want to expand their business in St Paul? Is this what the city supports?

Respectfully,

Mejken Thompson
The Wine Thief and Ale Jail