

**Woburn License Commission
Regular Meeting
City Council Chamber
Thursday, July 14, 2022**

Voting Members present: Chairman Thomas Skeffington, Commissioner William Pappalardo, and Commissioner David Gilgun
Also present: Woburn Police Capt. John Murphy

Chairman Skeffington convened the regular meeting of the License Commission at 6 p.m. Chairman Skeffington asked for a moment of silence to honor Shawn Dillon, the son of Ward 3 Councilor Jeffrey Dillon. Chairman Skeffington acknowledged Councilor Dillon in the audience.

- 1. Woburn Bowladrome, 32 Montvale Avenue, hearing to determine violation of M.G.L. c.138, §77 to wit: ceasing to conduct the licensed business:** Representing Woburn Bowladrome were Edward Gangi, Manager; Stephen Gangi, President; and Michael DeRienzo, Treasurer. Chairman Skeffington said it has been brought to the commission's attention that the bowling alley is closed, and if so the liquor license would be considered a pocket license. He said the licensed premises needs to be functioning continually. He said the commission has dealt with numerous phone calls. Mr. DeRienzo said he was not made aware of the pocket license issues. He said there are many members of the Gangi family who have interests in the Bowladrome. He said there are factions who want to sell the property and there are others who want to maintain the bowling alley. He said the property has not been put on the market. He said in June they decided to close for the summer. He said the money they earn in the winter usually carries them through the summer but since Covid became an issue, they have been unable to sustain the revenue in the winter to carry them throughout the summer. He said they had no choice but to close for the summer. He said they are focused on re-opening the bowling alley in the fall. Chairman Skeffington said it should be noted no one from the Bowladrome attended the mandatory meeting for liquor license holders in October, and the premises does not have an active Common Victualer's license. He said the Building Dept. will not sign the Common Victualer's application because \$900 is owed for the annual state inspection. Mr. DeRienzo said they have been shut down for the summer. He said they have worked with the Clerk of the Commission. He said the Bowladrome has been in business for 83 years and they have always tried to do the right thing. He said going forward they will keep the commission apprised of any developments. He said they missed the October meeting because there was a shortage of employees and no one could attend. He said he emailed the clerk after the meeting. Chairman Skeffington said Mr. DeRienzo has sent a number of emails to the clerk. He said Mr. DeRienzo has made promises to renew the Common Victualer's license but has not done so. Mr. DeRienzo said there are usually only two employees on staff and things happen. He said he is not trying to deliberately ignore the commission. Chairman Skeffington said it looks like they are giving the commission the run-around. Mr. DeRienzo said someone has to be in the building at all times. Chairman Skeffington asked what the status is of the Common Victualer's application. Mr. DeRienzo said it is all ready to go. Chairman Skeffington

asked if all the inspectors have signed the application page. Mr. DeRienzo said the Fire and Police departments have signed off. He said everyone has signed off except for the Building Commissioner. Chairman Skeffington said the letter Mr. DeRienzo and Stephen Gangi sent to the commission indicates they do not want to attend a public hearing because of the publicity, but they are active on social media with updates about the bowling alley. Mr. DeRienzo said people think the building is for sale. He said they have never indicated the building is for sale. Chairman Skeffington asked who the manager of record is. Edward Gangi said he is the manager. Chairman Skeffington said there is one email that suggested Edward Gangi spends limited time on the premises. He said he is confused about who is doing what. Mr. DeRienzo said everyone has been laid off for the summer. He said everything is related to finances. He said it is too expensive to open the building during the summer. He said they would lose \$100,000 in revenue if they were open regular hours during the summer. Commissioner Gilgun asked if Mr. DeRienzo, Stephen Gangi and Edward Gangi run the Bowladrome. Mr. DeRienzo said they run the day-to-day operations. Commissioner Gilgun asked who is responsible for reporting to the ABCC. Mr. DeRienzo said this year it will fall to him. Commissioner Gilgun asked what Mr. DeRienzo's title is. Mr. DeRienzo said he is the treasurer and manager-in-training. Clerk of the commission said Edward Gangi is the manager of record. Commissioner Pappalardo said the License Commission is typically extremely fair and accommodating, except in instances when people don't treat the board with respect. Mr. DeRienzo said he meant no disrespect. He said the plan is to re-open on Sept. 6. Chairman Skeffington asked where the alcohol is being stored since the premises closed. Mr. DeRienzo said they let the inventory expire. He said they were out of beer when they closed for the summer. He said the vending machines are all out of inventory. Commissioner Gilgun asked if shutting down will hurt business in the future. Mr. DeRienzo said the majority of their business is with the leagues that will be coming back in the fall. Stephen Gangi said over the past 3-4 years they opened during the summer and operated at a loss. He said if they didn't get PPP money, they would have closed for good. He said the Bowladrome is probably the largest and oldest business downtown. Mr. DeRienzo said he takes responsibility. He said he dropped the ball. Chairman Skeffington asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the commission in regard to the petition. There were no respondents. Commissioner Pappalardo said he goes back to the lack of respect for the board. He said he would like to issue a 60-day suspension. Commissioner Gilgun asked how far into September a 60-day suspension will extend. He asked if a 60-day suspension will conflict with the start of the fall leagues. Mr. DeRienzo said a 60-day suspension will impact the fall leagues. Commissioner Pappalardo said he is willing to scale back the suspension to 45 days. He said the Bowladrome will have to submit all of its outstanding paperwork. He said he will be amenable to reducing the suspension. Commissioner Gilgun said this takes the Bowladrome off the hook as far as a pocket license is concerned. Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to suspend the Woburn Bowladrome's liquor license for 45 days, with re-opening on Sept. 6, pending the submission of all outstanding paperwork to the commission; approved, 3-0.

2. Il Ponte Restaurant Inc., 428 Main St., application for transfer of license:

Representing Il Ponte Restaurant Inc. was Attorney Mark Salvati, 10 Cedar Street, Suite

26, Woburn, MA; Kyle Gere, proposed manager; and Hortenca Sheshori, both of 428 Main St. Attorney Salvati said Fortunato Conte, manager of Fortunato's Restaurant, is going to sell the restaurant to Il Ponte. He said Ms. Sheshori has 30 years in the restaurant business and was trained in Italy. He said Mr. Gere has 10 years of experience in the restaurant industry. He said they have financing in place contingent upon approval of the license transfer. Chairman Skeffington said the commission last month approved a new regulation that requires anyone involved in the service of alcohol to be certified by Tips or a similar training entity. Attorney Salvati said all employees will comply. He said right now the staff consists only of Mr. Gere and Ms. Sheshori. Commissioner Gilgun asked if the restaurant will open in September. Attorney Salvati replied affirmatively. Chairman Skeffington asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the commission in regard to the petition. There were no respondents. Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to grant the license transfer; approved, 3-0. Chairman Skeffington advised Mr. Gere and Ms. Sheshore to introduce themselves to Capt. Murphy.

3. **S&L Liquors Inc. dba Dion's, 485 Main Street, application for pledge of collateral:** Representing S&L Liquors was Attorney John Aieta, McDermott, Quilty & Miller LLP, 28 State St., Suite 802, Boston, MA. Attorney Aieta said Dion's was before the commission several months ago with an application seeking a change of beneficial interest, change of ownership and transfer of stock, and now is seeking a pledge of collateral. He said Rockland Trust is seeking a pledge of stock, inventory, and the license. Commissioner Gilgun said Dion's timing is pretty good. He said 20 years ago there was a home rule petition that allowed Woburn an exemption from pledges. He said about three years ago Chairman Skeffington brought the commission into the 21st century and allowed the commission to accept pledges. He said so far it has been successful. He said Woburn was probably one of the few communities in the state that was allowed to reject pledges, because the commission wanted to control the licenses. Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to grant the pledge of collateral; approved, 3-0.
4. **Caffe Nero, 290 Mishawum Road, new Common Victualer's license:** Representing Caffe Nero were Angela Gonthier and Taylor Levesque, 290 Mishawum Road. Ms. Gonthier said Caffe Nero is applying for a new Common Victualer's license at 290 Mishawum Road. Chairman Skeffington asked when the restaurant will open. Ms. Gonthier said the restaurant will open in September. Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to grant the new Common Victualer's license, pending the receipt of the completed Common Victualer's application; approved, 3-0.
5. **Dave's Hot Chicken, 296 Mishawum Road, new Common Victualer's license:** Representing Dave's Hot Chicken was Robert Quinlan, 296 Mishawum Road. Mr. Quinlan said he was before the commission several months ago seeking a beer and wine license that he later decided not to pursue. He said they are hoping to open the restaurant on July 28. Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner

Gilgun to grant the new Common Victualer's license, pending the receipt of the completed Common Victualer's application; approved, 3-0.

6. **Approval of meeting minutes from June 23, 2022:** Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 23, 2022; approved, 3-0.
7. **Any other matters that may be legally before the Commission:** Chairman Skeffington said Capt. Murphy will send a copy of activity at the city's hotels in time for the commission's next meeting. Capt. Murphy said the document is 126 pages and there has been some labor involved in compiling it.
8. **Motion made by Commissioner Pappalardo and seconded by Commissioner Gilgun to adjourn; approved, 3-0.** Chairman Skeffington adjourned the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

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Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees