

District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA)
Re: BZA Case No. 12799A
Request for Modification of Consequences
6201 Third St., NW (VIP Room)
Washington, DC 20011

Dear Board of Zoning Adjustment,

My wife Becky and I reside at 220 Rittenhouse Street NW. We have lived at this address since May 2017. Our home is located approximately 50 to 100 feet from the VIP Room. We are strongly opposed to the “minor-modification” of the VIP Room’s license which has been incorrectly characterized in the memorandum in the file for this proceeding by case manager Steven J. Mordfin at the Office of Planning dated November 16, 2018.

During the past 20 months we have dealt with numerous instances of loud music/noise from the VIP room during “events”, litter (bottles, trash, drugs), drug use, patrons of the VIP room yelling/fighting outside the venue and our home, and parking issues.

We have called to complain about the items above several times to hotlines provided to us by neighbors or ANC reps. We have even recorded video/audio a handful of times when we were present.

In 2017, the community agreed to a compromise to allow the VIP room to continue to serve but not sell alcohol in what is a majority “family neighborhood”. Manor Park is not the size of, nor resembles, the Upshur and Kennedy street areas that are being developed currently. We feel blindsided at how this new evolution has ramped up without notice to the community. Mr. Mordfin is plainly skewing the facts regarding the amount of community complaints and concerns regarding any modification requests. These complaints and concerns have been very well documented by residents in and around the “impact zone” affected by the VIP issues.

We join our neighbors who reside in close proximity to the VIP Room, who have also registered strong opposition to granting the VIP Room the right to sell alcohol on the premises (see letters in opposition from David Owens, Jim Stehle, Suzanne Grinnan, Jay Ferrari and Amber Husbands). In consideration of the VIP Room’s request for license modification, we urge you to review past decisions issued by BZA, dated January 29, 1979 and by the Alcohol Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA) dated November 1, 2017. These Orders impose conditions that state “the license holder should not sell alcohol on the premises...” because of the impact of the quality of life of the VIP Room’s neighbors. These Orders are consistent with prior decisions by ABRA on March 22, 2016, as affirmed by the DC Court of Appeals on March 29, 2016. This decision denied the VIP Room’s request for Retailer C Class license to sell alcohol on the premises and operate like a tavern or night club.

To set the record straight, the VIP Room’s request is a major modification of current license conditions. If approved, it will fundamentally and significantly impact the neighborhood by inviting crime, litter and loitering. It will represent a major step, which would eventually lead the VIP Room to turn into a tavern or nightclub. There is a significant difference between the VIP Room being permitted to serve alcohol on the premises versus being able to sell alcohol on the premises! We are very concerned that we have not been given notice concerning the requested changes. There has been no outreach by the VIP Room or the Office of Planning. As a result, there is significant outrage from the neighborhood. In our view, the issue is how to maintain a proper balance between the objectives of protecting this quiet, safe neighborhood surrounded

by daycare centers, schools, churches and a progressive family environment versus enhancing the financial viability of the VIP Room.

We hope you will seriously consider our comments. Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with our views.

Sincerely,

Chris and Becky De Louise