

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL BOARD
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MEETING

IN THE MATTER OF:

Temporary License Application	Fact-
Event: Birthday Party	Finding
Dates of Event: October 25, 2014 and November 1, 2014	Hearing
Applicant: Abner M. Sampson, Jr.	
Neighborhood: VIP Room, 6201 3rd Street, NW	
Over 100 Attendees	

October 22, 2014

The Alcoholic Beverage Control Board met in the Alcoholic Beverage Control Hearing Room, Reeves Building, 2000 14th Street, N.W., Suite 400S, Washington, D.C. 20009, Chairperson Ruthanne Miller, presiding.

PRESENT:

RUTHANNE MILLER, Chairperson
NICK ALBERTI, Member
DONALD BROOKS, Member
MIKE SILVERSTEIN, Member
HECTOR RODRIGUEZ, Member
JAMES SHORT, Member

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(10:53 a.m.)

CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. That brings us to our Fact-Finding Hearing. The first Fact-Finding Hearing scheduled is for a temporary license application. The applicant is Mr. Abner M. Sampson, Jr. It is for the VIP Room located at 6201 3rd Street, N.W. Okay. I believe there are two applications for birthday parties.

MR. SAMPSON: Yes, ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. And why don't you introduce yourself for the record?

MR. SAMPSON: My name is Abner M. Sampson, Jr. They call me Bo.

CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

MR. BIANCO: And Richard Bianco on behalf of the applicant.

CHAIRPERSON MILLER: All right. I believe that this Fact-Finding Hearing was called just to make sure that you would be,

1 well, one of the reasons, complying with the
2 BZA Order that came to our attention, which
3 restricts the selling of alcohol on the
4 premises.

5 MR. SAMPSON: Yes, ma'am.

6 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Can
7 you -- you might want to address briefly then
8 what the alcohol situation is going to be at
9 each of these birthday parties.

10 MR. SAMPSON: Oh, okay,
11 definitely.

12 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

13 MR. SAMPSON: Basically, what
14 happens is we never sell alcohol. We let --
15 you know, we only have alcohol on the premises
16 because of people wanting to have champagne
17 and wine. All the events are private events.
18 We have church functions.

19 Sometimes we don't even have
20 alcohol. So this Fact-Finding for the 25th
21 was to have alcohol on the premises, because
22 that's the law. We have to get temp license.

1 We have 60 years, so I had my last six, so I
2 put them in, you know, way ahead of time in
3 order to, you know, be able to have the
4 alcohol on the premises.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I'm sorry?

6 MR. BIANCO: Madam Chair,
7 actually, I think to directly address the
8 question of the Board, it's my understanding,
9 and Bo can correct me if I'm wrong, they
10 provide the temporary license six times a year
11 as a courtesy to their clients.

12 However, they don't purchase or
13 supply alcohol in any manner whatsoever. The
14 client will purchase alcohol from a retailer
15 and serve, but not sell on the premises as per
16 the BZA Order.

17 The BZA Order contemplates clients
18 of the VIP Room bringing in and providing
19 alcohol, but prohibits the sale. And that's
20 how the VIP Room operates. They allow their
21 clients to bring it in with an appropriate
22 license, but they don't allow the sale of

1 alcohol on the premises.

2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Do you use
3 caterers or no?

4 MR. SAMPSON: Do we use caterers?
5 I mean, we use caterers when needed, but, you
6 know, on this particular situation, no.

7 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: And these two
8 birthday applications that are before us, how
9 are you getting the alcohol?

10 MR. SAMPSON: They are going to
11 get the alcohol. You know, we don't -- we are
12 not going to -- we are not in the business to
13 sell alcohol.

14 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Right.

15 MR. SAMPSON: It's private events.
16 You know, people want to have, you know, wine
17 and beer. And even at church functions, we
18 don't allow them to purchase alcohol for the
19 community, you know, the wine. I mean, you
20 know --

21 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Do you lease
22 the space to private organizations and they

1 bring -- and they are responsible for the
2 alcohol? They bring it?

3 MR. SAMPSON: Well, we let the
4 clients do it, you know, if that's the
5 appropriate thing. But we screen everybody
6 before we make a decision if we want to even
7 lease or rent the place.

8 MR. BIANCO: The answer is yes,
9 they lease it to clients for events and the
10 event -- and the person holding the event
11 would be responsible for the supply. My
12 client doesn't sell it to them before or after
13 or during any event. There is simply no sale
14 of alcohol by my client to any of their
15 customers.

16 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: And there is
17 no sale by the --

18 MR. SAMPSON: Right.

19 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: -- your
20 customers to their --

21 MR. SAMPSON: Right. And no money
22 at the door. We have security. We let

1 Lieutenant Posey, you know, the lieutenant for
2 the police department, we allow them -- allow
3 her to know what is happening, what events
4 that we have. So, you know, no cash at the
5 door. We don't allow that. Everything has to
6 be done in advance.

7 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I know other
8 Board Members are going to have questions,
9 too.

10 MR. SAMPSON: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I just want
12 to ask one more and then I'm going to let
13 others ask questions.

14 You have had this arrangement
15 since 1978, according to the BZA Order?

16 MR. SAMPSON: Well, you know, my
17 father was, you know, Abner Sampson, Sr. He
18 is not alive now. So that has been his format
19 and we just expanded. We never sold alcohol.
20 We have no, you know, police history, not one
21 problem.

22 So basically it's private. We

1 respect the neighborhood and, you know, we
2 have been doing this. We have been on the
3 block for about 50 years. You know, we have
4 a good track record. We have had no problems.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Let me
6 let others.

7 MR. SAMPSON: No problem.

8 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Thank
9 you. Mr. Short?

10 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. Good
11 morning.

12 MR. SAMPSON: Good morning, Mr.
13 Short.

14 MEMBER SHORT: So I just want to
15 get this straight.

16 MR. SAMPSON: Yes, sir.

17 MEMBER SHORT: Alcohol comes in
18 with the clients, right? Whoever is renting
19 your venue?

20 MR. SAMPSON: Right, right.

21 MEMBER SHORT: Is there any money
22 exchanged between that person and the persons

1 consuming alcohol?

2 MR. SAMPSON: No.

3 MEMBER SHORT: So no money is ever
4 exchanged?

5 MR. SAMPSON: No.

6 MEMBER SHORT: Thank you. That's
7 all I have.

8 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Mr. Alberti?

9 MEMBER ALBERTI: So I'm going to
10 ask that same question a different way.

11 MR. SAMPSON: Okay.

12 MEMBER ALBERTI: Are these events
13 ticketed?

14 MR. SAMPSON: No tickets at the
15 door.

16 MEMBER ALBERTI: That's not what I
17 asked. You don't have to buy -- can you buy--
18 you said --

19 MR. SAMPSON: We do not --

20 MEMBER ALBERTI: Well, wait. Let
21 me finish speaking.

22 MR. SAMPSON: Okay.

1 MEMBER ALBERTI: You said
2 something about you have to -- something in
3 advance. So what is this? You have to buy a
4 ticket in advance or --

5 MR. SAMPSON: No.

6 MEMBER ALBERTI: -- what's going
7 on? There is no tickets in advance?

8 MR. SAMPSON: No. When I said in
9 advance, sir --

10 MEMBER ALBERTI: So there is no
11 tickets?

12 MR. SAMPSON: Right.

13 MEMBER ALBERTI: There is no cost
14 to attend these --

15 MR. SAMPSON: Right, right.

16 MEMBER ALBERTI: -- events?

17 MR. SAMPSON: Everything is --

18 MEMBER ALBERTI: By anyone?

19 MR. SAMPSON: -- private. Yes,
20 sir.

21 MEMBER ALBERTI: Okay. I just
22 wanted to make sure. Okay. Who is

1 responsible for the service of alcohol? Not
2 for the purchase, for the service.

3 MR. SAMPSON: Well, we have
4 licensed -- we would have a licensed
5 bartender. As a matter of fact, I went
6 through your class and I got my little
7 certificate, so I understand the rules.

8 MEMBER ALBERTI: Okay.

9 MR. SAMPSON: You know, so I
10 understand. You all did a good job. That was
11 a good class.

12 MEMBER ALBERTI: I will pass that
13 on to the Agency. Thank you.

14 MR. SAMPSON: Yes, yes, they did a
15 great job. I learned a lot.

16 MEMBER ALBERTI: All right. And
17 this is encouraging that you -- so you have
18 that. You have got the ABC manager as a
19 licensed bartender?

20 MR. SAMPSON: Right. I'm an ABC
21 Manager, official.

22 MEMBER ALBERTI: Okay. Great.

1 MR. SAMPSON: So another thing,
2 too, is, sir, the date that we have for
3 October 25th, I probably was going to change
4 that date because of the fact we didn't know
5 what would happen in this hearing. It was too
6 close for the 22nd, but it's going to be
7 private, the same thing.

8 MEMBER ALBERTI: Okay.

9 MR. SAMPSON: Because it's so
10 close, so I usually pick up the temp like --
11 I been doing temp licenses before my father
12 passed away. So I've been doing them over 10
13 years and we have had not one problem. You
14 know, the community would help me. We have
15 private birthday, an 80th birthday parties.
16 If you all want to rent the place out, give me
17 a call, you know, go to our website,
18 thevipdc.com.

19 MEMBER ALBERTI: Okay. So what
20 I'm hearing, Ms. Miller, is that he wants to
21 officially change the date for one of those
22 events.

1 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: The one that
2 is scheduled for --

3 MEMBER ALBERTI: I think we should
4 probably do that now.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: -- October
6 25th?

7 MR. SAMPSON: Yes, ma'am.

8 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yes.

9 MR. SAMPSON: Because I felt like
10 it was too close, so -- and the only
11 difference is we moved the time up like 8:00
12 to 12:00. And we have security. You know, if
13 there is something -- you know, to make sure
14 it's safe.

15 MR. BIANCO: Right.

16 MR. SAMPSON: So, you know, my
17 father created a great business model. I'm
18 promoting Sam Sampson now. 50 years we have
19 been in the community. We help in the
20 community. My mom back there, Earlene
21 Sampson, she is the owner. So she ain't going
22 to allow nothing to happen or I'm going to get

1 in trouble. You know what I'm saying?

2 So you know, we try to help
3 people. We are not out here trying to hurt
4 people, that's the reason why we were able --
5 we were trying to get the license and we went
6 -- you know, we did everything you guys asked
7 me to do. We went to the class, paid the
8 money, so you know, it's some people that came
9 in the neighborhood that doesn't understand
10 the history.

11 Sampson is a strong man in the
12 Bible. You know what I'm saying? I ain't
13 going to mess my family's name up and I want
14 to guarantee the Board and everybody that we
15 got too much to lose as a family, so we are
16 not going to hurt anybody, you know.

17 We have a track record of zero
18 problems. It's not a club. I've been in the
19 music business for 25 years, so I know what
20 not to do. I have helped last night, the old
21 days are gone leading by the -- that's a good
22 idea what you said on that hip hop/jazz thing.

1 Nobody has done that.

2 You got it on record, you did it
3 first. So if the public steals your idea, you
4 know, you've got it on the public record.

5 MEMBER SHORT: I would like to go
6 on the record right now and say thank you for
7 your comments, but the bottom line is we want
8 to make sure that alcohol being served in the
9 District of Columbia is done in an appropriate
10 legal manner.

11 MR. SAMPSON: Yes, sir. And we
12 only do things in four hours. We are not --
13 I will not let anybody or my mother will not
14 allow anybody to rent the place over four
15 hours, other than, you know, if we're doing
16 something to help the community, you know.

17 Okay. All right. I talk too
18 much. Hey, you know, my birthday was Sunday.
19 You call going to wish me happy birthday?

20 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Happy
21 birthday.

22 MEMBER ALBERTI: Happy birthday.

1 MR. SAMPSON: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: So you are
3 having two birthday parties.

4 MR. SAMPSON: You know, 50 again.
5 Huh?

6 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: So you are
7 having two birthday parties.

8 MR. SAMPSON: Oh, I am. As far as
9 me, I held out on this.

10 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Let me ask
11 you as a follow-up, you said you have a
12 licensed bartender. Is the bartender serving
13 the drinks at all these events?

14 MR. SAMPSON: You've got to.
15 Sometimes we don't even have alcohol.

16 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yours? Okay.
17 But it's your bartender? They don't bring in
18 a bartender?

19 MR. SAMPSON: Oh, definitely.
20 We've got to go by the rules, you know. If we
21 don't go by the rules, you ain't going to let
22 us do nothing.

1 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

2 MR. SAMPSON: I only get six
3 temps. Is there any way I can get more temps?
4 I mean, I know this is off the record.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Oh, yeah, no,
6 it's not off the record.

7 MR. SAMPSON: I'm just asking
8 because, you know, people come in there and
9 are renting the place, you know, and they want
10 to have alcohol. People like alcohol. We are
11 responsible. We've got a nice little track
12 record here. 50 years, you know, so --

13 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

14 MR. SAMPSON: -- I'm just -- you
15 know, I'm a promoter, too, so, you know, I've
16 got to throw in a couple of things. So is
17 there any way the Board can give us more temp
18 licenses --

19 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: We --

20 MR. SAMPSON: -- so we can move
21 our business forward? If we not going to, you
22 know, be able to be granted the license,

1 because the only reason we went --

2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

3 MR. SAMPSON: -- for the tavern
4 license is to help the community.

5 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. All I
6 can say right now is we hear your request.

7 MR. SAMPSON: Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

9 MR. SAMPSON: That's all.

10 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: So we can't--
11 it's not before us right now.

12 MR. SAMPSON: Okay.

13 MEMBER ALBERTI: Madam Chair?

14 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yes?

15 MEMBER ALBERTI: Just for clarity,
16 you can double check this with your attorney,
17 but, Mr. Bianco, I think one day licenses
18 which are different, one day substantial
19 change licenses are limited to six a year. I
20 think temporary licenses are unlimited
21 according to the statute.

22 I mean, the Board certainly

1 scrutinizes multiple applications and we take
2 that into account when we review them, but by
3 statute, there is no statutory limit on
4 temporary licenses, just so everybody is clear
5 about that.

6 MR. BIANCO: Yes, no problem.

7 MR. SAMPSON: Thank you. I
8 appreciate that.

9 MEMBER ALBERTI: You're welcome.

10 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. So
11 just a follow-up, I just want to make sure, so
12 you have your bartender is there at all these
13 events. Do you have servers as well?

14 MR. SAMPSON: We lend the
15 bartender if we have alcohol.

16 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: If you have
17 alcohol.

18 MR. SAMPSON: A lot of times we
19 don't even have alcohol.

20 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: That's all we
21 are concerned about.

22 MR. SAMPSON: Yes, ma'am.

1 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: When you have
2 alcohol.

3 MR. SAMPSON: Yes, ma'am.

4 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: You have a
5 bartender?

6 MR. SAMPSON: Yes, ma'am.

7 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Do you have
8 anybody else?

9 MR. SAMPSON: They got to be
10 certified.

11 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Do you have
12 security?

13 MR. SAMPSON: Security every time.
14 No money at the door. It's the only business
15 model in --

16 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

17 MR. SAMPSON: -- D.C. that we
18 don't do private --

19 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: How much
20 security do you have for these, do you have
21 for these birthday parties?

22 MR. SAMPSON: We have a couple

1 people that is doing security.

2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: You have two?

3 MR. SAMPSON: Sometimes two times
4 one. Sometimes one, but whatever the
5 requirement is because sometimes they only
6 have about 50 people in there.

7 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

8 MR. SAMPSON: You know, our place
9 holds about 100.

10 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I see it. If
11 you have 100 and you said two.

12 MR. SAMPSON: Yes. If it's over,
13 yes, ma'am.

14 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: All right.
15 Now, you want to change your October event to
16 a different date. Is that right?

17 MR. SAMPSON: Yes, ma'am.

18 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: What's --

19 MR. SAMPSON: October 25th to, I
20 think it is, November 22nd.

21 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: All right.

22 We are going to let --

1 MR. SAMPSON: If that's possible.

2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: -- you change
3 it and initial it.

4 MR. SAMPSON: I thank you. I
5 appreciate that.

6 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. All
7 right. Are there any other questions?

8 The other event is scheduled for
9 November 1st?

10 MR. SAMPSON: Right.

11 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: That's still
12 on?

13 MR. SAMPSON: Is that something
14 that we will be able to do still in time? I
15 put the paperwork in last month.

16 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: We are going
17 to vote on it today.

18 MR. SAMPSON: Oh, I appreciate it.

19 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yes, yes.
20 Okay. This is going to let you make that
21 change and then we will vote on it. Any other
22 questions? Okay. Here she comes. Okay.

1 MR. SAMPSON: I'm changing the
2 time, too. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. All
4 right. Changed to the 22nd. Okay. We have
5 two applications before us by Mr. Sampson for
6 a temporary license application for two
7 birthday events, November 1st and November
8 22nd.

9 Okay. I move that we approve
10 these applications.

11 MEMBER SHORT: Second.

12 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Mr. Short has
13 seconded the motion.

14 All those in favor say aye.

15 ALL: Aye.

16 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: All those
17 opposed? All those abstaining? The motion
18 passes 6-0-0.

19 Okay. We are just going to sign-
20 off and then get these to you and you will be
21 ready to go.

22 MR. SAMPSON: I appreciate it.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

3 MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: And, Mr.
4 Sampson, you have provided real strong,
5 positive testimony.

6 MR. SAMPSON: I appreciate that.

7 MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: You know, your
8 operation has had no violations in 50 years,
9 that's very commendable.

10 MR. SAMPSON: That's because of my
11 mother and father.

12 MR. BIANCO: Thank you, Madam
13 Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you.
15 We will get these to you in a minute.

16 MR. BIANCO: Take your time.

17 (Whereupon, the Fact-Finding
18 Hearing in the above-entitled matter was
19 concluded at 11:09 a.m.)

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22

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