



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

2 (11:15 a.m.)

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: The next case  
4 in our calendar we have a fact-finding hearing  
5 regarding a Temporary License Application for an  
6 event on April 23, 2023, Party with Disc Jockey.  
7 The applicant is Mr. Nayef, N-A-Y-E-F, Issa, I-S-  
8 S-A.

9 Mr. Orellana, can you please elevate  
10 the licensee in this case, please?

11 MR. ORELLANA: Nayef Issa, your access  
12 has been elevated.

13 That is all, Chairman.

14 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you.

15 Mr. Issa, can you please spell and  
16 state your name for the record, please?

17 MR. ISSA: Nayef, N-A-Y-E-F, last name  
18 is Issa, I-S-S-A.

19 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.  
20 Thank you. All right, Mr. Issa, this is a - you  
21 have - you have been requesting a temporary one-  
22 day license for this establishment, and you're  
23 requesting the one-day license with, I think, for  
24 the event that you are requesting is an  
25 occupancy. The location, this is for 1350 Okie

1 Street, NE address.

2 MR. ISSA: Correct.

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And the  
4 occupancy, it's my understanding of that address,  
5 is 1,100, it's 1,100 participants, and you're  
6 asking for 700 maximum participants.

7 You have been requesting one-day  
8 licenses for this location, and so I - we need  
9 to ask some questions about your business model,  
10 why is it that you're not applying for - but let  
11 me - all right, let me start. This is a fact-  
12 finding hearing. We're just trying to gather the  
13 facts.

14 MR. ISSA: Yes, for sure. I got you.

15 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And we're not  
16 - the Board can't order. We're asking  
17 questions. And for this particular case, we will  
18 make a determination, and based on the responses  
19 that are given, whether or not we will continue  
20 to approve one-day license for this location,  
21 okay?

22 MR. ISSA: Perfect.

23 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. So,  
24 the first question I want to ask you, sir, is,  
25 it's my understanding that this address used to

1 be the former City Winery facility. Is that  
2 correct?

3 MR. ISSA: Yes, sir.

4 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And so, what is  
5 your relationship with this facility? Do you  
6 have any relationship with City Winery?

7 MR. ISSA: So, yes, it's easy. So,  
8 I'm actually opening up a space around the corner  
9 which is just delayed with permits per DCRA and  
10 stuff, so I booked events at my space thinking  
11 we're going to be open. And this is kind of the  
12 story of why I've been applying for one-day  
13 liquor license.

14 So, my landlord owns City Winery.  
15 City Winery went out of business in January. And  
16 they are in, I guess, they're in, like, court or  
17 whatever, so he didn't want - since there's  
18 already an active liquor license there, you know,  
19 we agreed that we shouldn't use the liquor  
20 license since it's not under my name or his name.

21 It's under the old business, so that's  
22 why we ended up getting a written letter from the  
23 attorney, as well as the landlord allowing me to  
24 be able to pull one-day liquor licenses to be  
25 able to move the events from the actual space I'm

1 opening, but because we're delayed with  
2 construction, I'm just pulling the one-day liquor  
3 license because it is a space that is already  
4 permitted with an official CFO and whatnot.

5 So, that's pretty much why you're  
6 seeing me apply for the one-day liquor license.  
7 Hopefully, within the next few weeks, I should  
8 have my place open, but because we're delayed and  
9 already had events booked out a few months in  
10 advance thinking we will be open, but because of  
11 delays with DCRA and permitting and stuff like  
12 that, this is where we are, so this is kind of  
13 like the summarization of it all.

14 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: In reviewing  
15 your - okay, so you've answered the question  
16 that you do not intend to apply for a permanent  
17 license from this location, so how many events do  
18 you plan to have at this - I know that we have  
19 approved a series of one-days -

20 MR. ISSA: Correct.

21 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: -- for this  
22 licensed space. And I believe that there's a  
23 series of one-days. So, how many applications do  
24 you currently have within the Agency for this  
25 location?

1 MR. ISSA: Yes. I mean, honestly, I'm  
2 probably, like, two to four weeks out from  
3 finalizing the space maybe give or take a couple  
4 of weeks. And we do have a few events, so there  
5 be might another, like, four, maybe six max, but,  
6 I mean, you know, just kind of like a little,  
7 like, deflated because this is like, you know,  
8 I'm trying to open up the space in which delays  
9 and having to set this up, and it's causing just  
10 more work for everybody.

11 So, you know, I'm just kind of like,  
12 you know, stuck in a place right now where I just  
13 have to make sure we do these events because  
14 these are like BitTorrent Talent, so some of them  
15 are like live shows, kind of like what you'd see  
16 like at Unistage and stuff like that, so I can't  
17 really, like, change the dates because these are  
18 tours coming in from Europe or Africa or whatnot,  
19 and they're just, you know, they're hitting every  
20 city, so it's like imperative for me to make sure  
21 I keep the relationships with the agents, and  
22 that's why we're applying for the one-day so at  
23 least we have another venue to be able to host  
24 these live performances.

25 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. On

1 the application, the application there's a  
2 question. I'm not sure if you have the  
3 application in front of you. And this is  
4 question number 19 on the application. It  
5 states, "Is a special event license required for  
6 this usage?"

7 And do you have a response to that  
8 question?

9 MR. ISSA: It shouldn't be because the  
10 space was already approved as a - based on the  
11 CFO, it's already labeled as an entertainment  
12 venue that allows for live performances, so the  
13 only thing I'm doing is requesting is just a one-  
14 day liquor license and that's it. And we're just  
15 abiding by the restrictions and confinements of  
16 what the space allows us to do.

17 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Now, there's  
18 also question number 21. Question number 21, it  
19 says - does not contain that. What is your  
20 response to the question? How will patrons pay  
21 to participate in the event?

22 MR. ISSA: Oh, we normally sell  
23 tickets online, and then, you know, if there's  
24 people that walk up to the door, we sell tickets  
25 at the door. They're all all-day events with 21-

1 plus. No 18-plus on that.

2 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Now, tell us  
3 about how is the security to access the property?  
4 Is there metal detectors? Is there wanding? Is  
5 there bag search? Tell us about how is it that  
6 folks will be able to enter the type of security  
7 arrangements that you have for folks staying at  
8 the establishment.

9 MR. ISSA: Yes, we do bag searches.  
10 We generally don't do wand or metal detectors. I  
11 mean, knock on wood. I've been doing events for  
12 a long time. I've never had an issue. I'm doing  
13 events in D.C. for over 15 years, but, yes, I  
14 mean, we just do generally bag searches and just  
15 kind of keep an eye out for anybody who's looking  
16 suspicious or whatnot.

17 We hire a really good security team  
18 that I've been working with for a while. And, I  
19 mean, as you can see, you know, for the past few  
20 events that we've done, there hasn't been any  
21 incidents or anything of that nature.

22 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So, how many  
23 incidents have you had at this particular  
24 location?

25 MR. ISSA: How many events?



1                   CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Yes. So, far,  
2 how many events have we approved -

3                   MR. ISSA: I believe you guys, I  
4 think, eight or nine, maybe ten, something around  
5 there. I can look it up, but it's around eight  
6 or ten events that we've done over the past six  
7 weeks, six or seven.

8                   CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So, tell us  
9 about the security that you've had that you hire?

10                  MR. ISSA: In what capacity? They're  
11 licensed and insured. You know, we normally have  
12 two people out front, another person kind of  
13 hanging in like the perimeters of like the  
14 entrance so just in case people are getting their  
15 Ubers or whatever, we have somebody making sure  
16 they're safe getting there, we have two  
17 securities by the bathroom, one woman, one male,  
18 we have security by backstage, we have security  
19 on the stairs, we have security by the actual  
20 stage, so I generally have anywhere from 12 to 14  
21 security guards.

22                  CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And how do you  
23 promote the event?

24                  MR. ISSA: Through our networks, so  
25 through our social media, our email list, also

1 the artists generally have a really good  
2 following of who we book, so fans come out to see  
3 them.

4 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So, I should  
5 have asked you this question at the beginning.  
6 So, tell me who are you? Give me your background  
7 and -

8 MR. ISSA: Yes. So, I mean, I've been  
9 doing events in D.C. since I was like 21, 22.  
10 I'm 40 years old. Separate from doing events, I  
11 also own a pretty good restaurant in Dupont  
12 called Residence, so I have that, and I have my  
13 company called Nu Androids, which we do a bunch  
14 of, like, music and art events all around the  
15 city.

16 You know, I've been in publications,  
17 you know, PAPER magazine, medium.com, kind of  
18 really helping elevate the cultural and arts and  
19 music scene in D.C. and trying to really help put  
20 it on the map because, you know, everybody looks  
21 at us in terms of just being a government place,  
22 but we have a really cool art scene here, and so  
23 try to really empower that scene.

24 Separate from that, my biggest project  
25 to date, which is the one that's delayed right

1 now, is we're opening a multi-use events, arts  
2 space and conjoin it with a Lebanese and Mexican  
3 restaurant where the old Big Chief used to be in  
4 Ivy City, so this is a really big project that  
5 we're really, you know, galvanizing and really  
6 helping kind of put Ivy City on the map. It's  
7 like a \$6 million project that's been in the  
8 works for two and a half years, and we're in the  
9 final stages of it.

10 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.

11 Any questions by any Board Members?

12 Go ahead, Mr. Short.

13 MEMBER SHORT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14 Mr. Issa, how are you this morning?

15 MR. ISSA: Great. How are you, sir?

16 MEMBER SHORT: Great. How many years  
17 have you been in the entertainment business in  
18 Washington, D.C.? Will you state that again for  
19 the record?

20 MR. ISSA: I would say at least 15  
21 years.

22 MEMBER SHORT: Starting date when?

23 MR. ISSA: I'd say like 2006, 07.

24 MEMBER SHORT: And where was your  
25 first one located?

1 MR. ISSA: So, I was always just a  
2 promoter. I didn't own any businesses or  
3 nothing. I was just starting getting, you know,  
4 normal pay per head, submit a guest list to the  
5 owners, and they would check off, you know, how  
6 many people I brought to get paid, you know, per  
7 person.

8 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. Have you had a  
9 licensed brick-and-mortar business, entertainment  
10 business in the District of Columbia?

11 MR. ISSA: A brick-and-mortar, no. I  
12 always worked with venues directly, and then I,  
13 you know, I just work my way up to finally  
14 getting being able to open up my restaurant  
15 three, four years ago, and then now also opening  
16 up another place where I'm actually going to have  
17 a licensed brick-and-mortar as well.

18 MEMBER SHORT: So, where is your  
19 restaurant located?

20 MR. ISSA: Right now, one is in Dupont  
21 Circle.

22 MEMBER SHORT: Where's the other?

23 MR. ISSA: The other one will be in  
24 Ivy City. This is the one that we're opening up  
25 that's right around the corner from City Winery.

1                   MEMBER SHORT: So, you have a liquor  
2 license in your restaurant now?

3                   MR. ISSA: In the - yes. I mean, the  
4 one in Ivy City, it is in our name, but we  
5 haven't used it because we're not open, so we're  
6 just waiting for -

7                   MEMBER SHORT: I'm not asking about  
8 that one. You say you have one that you've owned  
9 previous to the application for this one.

10                  MR. ISSA: I believe the one in Dupont  
11 is under my business partner because he's the one  
12 that applied for it.

13                  MEMBER SHORT: So, you don't have one  
14 per se? You're just partnering with someone else  
15 who does have one?

16                  MR. ISSA: Sure, yes.

17                  MEMBER SHORT: So, for the record,  
18 again, state, do you have a business now that you  
19 own with a liquor license?

20                  MR. ISSA: That is open, no.

21                  MEMBER SHORT: All right. You say at  
22 the location you're hoping to open up in Ivy  
23 City, -

24                  MR. ISSA: Correct.

25                  MEMBER SHORT: - what is that

1 address?

2 MR. ISSA: 2002 Fenwick Street NE and  
3 2006 Fenwick Street NE.

4 MEMBER SHORT: When did you apply to  
5 the city for a venue license to operate a  
6 business there with a liquor license?

7 MR. ISSA: I don't really understand  
8 the question. The place has been in construction  
9 right now, so what we did is -

10 MEMBER SHORT: Let me make it a little  
11 more plain for you. You want to open up a place  
12 that you applied to have a liquor license that is  
13 not ready yet. Is that correct?

14 MR. ISSA: So, yes. However -

15 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. What is that  
16 address?

17 MR. ISSA: 2002 Fenwick Street NE,  
18 which there's already a liquor license there.

19 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. Is it in your  
20 name?

21 MR. ISSA: I believe so, but we're not  
22 open for business for that one.

23 MEMBER SHORT: Sir, I'm asking you to  
24 tell this Board so at least I as a Board Member  
25 can have a fair picture. When you applied for

1 the new license in your name, when was that?  
2 What date?

3 MR. ISSA: I would have to look up  
4 because - so, I'm trying to explain. So, the  
5 previous tenant was Big Chief. When we leased  
6 the space, we transferred the liquor license into  
7 our name.

8 I'm one of the persons on the liquor  
9 license. However, this place has been in  
10 construction for two years, so, yes, the liquor  
11 license is in our name, but we're not using it  
12 because we're not open for business.

13 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. So, that's what  
14 I've been trying to get to. For two years,  
15 you've been trying to get a liquor, to get a  
16 business open, and you haven't been able to open  
17 it. Why not and what's going on?

18 MR. ISSA: Oh, I can tell you a myriad  
19 of things with DCRA. First -

20 MEMBER SHORT: Yes, we have time. Go  
21 ahead.

22 MR. ISSA: Sure. I mean, DC Water  
23 delayed the project for a year by themselves. It  
24 took them eight months to come out and do a  
25 sample water test because we had to upgrade water

1 lines, and they wouldn't allow us to do a third  
2 party, so that was delayed eight months by  
3 themselves just on that part.

4 And then, it took another six months  
5 to approve the water plans that would take people  
6 to design, so literally, about 14 months was  
7 delayed on just DC Water. Separate from that, I  
8 mean, I can go through - we had DOE. Like,  
9 we've just spent, you know, so much money with  
10 lawyers, zoning lawyers, BZA relief, just all  
11 this stuff.

12 MEMBER SHORT: Did you have any idea  
13 - when you looked into this business that you  
14 want to open up that's taken all this time, did  
15 you have any idea it would take you this long to  
16 get a license there?

17 MR. ISSA: No. No.

18 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. Now, here's  
19 another point. You've been asking for one days  
20 in someone else's business, correct?

21 MR. ISSA: Well, their business is not  
22 - they're closed, but, yes.

23 MEMBER SHORT: But it's not your  
24 business. It's someone else's business, correct?

25 MR. ISSA: It's the landlord's. My



1 same landlord owns both properties.

2 MEMBER SHORT: Help me to help you.

3 MR. ISSA: Sure.

4 MEMBER SHORT: Just answer the  
5 questions as clearly and truthfully as you  
6 possibly can.

7 MR. ISSA: I am, yes.

8 MEMBER SHORT: I'm on your side. I'm  
9 on your side, Mr. Issa.

10 MR. ISSA: I got you.

11 MEMBER SHORT: Mr. Issa, you have been  
12 at this now for, as you're saying, almost a year,  
13 correct?

14 MR. ISSA: Two years.

15 MEMBER SHORT: Two years. How much  
16 longer do you think this Board should allow you  
17 to have one days until you get - how long - if  
18 you were sitting on the Board and I were applying  
19 to you, knowing the city regulations and rules as  
20 you do, you know them, correct?

21 MR. ISSA: Sure.

22 MEMBER SHORT: How long would you  
23 expect the Board to give me if I were sitting in  
24 your position and you were a Board Member?

25 MR. ISSA: Honestly, indefinitely

1 unless I do something wrong.

2 MEMBER SHORT: So, if it takes five  
3 more years and if you don't anything wrong, just  
4 we're supposed to continue to give you one days.  
5 Is that your understanding?

6 MR. ISSA: Because, Mr. Short, I'm not  
7 just employing myself. I employ - anytime we  
8 open up a business, there's about 50 to 70 people  
9 that are getting, that are making money that  
10 night, you know, single mothers, all these types  
11 of people who really -

12 MEMBER SHORT: Mr. Issa, I'm not  
13 trying to be controversial or anything other -

14 MR. ISSA: I get it.

15 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. Just let me  
16 finish.

17 MR. ISSA: Sure.

18 MEMBER SHORT: Two years you've been  
19 doing this. You have no idea when it's going to  
20 be completed or do you have an idea when you'll  
21 be ready to get a license?

22 MR. ISSA: So, we were, but now we're  
23 delayed with just a few things, but this is not  
24 like a two-year thing because, you know, we're  
25 burning money, so like -

1           MEMBER SHORT: If it's not going to be  
2 a two-year thing, give me an approximate date  
3 you'll be prepared to open? Give us, the Board,  
4 an approximate day.

5           MR. ISSA: Let's say June just to be  
6 on the safe side.

7           MEMBER SHORT: June of what year, sir?

8           MR. ISSA: Oh, June of this year.  
9 I'll go out of business if I don't open up within  
10 the next three months. I'm already burning  
11 through -

12           MEMBER SHORT: Would you say again  
13 June of what year, sir? What year?

14           MR. ISSA: June of 2023.

15           MEMBER SHORT: Okay. And if that  
16 doesn't happen in June of 2023, what should this  
17 Board do about your temporary requests?

18           MR. ISSA: For that specific place,  
19 then, yes, don't give me licenses anymore. If  
20 that's what you want me to say, go ahead, that's  
21 totally fine.

22           MEMBER SHORT: No, that's not what I  
23 want you to say. I want you to give us the truth  
24 and give us some perspective. We as a Board have  
25 - we have an obligation to the city and other

1 businesses because -

2 MR. ISSA: Sure.

3 MEMBER SHORT: -- if other persons  
4 like yourself just move into a preexisting  
5 business without a license and start asking for  
6 one days, it might become something that  
7 everybody else in the city would expect because  
8 they would say, "I want to be treated like Mr.  
9 Issa was."

10 MR. ISSA: I understand.

11 MEMBER SHORT: "I have a place, but  
12 it's not ready, but I just want to rent this  
13 other person's place with one days until I'm  
14 ready." Now, my next question would be for you,  
15 currently, where we're giving you the one days,  
16 what is the name of the security company that  
17 you're using?

18 MR. ISSA: I can get that for you.  
19 Give me one second. I'm texting the head of  
20 security, Lamar, so just give me one second.

21 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. While you're  
22 waiting for that text to come in, you also  
23 testified or you have given testimony this  
24 morning that you don't do any wandering because  
25 you've never had trouble before, correct?

1 MR. ISSA: Correct.

2 MEMBER SHORT: There's always a first  
3 time for everything, isn't it?

4 MR. ISSA: Yes, sir.

5 MEMBER SHORT: If this Board would  
6 continue to give you licenses, you can't tell us  
7 right now what the name of the security company  
8 is, you've admitted that you don't do wanding and  
9 other things. Are you aware that we've had in  
10 this city a lot of incidents of crime in places  
11 of public assembly that have ABC licenses?

12 MR. ISSA: I am aware, but -

13 MEMBER SHORT: Why wouldn't you take  
14 the precautions knowing that of wanding and  
15 checking persons coming in and out of your venue?

16 MR. ISSA: So, we check people. We  
17 check people's purses and bags and whatnot.  
18 However, yes, we've never - you know, I've been  
19 in multiple clubs and venues that none of them  
20 wand.

21 MEMBER SHORT: Mr. Issa -

22 MR. ISSA: Sure.

23 MEMBER SHORT: Everybody always has  
24 the first time. Hopefully, you never - you can  
25 keep your perfect record.

1 MR. ISSA: I got you.

2 MEMBER SHORT: Mr. Issa, if someone  
3 would come with a gun or a knife in their belt  
4 knife, you don't wand, you don't check them, they  
5 just walk on in, and unfortunately, for you, and  
6 for this Board, you have a one day and people get  
7 hurt.

8 MR. ISSA: Right.

9 MEMBER SHORT: Would you say then, if  
10 you were sued, "Well, the city allowed me to do  
11 that," would that be your answer?

12 MR. ISSA: Allowed me to not wand?

13 MEMBER SHORT: Allowed you to operate  
14 knowing that you were not wanding.

15 MR. ISSA: I don't know -

16 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. Well, if you  
17 don't know, think about it. But let me ask you a  
18 question. Do you think it would be advantageous  
19 for you to say to the Board today, "Maybe I  
20 should start or maybe I will start, maybe I'll do  
21 those things while I'm having these temporary  
22 one-days"?

23 Because by June, which is only a  
24 couple of months away, as you stated, if you  
25 don't have one by then, we should not give you

1 any more one days. Is that what I understood you  
2 to say?

3 MR. ISSA: I would prefer not to go  
4 down that route, but I feel like that's kind of  
5 what I'm kind of being pushed towards to say  
6 because I feel like you're trying to have me give  
7 you like a hard date of when -

8 MEMBER SHORT: I didn't ask for a hard  
9 date. I said an approximate date when you would  
10 be open, an approximate date.

11 MR. ISSA: It's worded differently,  
12 but that's how I take it.

13 MEMBER SHORT: Sir, but right now,  
14 your answers don't seem to go towards you knowing  
15 or have any idea because right now, the one days  
16 are working out well for you, so what would be  
17 the big rush --

18 MR. ISSA: It's not true, Mr. Short.  
19 It's not true. I'm literally bleeding \$30,000 of  
20 rent every month for a place I'm not open.

21 MEMBER SHORT: How much money do you  
22 make when you run other clubs?

23 MR. ISSA: Much less than that I'll  
24 tell you that. Because I have to bring in every  
25 equipment for one day and take it out and then

1 bring it back in and set up and take it out and  
2 pay all this labor and wages and all that stuff.  
3 It's not a fixed venue.

4 MEMBER SHORT: But not to belabor this  
5 and not to seem like we're all beating you.

6 MR. ISSA: I feel like it a little  
7 bit, but it's okay.

8 MEMBER SHORT: I'm just asking the  
9 questions. For the last two years, you've been  
10 bleeding like crazy, you've been getting the one  
11 days, and you're just making it.

12 MR. ISSA: I only started getting the  
13 one days at the end of February because we had  
14 assumed that we would be ready by end of  
15 February, and we were not, so this hasn't been  
16 like a thing where we've been doing one days for  
17 like two years.

18 MEMBER SHORT: When is the first time  
19 you ever got a one day in the District of  
20 Columbia for anything?

21 MR. ISSA: Me?

22 MEMBER SHORT: Yes, you.

23 MR. ISSA: So, we had this - it was  
24 me and my partner, Hashem, which we had the  
25 conversation with you guys a few weeks, I think,



1 in November or something.

2 MEMBER SHORT: No, I asked you what  
3 was the first day you ever gotten one approved,  
4 the first that you ever got one approved in the  
5 District of Columbia from this Board?

6 MR. ISSA: I would think June of 2019.

7 MEMBER SHORT: And this is now 2023,  
8 so you've been getting one days for quite a long  
9 period of time.

10 MR. ISSA: Yes, because what we do is  
11 we activate spots in the city, so sometimes I'll  
12 go get a special permit for, like, a random  
13 parking lot and build up a whole art installation  
14 and do some cool creative stuff in the city, so  
15 it's not like I was always using the same venue.

16 This is a different situation because  
17 it's around the corner from the venue, and the  
18 landlord owns both venues, and since there is an  
19 active CFO there, and it's safe in terms of exits  
20 and fire-approved and all that stuff, it was kind  
21 of like a blessing in disguise to allow us to do  
22 these events until our space opens up, but if  
23 you're asking me that I was just doing this all  
24 the time, no.

25 MEMBER SHORT: Okay.

1 MR. ISSA: Virtually, 99 percent of  
2 the -

3 MEMBER SHORT: One issue I have, Mr.  
4 Issa -

5 MR. ISSA: Sure.

6 MEMBER SHORT: - is your security  
7 should we continue to give you these one days, I  
8 have an issue, and I hope maybe the other Board  
9 Members would think the same as I think, I'm not  
10 sure, I'm just one Board Member, but I have  
11 issues, and I want it on the record, that if this  
12 Board continues to give you one days that your  
13 security becomes a little better and that you  
14 provide this Board with the name of the security  
15 company -

16 MR. ISSA: I have got. I have the  
17 name right now. It's iPurpose -

18 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. For the record,  
19 what is that?

20 MR. ISSA: iPurpose.

21 MEMBER SHORT: Are they registered  
22 with the District of Columbia, MPD?

23 MR. ISSA: I believe so, yes.  
24 iPurpose Management Consulting Firm.

25 MEMBER SHORT: So, you're saying they

1 are? For the record, you're saying they are  
2 registered with the District -

3 MR. ISSA: I'm confirming with them  
4 right now. I don't want to speak out of line.

5 MEMBER SHORT: Okay.

6 MR. ISSA: But just to go back, I will  
7 start wanding. And you can put that on the  
8 record to make sure that we're going above and  
9 beyond to making sure we are doing -

10 MEMBER SHORT: I can't make you. This  
11 Board can't make you do anything --

12 MR. ISSA: I know. I'm -- and I took  
13 your point. There's the first time for  
14 everything, and I do believe that, and I agree  
15 with you.

16 MEMBER SHORT: All right.

17 MR. ISSA: I'm not arguing. I'm  
18 saying for the record that moving forward, I will  
19 wand.

20 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. Well, let me not  
21 hold up any further.

22 Mr. Chairman, I've heard what I've  
23 heard. I want to hear now from you, Mr.  
24 Chairman, and other Board Members on Mr. Issa's  
25 application.

1 Thank you, Mr. Issa.

2 MR. ISSA: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr.  
4 Short.

5 Any other questions by any of the  
6 Board Members? Go ahead, Mr. Grandis.

7 MEMBER GRANDIS: Good morning, Mr.  
8 Issa, I believe.

9 MR. ISSA: Yes.

10 MEMBER GRANDIS: Good morning. You  
11 said earlier in your presentation that you had  
12 booked some of these national/international  
13 groups when you thought perhaps by the time that  
14 event happened, you would be open in your place  
15 that you have been spending all this money on.  
16 Is that correct?

17 MR. ISSA: Correct.

18 MEMBER GRANDIS: Okay. And we all  
19 know there's a lot of hurdles at DCRA, so -

20 MR. ISSA: Just a little bit.

21 MEMBER GRANDIS: Are you comfortable  
22 in - because once again, this is only a fact-  
23 finding.

24 MR. ISSA: Right.

25 MEMBER GRANDIS: You're not under

1 oath.

2 MR. ISSA: Right.

3 MEMBER GRANDIS: And we can't make you  
4 do anything.

5 MR. ISSA: Right.

6 MEMBER GRANDIS: Because we're trying  
7 to - we're really just trying to learn about the  
8 business model and when you'll be, you know, why  
9 you're having these one days where you are. So,  
10 you have said that you believe by June, all the  
11 hurdles will be done, and you will have your CFO  
12 so to speak to put it -

13 MR. ISSA: Correct.

14 MEMBER GRANDIS: - to lump it all  
15 together, okay. So, are you comfortable in  
16 letting us know how far out you have booked  
17 groups? Because I understand, I think we all  
18 understand, some of these groups book real  
19 quickly, they book out several years, so are you  
20 comfortable letting us know how far out you are  
21 booked?

22 MR. ISSA: Yes. I mean, I have shows  
23 booked through December, but not all at my venue.  
24 I mean, I work - I do events -

25 MEMBER GRANDIS: No, no. No - I'm

1       sorry to interrupt you.  Yes.

2                   MR. ISSA:  Sorry.  No problem.  I  
3       understand.  So, yes, I think the latest show I  
4       have right now that is confirmed is, I believe,  
5       October 28th.

6                   MEMBER GRANDIS:  So, following up with  
7       Mr. Short, if DCRA is still holding you off from  
8       getting your CFO when you stated June,  
9       realistically, you are obligated under contract  
10      with these groups to October.

11                  MR. ISSA:  Correct.

12                  MEMBER GRANDIS:  Okay.

13                  MR. ISSA:  Yes, because these tours  
14      are generally, as I'm sure you're aware, they  
15      book out, like, six months, a year in advance.

16                  MEMBER GRANDIS:  Yes.

17                  MR. ISSA:  You know, I'm competing  
18      with Live Nation who are a big conglomerate.  I'm  
19      a local small business, you know -

20                  MEMBER GRANDIS:  And if you don't grab  
21      it, you don't get it.  Maybe 2025.

22                  MR. ISSA:  Yes.

23                  MEMBER GRANDIS:  Are you comfortable  
24      in letting us know what is remaining with DCRA  
25      that you have no control over, but that you do

1 need before you can get your CFO?

2 MR. ISSA: I mean, right now on the  
3 restaurant side, we actually got our CFO last  
4 week, so we're waiting on health inspections. On  
5 the actual venue side, you know, we haven't  
6 applied for a CFO.

7 We have a couple, like, you know,  
8 there's a mechanical issue that we're dealing  
9 with, but everything else is pretty much ready to  
10 rock, so I'm hoping that's going to be settled in  
11 the next, like, two to three weeks, and then we  
12 can apply for our CFO.

13 MEMBER GRANDIS: Would you mind, once  
14 again, we can't make you, would you mind letting  
15 licensing know or the Agency know in two or three  
16 weeks where you are regarding -

17 MR. ISSA: A hundred percent.

18 MEMBER GRANDIS: Because I think part  
19 of our mystery is that it appears without knowing  
20 any more context that you're enjoying your one-  
21 day applications.

22 MR. ISSA: I am not, I promise. Can  
23 I explain why?

24 MEMBER GRANDIS: Yes.

25 MR. ISSA: Because I booked these

1 artists with these big agencies at the venue that  
2 I promised and sent them pictures of renderings.  
3 And then because we're delayed, I have to  
4 literally every time message them, get on the  
5 call with management, explain why.

6 I have to literally like, you know,  
7 apologize and send them a whole ordeal of how  
8 we're going to set this up and make this right  
9 and whatever, so it's like I'm having to do  
10 double the work. And it's not in my best, you  
11 know, it doesn't do me any justice to do this  
12 because, on top of me having to pay rent at the  
13 other space, I'm also paying rent at my space, so  
14 financially, it doesn't make sense for me.

15 From my rapport with the agents, it's  
16 not a good look because I'm constantly having to  
17 push those, so trust me when I tell you, like,  
18 it's not in my benefit to do this.

19 And I also keep having to do - I have  
20 to - when we do these one days, I have to bring  
21 in equipment, set it up, and then take it back  
22 out because, you know, the landlord has other  
23 uses for the space. So, whereas, if it's in my  
24 space, I have my built-in sound, I have my built-  
25 in stuff.



1 I don't have to do anything, except  
2 set up when I set up for that night, so every  
3 time I do a "pop up" is what, you know, what we  
4 call these, I have a crazy amount of stuff I have  
5 to set up for these events. Mind you, the money  
6 part of renting and then also paying for a space  
7 I'm not utilizing.

8 MEMBER GRANDIS: It sounds like you  
9 have a lot of different entities that you have  
10 fact findings in front of, not just us.

11 MR. ISSA: This is the only fact-  
12 finding I have, but, yes. In terms of, you're  
13 talking about like agents and stuff? Yes,  
14 exactly, yes.

15 MEMBER GRANDIS: That's what I'm -  
16 because I'm sure there's a lot of pressure.

17 MR. ISSA: Yes.

18 MEMBER GRANDIS: Okay. So, you are  
19 comfortable within three weeks to get back to the  
20 Agency to say, "Hey, I've checked this box off,  
21 and I have these other boxes to go."

22 MR. ISSA: No problem at all.

23 MEMBER GRANDIS: Or, to say that  
24 nothing has happened because we know how  
25 government is and bureaucracy is. We have our

1 boxes to check as well, you know, so that would  
2 be very helpful. And maybe you should not  
3 continue booking past October right away even  
4 though you may lose -

5 MR. ISSA: I know.

6 MEMBER GRANDIS: -- some of the groups  
7 you want because you don't want to be in front of  
8 us again like this. You want to be trying to -  
9 you want to be at DCRA today and not here, so we  
10 appreciate you coming in and being as factual as  
11 you are.

12 Just one final point with Mr. Short  
13 making a request regarding about security.  
14 Unfortunately, for whatever reasons, we are  
15 getting reports every week, truly every week of  
16 some type of knife activity, some type of gun  
17 inside the place, or some gun situation right  
18 outside the place which may be related to that  
19 licensee.

20 It really is a very different world in  
21 the context of what people bring into a venue  
22 than it was even before COVID, so when Mr. Short  
23 brings this up, it's something we see,  
24 unfortunately, and regrettably, every week now,  
25 so that's - I think you just need to be mindful

1        -yes, you have a crowd that doesn't historically  
2 bring those things in, but damn, you know, just  
3 be aware that every week, we really have reports  
4 of violence.

5                    MR. ISSA: I believe it. I'm seeing  
6 it. I believe it. My car window got broken into  
7 last week. I believe it.

8                    MEMBER GRANDIS: Okay. So, Mr.  
9 Short's concern with you, it's very legitimate by  
10 this Board that we don't - we don't want, and  
11 you don't want, violence in your facility, and  
12 whatever steps you can take to avoid it, you  
13 know, you should be considering that.

14                   Mr. Chairman, thank you for letting me  
15 have some time. Thank you.

16                   MR. ISSA: And to reiterate - thank  
17 you, Mr. Grandis. And to reiterate, you know, so  
18 first, the security question. They are  
19 registered in D.C., all right. He's texting me.  
20 They are registered in D.C. And I'm informing  
21 them that moving forward, we're going to wand  
22 everybody that walks in, so you guys have my word  
23 on that.

24                   And I do believe there is a first time  
25 for everything, so it's better to be a little

1 pessimistic than optimistic even though I've kind  
2 of, you know, rode the wave of not having any  
3 issues, but I do agree. I'm not going to argue  
4 against that comment.

5 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.  
6 Thank you, Mr. Grandis.

7 Any other questions by any other Board  
8 Members?

9 (No audible response.)

10 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Issa, okay,  
11 this fact-finding was we had approved all the one  
12 days that you had requested prior to April 1st.

13 MR. ISSA: First, correct.

14 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So, this fact-  
15 finding, it was for the April 1, 2023 date.

16 MR. ISSA: Correct.

17 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So, that's one  
18 of the reasons we need to get more information  
19 from you before the Board will approve or  
20 disapprove this event.

21 Just as an FYI. You're aware that at  
22 all these events that you need to have ABC  
23 license managers, or the owner needs to be very  
24 aware of that.

25 MR. ISSA: Yes, sir.

1 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.

2 Just as an FYI. All right.

3 MR. ISSA: Sorry. Sorry to cut you  
4 off.

5 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Yes, sir.

6 MR. ISSA: I have no problem updating  
7 you guys every two, three weeks. Who should I  
8 email?

9 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Well, what I  
10 would say is just you can just send to the  
11 licensing. And I just want to correct the  
12 record. There's no longer a DCRA agency. It's  
13 the Department of Buildings.

14 MR. ISSA: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: It's the  
16 Department of Buildings. There's no longer a  
17 DCRA, and so -

18 MR. ISSA: It's a good rebrand.

19 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. So,  
20 one thing that I'll say, sir, you can just update  
21 licensing. And this is what I will say to you.  
22 Each time that you are applying for a one day,  
23 why don't you provide us, say, an update with  
24 what's going on?

25 Because at least if you provide us an

1 update, when the Board looks at the application,  
2 the Board will know where you are in having your  
3 permanent space completed, and so I would so  
4 recommend that you do that just with the  
5 application that you submit, you provide us with  
6 an update of where you are and what needs to be  
7 done, what you believe needs to be done for you  
8 to get a certificate of occupancy for the space.  
9 And I think that would be helpful for the Board.

10 So, you have heard today the concerns  
11 that the Board has had, and what we're  
12 requesting, so I would just ask that for future  
13 events that you just provide us just information,  
14 let us know the status of your, of the completion  
15 of your current building.

16 And I think that will - I know that  
17 Mr. - I don't think that the Board is saying to  
18 you that you shouldn't request for a one day  
19 after June, but I think that if you provide us  
20 with a schedule, to the best of your ability, of  
21 what is it you're receiving, what is the holdup,  
22 I think the Board will listen and make a  
23 determination based on facts, based on  
24 information that are provided to us, okay?

25 MR. ISSA: I understand.

1                   CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right, so  
2 we'll take this matter under advisement, and  
3 you'll find out shortly whether or not we are  
4 approving the event for April 1, 2023, okay? Any  
5 other questions?

6                   MR. ISSA: No. Thank you so much.

7                   CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.  
8 Have a great day, sir.

9                   MR. ISSA: You too. Bye.

10                  CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you.  
11 Bye-bye.

12                                 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
13 went off the record at 11:53 a.m.)

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In the matter of: Nayef Issa

Before: DC ABRA

Date: 03-29-23

Place: teleconference

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