

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL BOARD  
+ + + + +  
MEETING

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IN THE MATTER OF:                   :  
  :  
Miracle Theater                    :  
600 I Street NW                    : Fact Finding  
  : Hearing  
  :  
(Temporary License                :  
Application)                        :  
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Wednesday  
April 5th, 2023

The Alcoholic Beverage Control Board  
met via WebEx videoconference, Chairperson  
Donovan W. Anderson presiding.

PRESENT:

- DONOVAN W. ANDERSON, Chairperson
- BOBBY CATO, JR., Member
- EDWARD S. GRANDIS, Member
- JENI HANSEN, Member
- JAMES SHORT, JR., Member
- RAFI ALIYA CROCKETT, Member

ALSO PRESENT:

- LANA MAHMOUD, Applicant
- JOSE ORELLANA, DC ABRA Staff

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

2 11:38 a.m.

3 CHAIR ANDERSON: All right. The last  
4 hearing for our morning is a fact-finding  
5 hearing, and this is for a temporary license  
6 application for Miracle Theater.

7 And now we can have Ms. Lana Mahmoud.

8 MR. ORELLANA: Has been elevated.  
9 That is all, Chairman.

10 CHAIR ANDERSON: Thank you. Good  
11 morning, Ms. Mahmoud. Can you please identify  
12 yourself for the record, in this, for the right  
13 case now, ma'am?

14 MS. MAHMOUD: Good morning once again.  
15 Lana Mahmoud, spelled L-A-N-A, last name M-A-H-M-  
16 O-U-D.

17 CHAIR ANDERSON: All right. Good  
18 morning, ma'am.

19 MS. MAHMOUD: Good morning.

20 CHAIR ANDERSON: This is a fact-  
21 finding hearing, and one of the reasons why we  
22 have a fact-finding hearing is that the Board --  
23 you have requested a significant amount of one-  
24 day hearing -- I'm sorry, a one-day temporary  
25 license for the Miracle Theater and for the Sixth

1 & I Synagogue. And so, this is a series of  
2 requests that you have requested over the years,  
3 and some Board members are wondering, since you  
4 have been requesting these significant amount of  
5 one-day licenses, why is it that you have not  
6 applied for a permanent license?

7 And so -- so, let's start off, since  
8 this is a fact-finding hearing: who are you, and  
9 your business model, and tell us why is it that  
10 every so often you have been applying for  
11 temporary one-day license from our agency, ma'am?

12 MS. MAHMOUD: Absolutely, no problem.  
13 So, again, my name is Lana, I'm the Director of  
14 Operations for Union Stage, located in  
15 Washington, D.C. We also operate doing business  
16 as Union Stage Presents.

17 So, we are a concert space and private  
18 event space located at The Wharf in Southwest,  
19 and we currently have a events contract with  
20 Miracle Theater, located in Southeast, and  
21 Capital Turnaround, also located in Southeast.

22 What we do is we present concerts at  
23 these spaces. We don't own these spaces; we  
24 don't have a liquor license for those spaces;  
25 they don't have liquor license for those spaces.

1                   So, what we do, as, you know, a  
2 concert venue and as a booking company --  
3 essentially, a promoter for public events -- we  
4 put on concerts in these spaces per their  
5 request, to bring in business for their venues.

6                   In addition to that, because we have  
7 a liquor license for Union Stage, they've  
8 requested that we provide the alcohol for their  
9 events, since they're not permitted to have a  
10 liquor license because they're owned under a  
11 church.

12                   So, we present concerts there. And  
13 so, for each concert date that we have from the  
14 very beginning years and years ago, once we  
15 started this, we were asked to get temporary  
16 licenses -- it's how we were told to do it by  
17 ABRA many years ago.

18                   But we would love a permanent  
19 solution. I've reached out many, many times to  
20 ABRA with no response regarding, you know,  
21 getting a catering license or just understanding  
22 what our options are.

23                   CHAIR ANDERSON: Well, let me ask you  
24 a question. So, what is it that -- when these  
25 events occurs at these two locations, what is it

1 that you provide?

2 MS. MAHMOUD: Sure. So, it depends on  
3 the venue. So, for Miracle Theater, we provide  
4 beer and wine only. And at Capital Turnaround,  
5 and one of our other -- the other venues that we  
6 present at, we provide beer, wine, and sometimes,  
7 based on the show, canned cocktails. So, I  
8 guess, spirits.

9 CHAIR ANDERSON: Spirits. So you  
10 don't provide food for any of these events, is  
11 that correct?

12 MS. MAHMOUD: No, sir. We tried to  
13 get a vending license to provide snacks and just  
14 miscellaneous easy items that we could bring,  
15 but, again, we reached out several times to  
16 different D.C. providers with no avail. So.

17 CHAIR ANDERSON: Now, if you applied  
18 to D.C. for a caterers license, then you'd have  
19 to provide food. Is that something that you're -  
20 - would you be able to provide food to any of  
21 these venues, if you were to apply for a caterers  
22 license?

23 MS. MAHMOUD: Unfortunately not. I  
24 believe that was the stop with the catering  
25 license. We don't have a full-service kitchen

1 located at Union Stage, which is our primary  
2 location, and the liquor license that we apply  
3 for these temporary permits under. We only have  
4 a prep kitchen there. So we do make, you know,  
5 pizzas and wings and things like that, but they  
6 are done and very small, simple convection ovens.

7 We don't have the scaling and the  
8 kitchen size to vend food for these events. We  
9 have worked with other companies that do provide  
10 food in the past. So, for example, we worked  
11 with a restaurant in D.C. that had a catering  
12 license and they provided food for some events.

13 Unfortunately, they were no longer to  
14 be able -- they were not able to continue these  
15 services because of the scale of the events.

16 CHAIR ANDERSON: All right. So, tell  
17 us about -- now, how does patrons pay to  
18 participate in these events?

19 MS. MAHMOUD: Sure. So, all attendees  
20 for all of our public shows that we host at these  
21 off-site venues -- that's what we refer to when  
22 we're talking about anything outside of the four  
23 walls, and what these licenses are for -- they  
24 purchase tickets.

25 So, they're purchasing general

1 admission tickets, or sometimes a VIP ticket.  
2 None of those include beverages, but beverages  
3 are available for purchase once they enter the  
4 building.

5 CHAIR ANDERSON: And how long have you  
6 been doing this?

7 MS. MAHMOUD: We've been doing these  
8 events for, I would say, at least three years, if  
9 not four. I've been in this position for  
10 probably five years now, so a little after I  
11 started in this position.

12 CHAIR ANDERSON: And normally you have  
13 500 attendees at these events, so tell us about  
14 the security that's provided and who provides the  
15 security.

16 MS. MAHMOUD: Sure. So, the  
17 attendance really varies, just as some of you, I  
18 mean, I'm sure have experienced, if you've been  
19 to a concert -- sometimes it's 50 people,  
20 sometimes it's 500. But we have our own security  
21 personnel, they're W-2 employees that are hired  
22 through our company, and they provide security  
23 personnel.

24 CHAIR ANDERSON: What type of training  
25 is provided to the security and who provides the

1 training?

2 MS. MAHMOUD: Absolutely. So, we have  
3 a Head of Security that provides a first aid and  
4 CPR training. He actually just very recently  
5 completed, I believe it was the -- I forget the  
6 acronym for it but it is a training that prevents  
7 sexual violence, and educating people on sexual  
8 violence.

9 So, that was a training he completed  
10 and he is now a certified trainer, and is passing  
11 that trainer along to his employees.

12 We're also having him and our other  
13 Head of Security -- so, anyone who would have to  
14 be kind of in charge of other security personnel  
15 -- completing a TIPS training, as well.

16 CHAIR ANDERSON: All right, thank you.  
17 Any questions by any Board members?

18 Go ahead, Mr. Short.

19 MEMBER SHORT: Good morning, Ms. --

20 MS. MAHMOUD: Good morning, Mr. Short.

21 MEMBER SHORT: I've been on the Board  
22 for a period of time and I had no idea that we  
23 were giving licenses for one-days to a company  
24 that you -- you and your company. And that you  
25 had no real license to sell alcohol in



1 Washington, D.C., other than -- what's the name  
2 of the company, again, you?

3 MS. MAHMOUD: So -- I apologize. So,  
4 we do have a liquor license, because we own a  
5 business at The Wharf in D.C., under -- the legal  
6 entity is BBDC, LLC, doing business as Union  
7 Stage.

8 So, we do have a liquor license --

9 MEMBER SHORT: I understand that.

10 MS. MAHMOUD: Yes, sir.

11 MEMBER SHORT: I do think that there  
12 is a workaround through our code where you could  
13 use that license, but I think that the way that  
14 you are using it now is inappropriate.

15 MS. MAHMOUD: Okay.

16 (Simultaneous speaking.)

17 MEMBER SHORT: I'd like to get, if you  
18 would agree to it, to come into our office, sit  
19 down with our licensing specialist, and find out  
20 how you can continue to do this. I have voted  
21 on many occasions for the one-day licenses,  
22 knowing what I know about Miracle Theater and  
23 knowing what I know about the church at Sixth & I  
24 Street.

25 So, I would not, as a Board member,

1 want to see you discontinued. However, I, as a  
2 Board member, want it to be done according to the  
3 code, and in a way that I would feel comfortable  
4 -- and this Board can feel comfortable -- in  
5 granting further licenses to you.

6 I would say this to you today, at this  
7 hearing -- and thank you for coming in and  
8 agreeing to meet with us -- that, if I hear from  
9 our Licensing Division that you've come in and  
10 amended, or are working on amending, the way that  
11 you're doing business through your company, then  
12 I will continue granting the one-days.

13 But, up until this point, I don't  
14 think that I could vote, at this particular  
15 juncture, to continue. And I'm only one Board  
16 member, so I'll just say this -- I would say to  
17 you, when can you come in? Or when could you go  
18 down to our office and work with our licensing  
19 division?

20 MS. MAHMOUD: No problem. Yeah, I  
21 mean, as soon as possible. Once again, we've  
22 been we've -- we always want to do things right  
23 by ABRA, first and foremost, just to be clear.

24 We originally -- just to give you a  
25 little bit of background, we're originally from

1 Virginia, we opened this business, Union Stage,  
2 in D.C. in 2017. We started these offset events  
3 in 2019. So, it's been a learning curve.

4 When we first visited ABRA, this is  
5 how we were told to do it. If that is not  
6 correct or you believe that it's inappropriate, I  
7 am more than happy to come by in person. What's  
8 the best way to schedule that meeting for me to  
9 come by in person, sir?

10 MEMBER SHORT: I think that you need  
11 to give our office a call. And if you could go  
12 to our website, all the information you would  
13 need about getting in contact with our office,  
14 you can get through our website.

15 But, also, I would like to ask you  
16 about some of the questions that were asked you  
17 about security.

18 MS. MAHMOUD: Yes, sir.

19 MEMBER SHORT: Are you aware that the  
20 District government, Metropolitan Police  
21 Department, the Council, if not recently, they're  
22 working on making sure that any people that work  
23 in security, especially where alcohol is served,  
24 get the appropriate training.

25 And I understand -- I heard you talk

1 about sexual violence and a few other things, but  
2 that's a far distance from dealing with crowds of  
3 700-800 people drinking alcohol, in the locations  
4 that we're talking about.

5 There is some specialized training  
6 that your security people could get, and I think  
7 it's free, from MPD. So, I'd like for you to --  
8 just, if you would, contact MPD, and have your  
9 security person's contact MPD, and provide that  
10 information to the Board or to the Licensing. I  
11 think that would help and go a long way, that  
12 you're working with us and we'll continue to work  
13 with you.

14 MS. MAHMOUD: Absolutely. Yeah, I  
15 took note of that, so we'll definitely reach out  
16 to MPD and see what trainings that they offer.  
17 Just because -- yeah, absolutely, we want  
18 everyone trained as well as possible to avoid any  
19 issues, of course.

20 MEMBER SHORT: Okay. Well, we can't  
21 make you do anything today because this is a  
22 fact-finding hearing, but I'm glad that you've  
23 agreed to do these things. And I wish that, once  
24 you get in contact with our licensing folks, they  
25 will let us know at our next Board meeting how to

1 proceed with any further one-day licenses, or  
2 temporary licenses, under your name.

3 MS. MAHMOUD: Okay, understood. So,  
4 the next step, I will go ahead and contact the  
5 licensing office to set up a meeting and then  
6 we'll go from there.

7 MEMBER SHORT: Okay, and also MPD,  
8 correct?

9 MS. MAHMOUD: Yes, sir. That's  
10 correct.

11 MEMBER SHORT: All right, thank you.  
12 That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

13 And thank you very much for your  
14 testimony today.

15 MS. MAHMOUD: Yes, sir. No problem.

16 MEMBER SHORT: That's all I have, Mr.  
17 Chair.

18 CHAIR ANDERSON: Any other questions  
19 -- thank you, Mr. Short. Any other questions by  
20 any other Board members?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIR ANDERSON: All right, Ms.  
23 Mahmoud. Let me clarify the record, you're not  
24 doing anything wrong, okay, as far as the Board  
25 is concerned, okay? I think that you have been

1 requesting a series of one-day licenses and the  
2 Board has been approving these one-day licenses.

3 And so, because we see these One-Day  
4 licenses, we normally will call the person to  
5 find out what their business model is, and to see  
6 whether or not is this the appropriate license  
7 that is being utilized for you.

8 So, I don't want you to leave today to  
9 say that you're doing anything wrong by applying  
10 for one-day licenses. You have not -- I'm not  
11 aware that -- I do not know if we have monitored  
12 any of your events, but at least I'm not aware  
13 currently of any violations, to say that you have  
14 done anything improperly, once we have granted  
15 these one-day temporary licenses.

16 But one of the things that I -- based  
17 on your conversation with Mr. Short -- that I'll  
18 ask that you either, contact Ms. Karen Jackson or  
19 Mr. Sean Gordy, who are in our Licensing  
20 Division.

21 MS. MAHMOUD: Okay.

22 CHAIR ANDERSON: To just talk to them  
23 about your business model, and they can provide  
24 you information whether or not you are able to --  
25 what type of license can be utilized.

1                   You stated that you currently have a  
2 license in D.C.

3                   MS. MAHMOUD: Absolutely.

4                   CHAIR ANDERSON: And if you have a  
5 license in D.C., one of the options -- and I  
6 don't know if this would be appropriate for you -  
7 - is that you could request a one-day substantial  
8 change of your current license. So you could use  
9 your current license to take it to these other  
10 establishments to use. So that's also an option  
11 that -- but I don't know if that -- I'm not sure  
12 if that's appropriate.

13                   So, we will discuss the current  
14 application that you have in front of us and, at  
15 least as the Chair -- and this is, again, I only  
16 have one vote -- I don't necessarily have a  
17 problem. But one of the things that I said  
18 before, I will ask you to once again reach out to  
19 Mr. Sean Gordy, for Mr. Gordy to provide you some  
20 directions on the type of licenses that you can  
21 utilize.

22                   And the one thing that I will say that  
23 this Board will do -- I mean, we will follow up  
24 with Mr. Gordy and see what recommendations that  
25 he has provided to you about moving forward. And

1 I think the events that -- what you have in front  
2 of us, I think you have an event for April 19,  
3 20, and 22, I think those are the ones that are  
4 currently -- those are the only applications that  
5 you have in front of us. Is that correct?

6 MS. MAHMOUD: That are currently  
7 pending, yes, sir.

8 CHAIR ANDERSON: Yes.

9 MS. MAHMOUD: I did receive -- and I  
10 apologize to interrupt. I did receive a copy of  
11 the approved licenses, I believe. So, I have a  
12 license, I have the file in front of me from the  
13 licensing office that shows we do have the  
14 licenses approved already for the 19th, the 20th,  
15 and the 22nd.

16 (Simultaneous speaking.)

17 CHAIR ANDERSON: Well, if we had  
18 approved that, then, if those were approved, I'm  
19 not sure, but as moving forward --

20 MS. MAHMOUD: Yes, sir.

21 CHAIR ANDERSON: For moving forward,  
22 then, for any other requests from you, then we  
23 need to get further information from licensing to  
24 see whether or not this is a proper type of  
25 license you should continue applying for, moving



1 forward. Okay?

2 MS. MAHMOUD: Understood. I'll reach  
3 out to MPD and then I will reach out to Licensing  
4 to speak to Ms. Jackson or Mr. Gordy.

5 CHAIR ANDERSON: Thank you very much,  
6 ma'am.

7 MS. MAHMOUD: You're very welcome.

8 CHAIR ANDERSON: All right, thank you.

9 MS. MAHMOUD: Thanks for your time.

10 CHAIR ANDERSON: You're welcome.

11 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
12 went off the record at 11:55 a.m.)

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In the matter of: Miracle Theater

Before: DC ABRA

Date: 04-05-23

Place: teleconference

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