> DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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> ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL BOARD
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> MEETING

| IN THE MATTER OF: | $:$ |
| :--- | :--- |
|  | $:$ |
| Penn Social, LLC, | $:$ |
| t/a Penn Social | $:$ |
| 801 E Street NW | Fact Finding |
| Retailer CX - ANC 2C | : Hearing |
| License No. 86808 | $:$ |
| (Request to Install | $:$ |
| Dragon Ascent Electronic : |  |
| Game of Skill at |  |
| Premises) |  |
|  | Wednesday |
| October 9, 2019 |  |

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 Donovan W. Anderson, presiding.

## PRESENT:

DONOVAN W. ANDERSON, Chairperson
BOBBY CATO, JR., Member
RAFI ALIYA CROCKETT, Member
JAMES SHORT, JR., Member
ALSO PRESENT:
STEPHEN O'BRIEN, COUNSEL FOR APPLICANT
RYAN WOOD, PACE-O-MATIC
NANCY BENNETT, PACE-O-MATIC
KEVIN ANDERSON, COMPLIANCE OFFICER, PACE-O-MATIC
CHRIS CUMMINGS, PACE-O-MATIC
GEOFFREY DAWSON, APPLICANT
P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
1:34 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Good afternoon. We're back on the record. Our next case is a fact finding hearing on Penn Social, License No. 86808. Would all parties -- welcome, and would all parties please identify yourselves for the record, please?

MR. O'BRIEN: I'll make the introductions, Mr. Chair. I'm Stephen O'Brien, counsel for Penn Social.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I'm sorry. What, again, did you say your role is, Mr. 0'Brien?

MR. O'BRIEN: I'm sorry, sir?
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I didn't hear what you said your position was.

MR. O'BRIEN: Oh, I'm counsel for Penn Social.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Okay. Thanks. All right.

MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you. To my right is Geoffrey Dawson who is the managing member of the licensee, Penn Social. Geoffrey spelled with a G. Sitting at the opposite side is what I
normally would be sitting at and simply because this is not a contested case. But I want interviews of the folks from Pace-O-Matic.

Immediately to left is Ryan Wood is who vice president of Pace-O-Matic. Next to Ryan is Kevin Anderson who's a compliance officer for Pace-O-Matic in Virginia, a former Virginia ABC agent. To Kevin's left is Nancy Bennett and to her left is Chris Cummings. Nancy and Chris are technical personnel with Pace-O-Matic and can answer any questions anyone may have regarding how the games work.

Thank you for seeing us. I do want to make one correction. In my written submissions, I referred to this as Dragon Ascent. It's Dragon's, apostrophe S, Ascent.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Okay.
MR. O'BRIEN: Possessive.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Hold on, Mr. O'Brien, before you start. All right. This matter is a fact finding hearing granted at the request of Penn Social, LLC, Penn Social, ABRA License No. 086808.

Based on the request, the Board is aware that the licensee is requesting permission
to install a new video game terminal in the establishment. This request is unique because the license and the manufacturer have characterized the game as a game of skill that gives out cash prizes and does not violate District of Columbia law regarding gambling. While the Board is not the primary gambling regulator, the request potentially implicates compliance with Title 25 of the D.C. Official Code. Specifically, if the machine qualifies as a gambling device, licensees may be in violation of the District's gambling and alcohol laws.

Furthermore, if these devices are not gambling devices, they still may trigger the substantial change statute which requires Board approval before the installation and use of the device in a licensed establishment.

Based on our review of the materials provided by the license holder, we are aware that Penn Social is requesting that the Board find these devices in compliance with District law and not deem the proposed installation a substantial change requiring public notice and potential protest.

With this being said, let's hear from the license holder regarding the request and any presentation they would like to make. And then the Board will have some questions regarding what was presented. So go ahead now, Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me address the two issues you've identified in reverse. Let's talk about Penn Social first. As we know, the substantial change statute and regulations govern a laundry list, 15 or 16 examples of what might be deemed a substantial change.

But in each case, the overriding issue is whether the change would likely be of concern to residents of the neighborhood. That's really the determining factor. I'd like to say we could put an identical sidewalk café at 14th and $F$ or on the corner of Wisconsin, M, and Georgetown.

The sidewalk café at 14 th and $F$ should not be a substantial change. It's not going to bother any residents because there are no residents. Whereas the one at Georgetown would probably be very much of interest to the community based on the fear of noise and things like that.

But Penn Social is at 8th and E. And we chose Penn Social as a vehicle to present this game to the Board because it already has -- we counted about 20 entertainment -- mechanical or electronic entertainment devices. So putting another one in, adding one, or even substituting this game for an existing one, it's not going to qualify as a substantial change we submit under Section 762(14) which talks about mechanical and electronic games.

So that's the reason that we chose Penn Social. We submit that given its location and the nature of the existing business which is not controversial that it should not be deemed a substantial change. Having said that, subject to any questions, $I$ would now like to talk about the game.

## CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I think one of

 the things you could talk about is that -- I've never been to Penn Social so I'm not familiar. So maybe you can tell us. You said that they have 20 entertainment devices at this establishment. So what -- can you just tell me what are these 20 entertainment devices that they have? And then maybe you can tell me, is there adifference between what they have currently and what's being proposed. Because I don't know what these devices that they have there.

MR. O'BRIEN: Mr. Dawson can describe them.

MR. DAWSON: So we're an entertainment venue, and we rotate games in and out, pinball, video games. We try to get the most current, interesting game to keep customers there. I mean, it's hard to get people to come through the door. Once they're in there, you want to give them something that's really special and worthwhile.

So this game we think is cutting edge, the newest, coolest thing on the block. And we feel it would really help us maintain our business and improve the amount of time that people will stay there.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And I'm not that archaic, but -- and I'm being very -- I've never been there. And so the games that are there, tell me about how is it that -- is there money involved in the sense of the games that are currently there?

MR. DAWSON: Only that people pay to
play. We have a lot of private parties. We do corporate events. We do all sorts of events for law firms and business groups downtown. And so they'll come and sort of buy out the room. And then there are people who will come and play the games.

Or on a night, say, it is Sunday when we have football games and Saturday, football games, we have a lot of people there. In between the games, they play video games. They sort of branch off. It's an additional source of revenue for us that really helps us stay in an extraordinarily high rent district. And in this day when everything is costing more, having every single piece of competitive edge is really important.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: The games that are there, you have to pay money to --

MR. DAWSON: Yes, and that's a --
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: -- utilize
these games?
MR. DAWSON: Yes, and that's a revenue source for us. And the second part of that is that people stay longer.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And also with
the current games that are there, the -- I guess the person who plays the game, the satisfaction they get in a sense of return is that, okay, 1 beat the machine. Or you get satisfaction that you're able to score.

MR. DAWSON: I do.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I'm asking you. So you get satisfaction that --

MR. DAWSON: Yes.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: -- you're able to beat the score or whoever, if you're --

MR. DAWSON: Yes.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: -- playing with someone, that's the person's satisfaction. So -MR. DAWSON: And a lot --

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: -- there's no monetary exchange at least that the person doesn't get anything back from that machine?

MR. DAWSON: Right. Now a lot of times, it's a competition too. There are multiple players on a given device. And so they compete against each other. They can also compete on the internet with other bars at other places, so --

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I'm coming back
to you. We're just talking about --
MR. DAWSON: I'm just painting a picture.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And I'm asking because I'm not familiar. So do we have any other questions on that specific -- just on currently the type of machines they have there? Yes, Mr. Short.

MEMBER SHORT: Well, I'm worried about the -- well, concerned. What is the age group now that you have coming in and out of Penn Social?

MR. DAWSON: Twenty-one and older.
MEMBER SHORT: They have to be 21 to come in?

MR. DAWSON: Yeah.
MEMBER SHORT: Okay. Thank you. That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Any other questions? Okay. Go ahead.

MR. O'BRIEN: The questions the chair asked really has set up, though, the distinction between this game we're introducing and all the games that exist. This game, one plays for money and can and almost always will get money back.

That's the different between what is already there and what we are introducing to you today.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So why -- and I -- and the reason I'm asking you because you said it's not a substantial change. So why would you not -- and I've not made a decision. But why would you not consider that a substantial change if you've already -- there's a major distinction in the sense that this is a person on a game in the establishment that's going to give you back your payback. So why would not say that's a substantial change?

MR. O'BRIEN: Because it's not likely to be of concern to residents of the neighborhood, residents or businesses in the neighborhood, which is the test for whether something is a substantial change or not.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I -- okay. I mean, and I know -- it's just I would think -and I've not made a decision. So -- and I mean this is something very novel for us. So it's going to take a lot of thinking.

But I would've thought that if you're now introducing a machine that you can get -that's going to pay you a premium to play that
this would be of concern to the community, that the people -- because maybe more people would want to come because I'm no longer playing a competition against either myself or a team. I'm actually getting money.

So I would've thought that the community would want to want to be aware of this. But that's just me thinking aloud.

MR. O'BRIEN: Well, I don't think it makes a difference or should make a difference to the community whether one plays an electronic game for the satisfaction of beating the game or for getting a possible return on their play.

When we talk about the issues about whether the likely concern to the community, the concern in my experience is always disruption to the neighborhood resulting from a change in format. This is not a change in format $I$ submit.

Typically, if we, for instance, asked for a rooftop summer garden. Well, there's a potential there that noise from the rooftop could bother people residing a block away. That's a substantial change.

But merely whether one gets, again, the satisfaction from beating the game or gets
some, all, or in some cases, more than the money that they put into the game back does not impact the neighborhood tranquility or the quality of life anywhere.

So I would submit that it should not be a substantial change. The fact that something is enumerated on that list in Section 762, it was, like, 15, I think, and number 14. Subsection 14 is the introduction of electronic games. That doesn't mean that everything on that list is, ipso facto, a substantial change. It's examples of what might be deemed a substantial change depending on the context.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Okay. Go ahead.

MR. O'BRIEN: Pace-0-Matic is
represented by these four visitors, has been specifically designed to comply. I'm sorry. Pace-0-Matic designs its games of skill to comply with local laws that prohibit gambling. A knee jerk reaction sometimes is to simply say, well, if you can play the game and win money, it's gambling. But that's not the case. The law is very clear on that we submit.

Gambling involves chance. The game
that we're introducing today is what we call pure overriding skill. It's a practical matter. It's 100 percent skill gam. And that's what Pace-0Matic has spent years and years developing.

Indeed Pace-0-Matic has been in business for 30 years, and it's a leader in the industry -- in the electronic game industry. But the salient point here is integrity.

We could have -- in a vacuum, we could simply put this game into Penn Social and other licensees without asking permission from anyone because it is not gambling which, of course, is prohibited. But Pace-O-Matic insists on having the regulatory authorities in each jurisdiction it comes into review and either consent or approve to the installation of the game. We will not install a game without running it by the regulators first.

Pace-0-Matic in the jurisdictions in which it operates employs retired law enforcement personnel to act as compliance agents on the street making sure that the licensees that present the games are doing it correctly, identifying illegal games that sometimes follow the legal ones into a jurisdiction.

Kevin Anderson too to my left is a former Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Board agent, and he's director of compliance in Virginia for Pace-O-Matic. And he has two fulltime deputies, $I$ believe. A total of three people in Virginia.

In Virginia, there's a game installed by Pace-0-Matic in 2,500 different places in the state of Virginia, a total of 62 or 63,000 games. Now the games in Virginia -- and you may have heard something about Pennsylvania also. The games in Virginia and Pennsylvania have been rules to be predominately games of skill, even though there's an element of chance. The game we're introducing to you today is again pure overriding skill or, as a practical matter, 100 percent skill.

The Pace-O-Matic will limit the number of games installed in any one venue meaning in any one licensee to three games. The game comes in two-person configuration which is a console that stands up and you can pull a stool up and play at the console. There's a four-game version in development. But an eight-game version is what we're introducing to you today.

This eight-game version, essentially the exact same version, is operating now in Texas, in -- help me, Ryan. Texas?

MR. WOOD: Florida.
MR. O'BRIEN: In Florida --
MR. WOOD: Nebraska.
MR. O'BRIEN: -- and Nebraska, installed and operating this very game, the 100 percent skill game. And we expect to introduce it in a couple weeks. We've already got the approval in Kansas and we have the approval -it's not quite installed yet -- in Honolulu.

Now in the game, what happens is there are -- and I may have underestimated the number. There are seven -- in this version, seven levels. By level, we do not mean to suggest degrees of difficulty. A better way to put it is seven scenarios that play across the table. They do not vary. It's repeated. One, a skilled player and one with enough time on their hands, and there are some, can memorize one or more of the scenarios as they go by and win the game very single time, meaning get more money back than they put into it.

Someone who is so motivated could sit and watch
the game for weeks, whatever, ignore six of the seven scenarios, just memorize that one.

And I liken it to probably all of us knows someone who's seen the same movie so many times that they can recite every single line in that movie start to finish. That person can also beat Dragon's Ascent every single time.

And what makes it a game of skill as opposed to a game of chance is that it is void of -- meaning there are no random number generators. What's a random number generator? It's what introduces the element of chance. I've heard -I'm not a card player myself. But I've heard it said that poker is a game of skill.

I could be the world's most skilled poker player and Geoff here could be the world's -- had never played poker before. But Geoff could beat me on the next hand because of the random number generator which is the cards that are dealt. That's what makes poker, for instance, a game of chance. Even with skill involved, it still all depends on chance.

There's also no compensating
algorithms. A compensating algorithm is something that would be, I think, embedded in
most slot machines. They change the chance of winning based on who's just won. I liken it to who's just won or who's just lost. It can accelerate a payoff. I can postpone a payoff.

I liken it to shooting a basketball, having them move the hoop while the ball is still in the air. That's what a compensating algorithm is. I'm getting approving nods from the table. Thank you. I want to make sure I got that right. So there's no compensating algorithms. All elements of chance are eliminated. If you're skilled, if you spend the time, you win every single time. And it's been so certified by national testing laboratories and legal analysis. And I invite your attention to the attachments to my letter of September 6 to the Board which have those reprints there.

I'd like now to invite your attention to a brief video.
(Video played.)
(Video ends.)
MR. O'BRIEN: I'd like to point out that this, may have been clear, was a focus group. These were not actors that were paid to do this. It was a focus group or focus groups,
plural -- the composition we can see was different -- who had not seen this game before seeing it here on screen.

The way it works, I should point out is that each player station has a slot into which one can insert money and choose how much they want to play. At any time, a player can just cancel out and receive back what they haven't used. And the way it works is when a player does cash out, a ticket comes out from where the money went in for a certain amount of money which the play then goes to the bar and redeems for cash. Our statistics show that over 90 percent -- I'm going to say 95 percent of money played into the game is returned in winnings to the players. Even the most unsophisticated player, somebody like me, for instance, is going to get something in the neighborhood of 60 percent back.

This is designed to make people want to continue to play. It's not designed to take money off the table. And I said 95 percent of what is played is returned in winnings and the manufacturer of the bar and the distributor, they simply share that five percent.

Geoff Dawson alluded to getting people into the seats and keeping them in the seats. There's a lot of competition out there for the entertainment dollars. We've got National Harbor right across the river if somebody is looking for some action. And this really is the wave of what's coming as far as entertainment in bars. Pace-0-Matic is way ahead of the industry in that it's the only one that truly has 100 percent skill games. But it'll keep people in their seats.

Anecdotally, I think Kevin told me that venues in which they're installed in Virginia are reporting 20 percent greater sales of food and beverage before and after installation of the game. Now that's not a scientific study, but it's been reported by quite a few, if I understand Kevin correctly, that that's what they're seeing revenue.

Kevin and Nancy -- I'm sorry, not
Kevin. Chris and Nancy can answer any technical questions about how it works. As I said, Kevin can discuss how the integrity of the game is maintained and we can demonstrate that a little bit.

I should tell you -- as I said, Kevin is one of -- is the chief of three enforcement agents in Virginia. We've already interviewed and are prepared to hire -- and I think here it's retired deputy chief George Kucik of MPD and Sergeant -- raise your hand, please -- and Sergeant Delroy Burton who's just recently retired from MPD to be compliance people here on the street. They're not on the payroll yet because we don't have the games installed yet. But they've been through the whole process with us and they're prepared to go.

At that point, $I$ don't have a great deal much to say unless the Board has questions. But I'd like the Board to come down off the dais and take a look.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: You want us to come down off our high horse --
(Laughter.)
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: -- to go look? I think if I stand up, I'll be able to see when I come out, so --

MR. O'BRIEN: Well, we have it set up so you can see how -- come down and play with them, see how it works.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Well, I guess, yeah, we can. Sure.
(Pause.)
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I had a different impression of what the machine would have been. So to try to decide if it's what it is, it's a different twist. So it does present, at least in the District, something very unique to make a decision that whether or not it's -- is it clearly a game of skill or a game of chance?

And as I said, I'm not into stuff like that. So that's why I didn't -- that's just not me. But I don't -- other folks, if they enjoy it, I support it. But that's not me. That's just my personal --

I guess what you raised earlier, you're saying that approximately 95 percent of folks, there's a 95 percent recovery. So with three machines in an establishment with five percent that's split three ways, I don't understand how is it that it's profitable. Because if that's clear because you're splitting five percent as you say between three parties.

MR. O'BRIEN: Volume.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But typically,
how -- in the other jurisdictions, typically, how long does a person sit at this machine?

MR. WOOD: I can't tell you the length of time. It varies a little bit. But I will say it's worse than that because it's not set at 95 percent. So depending on who's sitting around the table, there might not be any money for the guys that paid 15,000 dollars for the machine.

On average, he's right. The volume and impatient players that don't want to execute perfect skill over time that you are dealing with a variance of between 80 all the way up to 110 percent.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I know that you mentioned that you have the -- it's in Virginia. And so there's significant --

MR. WOOD: This game is not currently in Virginia.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Where is this game? Is this game anywhere else in the country? MR. WOOD: Sure. We have three test locations, Texas, Florida, and Nebraska, that we picked. And they are -- I mean, how many, 10, 15 machines?

MS. BENNETT: Fifteen.

MR. O'BRIEN: And Kansas and Honolulu

MR. WOOD: Don't have games in them in yet, but --

MR. O'BRIEN: Don't yet but you have the approval. So it's --

MR. WOOD: Correct.
MR. O'BRIEN: -- just a question of getting the games there and plugging them in.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: We're talking about the same game, this specific game?

MR. O'BRIEN: This pure overriding skill game with 100 percent skill. The ones in Virginia have some elements of chance but are approved in Virginia because they are predominantly skill. But this game takes it to the next level.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And so you're saying this specific game will be in -- let me see. Again, what states, I'm sorry, that specific will be in?

MR. O'BRIEN: Already in Texas --
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Texas, Florida, and Nebraska?

MR. O'BRIEN: Nebraska and arriving --
it appeared, $I$ believe, in weeks, if I'm correct.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And in Kansas and --

MR. WOOD: Kansas and Honolulu.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: -- and Hawaii? Now -- and I'm not sure. I might be far afield. Is gambling legal in Texas, Florida, and Nebraska?

MR. WOOD: No.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: No? And the same with Kansas and Hawaii?

MR. WOOD: This machine would not play nor earn in sitting beside a slot machine or in a casino environment. It's just those are all games of chance and people would just be pushing the play button. And those aren't our players.

And I think it's important to mention that we do have a successful project in Virginia. And you asked why D.C. A lot of our operators and our customers have accounts here, have bars and establishments. And when they came to us, they wanted to put their Virginia games here.

We've chosen this product because we feel like it's a better fit for the District of Columbia and it's more driven towards
millennials. And we're excited about the project, and it's very new for us.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Now in Texas, Florida, and -- and you'd get a cash prize from this machine. Is that correct? And that's the same for Texas, Florida, and Nebraska?

MR. WOOD: Yes.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And potential, Kansas and Hawaii, that they're potential to get a cash prize from this game? Okay. Are there -are you aware of any similar games that's currently on the market?

MR. WOOD: Mm-hmm.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: What games and where are they available?

MR. WOOD: Similar style is the way they play. There's a group out of China and they make what we call fish games or fish tables. And instead of dragons, you see fish swimming around the sea. Those games are 100 percent illegal, and they have both random number generators and compensating algorithms.

They have been confiscated in many jurisdictions. And I know the manufacturer won't even go to fight for them because he knows that
what they will find. So they just sell the machine into jurisdictions and don't support it and don't make sure -- and definitely do not make sure it's legal.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Now currently the prizes that would be offered would be cash. That's all --

MR. WOOD: Yes.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: -- that would be offered from the machine? Do you have any statistics or are you aware -- since these machines are operating in Texas, Florida, and Nebraska, are the operators -- are they -- is there a money making proposition, I mean, breaking even? Or what's going on with these in these other states where this machine is operating?

MR. CUMMINGS: They're earning.
They're not earning through the roof. There's a lot of volume going through the machines and not a lot of profit. It's really driven as an entertainment device, so it does have to make a whole lot of money. It's geared more towards entertainment.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Now this is for
you, Mr. O'Brien. How confident are you that your device comply with the Federal Johnson Act and other federal laws regarding gambling?

MR. O'BRIEN: And we do have District of Columbia statute and regulation also governing, prohibiting games of chance. I know the chair referred to the D.C. Code. But there's also a DCMR provision.

I am very comfortable because the test is, is it substantially a game of skill? The test under the cases of the Johnson Act, is it substantially a game of skill or predominately a game of skill? But this is a whole new level above. This is purely skill, pure overriding skill.

So I am very confident that it does not run afoul of District's gambling laws or the Johnson Act.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: No, I know that -- in Penn Social, though, if you're -- is it only -- can someone younger than 18 go to Penn Social?

MR. DAWSON: We do not let people come in, in our day-to-day business under the age of 21.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I'm sorry, yeah, 21, yeah.

MR. DAWSON: Because we serve a lot of alcohol, and it's just not worth the danger of serving an underage person. If we have a party and people are going to bring people underage in, we cover up bars if we're not using them. We would cover up a game like this. We don't do that very often because it's just not our core business.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So you're basically -- I guess the reason why you're saying that this machine is only available 21 or older is because the -- at least at Penn Social, it's only 21 or older for the most part who are allowed in?

MR. DAWSON: We would treat this like serving a drink which is a very important part of what we do. And we treat that privilege very careful and we protect it. We would do the same with this because there's no reason for us to endanger our license or our good standing for one small piece of the larger business.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: This machine is not in -- as you say, it's not in operation in

Virginia. Is that correct?
MR. O'BRIEN: That's correct.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.
This machine -- all right. Now what control, if any, of the device does the retailer have? So the machines is at Penn Social. So what control, if any, does this particular retailer have over the machine?

MR. CUMMINGS: They can unplug it.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But that's -basically that's to unplug the machine? Everything else is operated by a central by the distributor?

MR. O'BRIEN: The distributor and our compliance team on the street.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Now there's a technical issue. There's a follow up. So all right. I believe I should get a different payout or my money gets lost in the machine. So how is that handled?

MR. WOOD: Service call to the local D.C. distributor here would be out there as soon as he received the call.

MR. O'BRIEN: Do we experience that at all?

MR. WOOD: Sure.
MR. CUMMINGS: I mean, every once in a while it does happen. But these are very reliable peripherals that we chose.

MR. DAWSON: And in real time if a customer has an issue, if it's a small issue, we always favor the customer. And then we would take it up with our distributor and we would say, on this day, we had an issue. We get 20 bucks back or whatever. Everything is good. They're a happy and returning customer. That's what we want.

We have a longstanding relationship with our distributor that $I$ don't see changing. It's a very good relationship and there's a lot of trust and a lot of goodwill there in terms of servicing machines, in terms of providing opportunities for new machines. It's great for us and great for business.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Now you stated that you made a presentation to the Office of Attorney General. Is there any other District agency outside of ABRA that you've made presentations to regarding the operation of this machine?

MR. O'BRIEN: No, we will discuss this with the U.S. Attorney's Office which is the criminal prosecutor to make sure that they don't have any issues with it. But because we intend to put this in licensees seemed to us and still seems to us that in the first instance we should make sure that the Board doesn't have any issue.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Any other Board members have any questions that are as a result of the conversation that we had? Mr. O'Brien, do you want to make any final statements to wrap up?

MR. O'BRIEN: I don't think that's necessary, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So what is it again you're asking the Board to do?

MR. O'BRIEN: We're asking the Board to approve the installation of this game at Penn Social. Penn Social is the vehicle which we've used to put it before the Board. Obviously, for the Board to approve the installation of this at Penn Social, the Board has to at a minimum say that it doesn't have a problem with the game, that the game is not offensive to the Board. And not only subjectively offensive. I mean, that the Board doesn't believe it's gambling.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Well, I stated before, we're not the body that can make that determination whether or not this is a game of -you've told us that it's a game of skill rather than a game of chance. And that's not our call, per se, for us to make that determination whether or not we agree with your interpretation of the statute.

And the easier question for me that's easier to make is whether or not that's a substantial change. And to me, that's an easier question. I'm not saying that we're making that decision now. But that's elementary. I mean, the reason that people can determine whether can agree or disagree that's a substantial change. But is this truly a game of skill versus a game of chance? That's --

MR. O'BRIEN: I know the Virginia ABC Board did make that call.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I was told the Virginia ABC Board did make that call. And one of the reasons why I didn't specifically ask you about Virginia because you have told me that this machine is not in operation in Virginia.

Because if you had told me this -- I
had some questions to ask you about because it's my understanding that in Charlottesville, I think, that they have asked that all of the machines be removed. But since it's a different machine, that's why I didn't really ask you about it.

MR. O'BRIEN: Well, I've got two things I'd like to say then, Mr. Chair. Number one, this is a different machine only in that it is 100 percent skill instead of predominantly skill. So if the game in Virginia is okay in Virginia, this clearly would be okay in Virginia.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But it's also my understanding too that either the ABC Board in Virginia is now in the hot seat because lottery or some other entity is complaining about the impact that this game has had.

So therefore for us making this decision, if we need to take -- it's going to take some analysis to make sure that whatever decision that this Board makes that this Board is comfortable in moving forward. Because as you know, if the Board decides that's a game of skill, then every other establishment will come and apply for one.

And so therefore although you're saying that it's only going to be three per establishment, then I'm not quite sure how many people would apply for it. But then before you realize, we could have a couple hundred of these machines in the District.

So this is a first. So whatever decision is being made --

MR. O'BRIEN: I'm not suggesting, Mr.
Chair, that what the Board decides forecloses any other agency of D.C. from checking itself or asserting its position. But the flip side of this is let us say that there was a clearly illegal game of chance operating in some part here in D.C., a fishing game. If the Board found out about that, $I$ believe the Board would take enforcement action --

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Only if it's an

MR. O'BRIEN: -- on the premises.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Only if it's an ABC establishment, yes, of course.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Yes, only an ABC establishment, correct. But I'm saying the flip side of that is the Board in this case is
presented with what we submit is 100 percent pure skill game. And thus the Board passing judgment in its own view as to whether this offends any Board statutes or regulations is all we're asking for.

Again, each agency has its own rules and tests and things like that. And we chose to come to the Board early because all our prospective venues are licensees.

MEMBER SHORT: How many are there?
MR. O'BRIEN: Prospective venues?
MEMBER SHORT: Yes.
MR. O'BRIEN: I can speculate. The issue in a lot of places is simply space. How many places could take up the space to put an eight-player game in? I would say hundreds, hundreds of locations. Some of them might only be able to accommodate a two-person console. You saw that on the video, two people sitting on stools there. But yes, hundreds.

Certainly, it's not the intention to put this in Penn Social and then leave town. The intention is to market in D.C. Again, Penn Social, for the reason that we believe, it is not even arguably a substantial change, was selected
as a stalking horse, if you will.
And that and the fact that Mr. Dawson expressed, a business interest in getting something like this in, in order to get those customers in the door, keep them in their seats longer, generate greater sales of food and beverage and consequently greater sales tax revenues.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr.
O'Brien. I do understand why you chose Penn Social because based on the explanation that you provided today of what they offer, it would appear that it fits into what they're doing. But I've not made a decision. The Board will take that under advisement.

And one other thing that I'll just say. I want to thank you today for your presentation. One of the -- one thing that I really enjoy when I come here on Wednesdays is that it's a fascinating area, fascinating practice.

And it appears that we in D.C. are on the cutting edge in making type of decisions that -- and I enjoy the opportunity. And it's a challenge and I look forward to continuing this.

And so I want to thank you for your presentation today. And although I'm not a machine player, per se, but $I$ was actually fascinated by the process. So thank you. And the Board will take this matter under advisement.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you very much.
MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you.
CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. Have a good day. All right.

So the Board is therefore in recess until our 3:30 hearing. Thank you.
(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 2:50 p.m.)

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Neal R. Gross and Co., Inc.

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In the matter of: Penn Social

Before: DCABRA

Date: 10-09-19

Place: Washington, DC
was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

> Neae $\operatorname{lors} \rho$ ------------------Court Reporter

