COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE INSIGHT & NEWS

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New Rules for Worcester On-Premises Liquor Licensees

BY CESIRA NEWCOMB • MARCH 27, 2019

On November 1, 2018, the City of Worcester License Commission amended the rules and regulations for establishments that serve alcoholic beverages to be consumed on-premises. The establishments affected by these new rules and regulations include restaurants, bars, nightclubs, hotels, breweries and other businesses that hold pouring licenses in the City of Worcester. The new rules and regulations are meant to improve security and to prevent service to underage patrons.

One of the most significant additions to the rules and regulations is the "Identification Plan" requirement for all licensed establishments (including restaurants) that allow individuals under the age of twenty-one to enter the establishment after midnight. Under the new rule, all such licensed establishments must prepare and submit a security plan to the City of Worcester License Commission that describes how underage individuals will be identified and prevented from consuming alcoholic beverages. Licensed establishments are also required to have sufficient security personnel to enforce the particular identification plan. Licensed establishments that do not have the ability to monitor the activities of underage patrons may voluntarily refuse to admit underage patrons after midnight.

Since the enactment in November 2018, the City of Worcester Police Department Alcohol Enforcement Unit has been meeting and educating licensees about the new rules and regulations and providing tips on how to ensure compliance. The City of Worcester Police Department Alcohol Enforcement Unit now appears ready to begin enforcing these new rules and regulations, having issued a notice on January 7, 2019 indicating that it will be stepping up efforts to stop the sale of alcoholic beverages to underage patrons.

Licensees in the City of Worcester should review the new rules and regulations and make any necessary filings with the City of Worcester License Commission to ensure compliance. Licensees should also take the time to confirm that their license reflects the current operations of the business (including the named Manager of Record for the licensed establishment, operating hours and ownership structure). Failure to obtain approvals for changes to a license can result in the issuance of violations, which could lead to disciplinary hearings and the potential suspension or revocation of the license.

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The new rules and regulations can be accessed through the City of Worcester License Commission's webpage or here.

Licensees that have questions regarding the new rules and regulations are invited to contact the attorneys at Bowditch & Dewey, LLP.

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