

IN THE MATTER OF THE	*	BEFORE THE ALCOHOLIC
APPLICATION OF ERIC ROBERT	*	BEVERAGE HEARING BOARD
STEIN, CHIRAG PATEL,	*	OF
BIRAJUKUMAR V. PATEL, AND	*	HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND
PREM PATEL ON BEHALF OF	*	
DECANTER WINES, INC. T/A	*	
DECANTER FINE WINES FOR	*	CASE NO. 19-51
A TRANSFER OF A CLASS A-1,	*	
BEER, WINE, & LIQUOR 7-DAY	*	
OFF-SALE LICENSE	*	

DECISION AND ORDER

The Board of License Commissioners for Howard County, Maryland (the “Liquor Board”), pursuant to Rule 1.02(A) of the Liquor Board Rules and Regulations, has delegated the authority to hear and decide cases to the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board for Howard County, Maryland (the “Hearing Board”).

On December 10, 2019, the Hearing Board heard the application of Eric Robert Stein, Chirag Patel, Birajukumar V. Patel, and Prem Patel (the “Applicants”), on behalf of Decantur Wines, Inc., t/a Decanter Fine Wines (“Decanter”) for a transfer of a Class A, Beer, Wine, & Liquor 7-day off-sale license and tasting license from Mary Margaret Stein on behalf of Steinwines, LLC, t/a Decanter Fine Wine for a 2,875 square foot package goods store located at 6420 Freetown Road, #170, Columbia, MD 21045.

The hearing was properly advertised and the property posted pursuant to the Alcoholic Beverages Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The Applicants were represented by Katherine Taylor, Esquire. There were no protestants who appeared in opposition to the application.

All the documents on file were incorporated into the record by reference.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

Eric Stein, former owner, 10% owner and proposed resident agent was sworn and testified before the Board.

Mr. Stein testified that he has owned Decanter Fine Wines for over 21 years and has been in the alcoholic beverage industry since he graduated from college. He testified that he has lived in Howard County since 1973 and is a registered voter.

Mr. Stein testified that in 1998 he received a DUI after leaving the store after working alone for many hours. He stated that it was a terrible event in his life and nothing like it has happened since. In addition, Mr. Stein testified that there was one violation at Decanter which involved an of age employee giving alcohol to an underage employee offsite.

Mr. Stein testified as to his role as the resident agent once the transfer takes place. He testified that the new owners would like to keep the business running as it was under Mr. Stein. He stated that this would include all employees being TAMS certified and Mr. Stein will be working at the store for the next two years or so to make sure that all operations are handled appropriately. He testified that Chirag Patel will serve as the manager and has been working with Mr. Stein for the last few weeks to learn the business practices and that most of the current employees plan to stay on with the new owners.

Mr. Stein testified that the current ID policy is to ask for identification for anyone who looks under 27. He stated that on each register is the date that you can buy alcohol and tobacco.

He stated that the new owners have been vetted and approved by KIMCO, the company that owns and has plans to redesign the Hickory Ridge Village Center.

Mr. Chirag Patel, 40 % owner, intended manager and license applicant, was sworn and testified as follows:

Mr. Patel testified as to his past work history which includes working as a banker in India, working in the casino industry in Atlantic City. He has since moved to Howard County and bought Decanter Fine Wines with his brother-in-law, Birajukumar Patel and Prem Patel.

Mr. Patel testified that he has been working at Decanter with Mr. Stein for about six weeks and will be the full-time manager once the transfer takes place.

He testified that he is familiar with the Board's Rules and Regulations, is TAMS certified and will purchase an ID scanner for the business. Mr. Patel stated that the hours of operation will be Monday through Thursday, 10:00am to 9:00pm; Fridays and Saturdays, 10:00am to 10:00pm and Sundays 11:00am to 7:00pm.

Mr. Birajukumar V. Patel, 25% owner, and Prem Patel, 25% owner, were also present at the hearing.

Pursuant to Rule 6.13 of the Liquor Board Rules and Regulations, the Applicants waived their right to request the Liquor Board to hear the case.

Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Hearing Board finds that Eric Robert Stein, Chirag Patel, Birajukumar V.

Patel, and Prem Patel, on behalf of Decantur Wines, Inc., t/a Decanter Fine Wines have applied for a transfer of a Class A, Beer, Wine, & Liquor 7-day off-sale license and tasting license from Mary Margaret Stein on behalf of Steinwines, LLC, t/a Decanter Fine Wine for a 2,875 square foot package goods store located at 6420 Freetown Road, #170, Columbia, MD 21045.

2. The Hearing Board finds that the Applicants are fit and proper persons to hold an alcoholic beverage license.

3. The Hearing Board finds that Eric Stein has been a Howard County resident for more than two years and is a registered voter.

4. The Hearing Board finds that the granting of the application is necessary for the accommodation of the public.

5. The Hearing Board finds that the granting of the application will not unduly disturb the peace and safety of the residents of the neighborhood.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Hearing Board concludes that Eric Robert Stein, Chirag Patel, Birajukumar V. Patel, and Prem Patel, on behalf of Decantur Wines, Inc., t/a Decanter Fine Wines have applied for a transfer of a Class A, Beer, Wine, & Liquor 7-day off-sale license and tasting license from Mary Margaret Stein on behalf of Steinwines, LLC, t/a Decanter Fine Wine for a 2,875 square foot package goods store located at 6420 Freetown Road, #170, Columbia, MD 21045.

2. The Hearing Board concludes that the Applicants are fit and proper persons to hold an alcoholic beverage license.

3. The Hearing Board concludes that Eric Stein meets the requirements of Rules 1.10(S), 1.10(T), and 2.06 of the Liquor Board Rules and Regulations concerning resident agent qualifications.

4. The Hearing Board concludes that the granting of the application is necessary for the accommodation of the public.

5. The Hearing Board concludes that the granting of the application would not unduly disturb the peace and safety of the neighborhood.

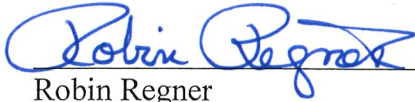
ORDER

For the foregoing reasons, it is this 31ST day of December, 2019, by the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board of Howard County **ORDERED** that the application of Eric Robert Stein, Chirag Patel, Birajukumar V. Patel and Prem Patel, on behalf of Decantur Wines, Inc., t/a Decanter Fine Wines for a transfer of a Class A, Beer, Wine, & Liquor 7-day off-sale license and tasting license from Mary Margaret Stein on behalf of Steinwines, LLC, t/a Decanter Fine Wine for a 2,875 square foot package goods store located at 6420 Freetown Road, #170, Columbia, MD 21045, be and the same is hereby **GRANTED**, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) That the Applicants comply with all State and County Rules and Regulations; and
- (b) That the Applicants satisfy any requirements necessary to obtain the license by March 20, 2020, unless that deadline is extended by the Board upon good cause shown; and
- (c) Failure to comply with these conditions shall render this Proposed Decision and Order null and void.

ATTEST:

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE HEARING
BOARD OF HOWARD COUNTY,
MARYLAND



Robin Regner
Board Administrator



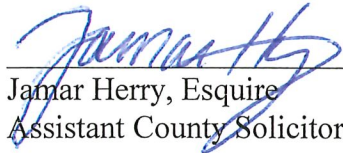
Gene Ryan, Chairperson



Mary Bird, Vice Chairperson

REVIEWED BY HOWARD COUNTY
OFFICE OF LAW
GARY W. KUC
COUNTY SOLICITOR

Absent AT TIME OF SIGNING
Harry Evans, Member



Jamar Herry, Esquire
Assistant County Solicitor



Heather Gaetano, Member



Charley C. Sung, Member