

IN THE MATTER OF THE	*	BEFORE THE ALCOHOLIC
APPLICATION OF KEHBUMA	*	
LANGMIA AND GABRIEL	*	BEVERAGE HEARING BOARD
NJINIMBOT ON BEHALF OF	*	
BUENA VISTA CONFERENCE	*	FOR
CENTER, LLC T/A BUENA VISTA	*	
BALLROOM FOR A NEW CLASS D	*	HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND
BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR	*	
7-DAY ON-SALE LICENSE	*	Case No. 22-03
	*	

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 January 11, 2022, the Hearing Board heard the application of Kehbuma Langmia and Gabriel Njinimbot (the “Applicants”) on behalf of Buena Vista Conference Center, LLC t/a Buena Vista Ballroom (“Buena Vista”) for a New Class D, Beer, Wine and Liquor, 7-day on-sale license for a 5,000 sq. ft. Conference Center with a 2,000 sq. foot outdoor area located at 8844 Washington Blvd., Suite E, Jessup, MD 20794.

The hearing was properly advertised, and the property posted pursuant to the Alcoholic Beverages Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The Applicants were not represented by counsel.

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

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

Gabriel Njinimbot, 90% interest holder and proposed licensee, was sworn in and

testified before the Board.

Mr. Njinimbot stated he wanted to clarify the police report referencing full disclosure of his relationship with Buena Vista. Mr. Njinimbot stated he was a lease holder of the space since 2008 for a different entity. Mr. Njinimbot stated from 2008 to 2014 the space was a garage and a used tire shop and then he went to Department of Planning and Zoning and had an occupancy change of use before starting Buena Vista Ballroom. Mr. Njinimbot stated he wanted to clarify that he was self employed as a consultant for Baltimore City government for 18 years and when he separated from the company in 2019, he applied for unemployment. Mr. Njinimbot stated he is no longer receiving unemployment benefits and is now an employee of Buena Vista.

Mr. Njinimbot testified about the police report and stated that over the past 7 years he has had 23 calls for police service but that he initiated the calls because he wanted to make sure there was peace and order at events. Mr. Njinimbot stated there were 7 area checks that he requested from the police. Mr. Njinimbot stated there were 6 noise complaints since 2015 because of patrons straying into the Quality Inn parking lot next door. Mr. Njinimbot stated he had no-parking signs installed at the hotel parking lot, he employed security to patrol the parking lot, and he had night-duty employees report complaints to him. Mr. Njinimbot stated there were 2 assaults at a sweet sixteen party and a fight was initiated from outside the venue. Mr. Njinimbot stated there were 2 shooting events that he was not aware of and that sometimes the calls to the police were bogus. Mr. Njinimbot stated that the vehicles that were damaged were not at his location. Mr. Njinimbot stated there was a violation of an Executive Order, but it wasn't Buena Vista's violation; it was a patron's violation for arriving with 500 people when his business was supposed to be operating at

50% capacity. Mr. Njinimbot said there was 1 liquor license violation but there haven't been any violations in 2 years.

Mr. Njinimbot stated he wanted to amend the application to remove the 2,000 square foot space that was included in the outdoor portion but was not able to submit a revised application because DPZ didn't mention there was an outside development plan for the property, and he learned yesterday that a redline would need to be recreated.

Mr. Njinimbot stated he is applying for the liquor license because there is an increased number of non-profit organizations that want to sell liquor. Mr. Njinimbot stated that over the past 2 years he has applied for over 19 one-day temporary licenses and having a permanent liquor license would reduce the processing time needed for temporary licenses. Mr. Njinimbot stated all the bartenders would be certified and will ensure they check the IDs of anyone requesting liquor. Mr. Njinimbot stated he has read the Liquor Board Rules and Regulations of Howard County and is Alcohol Awareness Certified. Mr. Njinimbot stated he understands he is responsible for any violations and encourages the inspectors to come in for inspections when needed.

Mr. Njinimbot stated they will operate 95% of the time on the weekends between 5 p.m. and 2 a.m. Mr. Njinimbot stated sometimes they are there until 3 a.m. or 4 a.m. and he will abide by the County's rules. Mr. Njinimbot stated there is always security on-site, no one brings liquor into the building or drinks liquor outside the premises. Mr. Njinimbot stated they plan to work closely with the community regarding noise issues and there are no surrounding tenants during their hours of operation. Mr. Njinimbot stated there are security cameras inside and outside of the building and that they have a vehicle with a public announcement system to ensure peace and order of the patrons. Mr. Njinimbot stated they

don't plan to display alcohol on shelves off-premises, nor will they allow purchases from non-customers. Mr. Njinimbot stated they received approval for police presence on the location in addition to security officers.

Mr. Njinimbot stated that when he opened the venue, he wanted to obtain a liquor license, but the process is not easy, and he wished he had obtained a license long since. Mr. Njinimbot stated he has 5 security officers and 3 cleaning staff and does not pay below minimum wage. Mr. Njinimbot stated he has an updated documented security plan and updates fire-related documents and keeps logs. Mr. Njinimbot said that the latest time events have ended at his venue is 2 a.m., but by the time the cleaning staff leaves it is almost 5 a.m.; however, his venue is not open until 5 a.m. Mr. Njinimbot stated that looking at the 911 calls, they weren't all negative and that having a liquor license is important to him. Mr. Njinimbot stated he hasn't had issues controlling crowds because of security and the monitoring of the capacity. Mr. Njinimbot stated there is a food-holding area but no licensed kitchen. Mr. Njinimbot has a caterer that they use. Mr. Njinimbot stated citizens have more respect for police officers than security officers and are more well-behaved when police are present. Mr. Njinimbot stated that not all of their events require liquor licenses and that he is in contact with Inspector Baxter. Mr. Njinimbot stated he does not know why people make calls to damage his business. Mr. Njinimbot ensured that everyone serving drinks at the bar was certified when he applied for temporary licenses. Mr. Njinimbot was sued by the State of Maryland for an event that went over-capacity. Mr. Njinimbot and police officers testified in court over what took place at that particular event.

Kehbuma Langmia, the proposed resident agent and 10% interest holder, was sworn in and testified before the Board.

Mr. Langmia testified as to the police report he forgot about, wherein he was stopped by police when using his cell phone while driving. Mr. Langmia stated he is always at Buena Vista for events and hadn't heard about many of the issues raised tonight. Mr. Langmia stated he wants his name associated with the business because of Mr. Njinimbot's good conduct. Mr. Langmia stated that during the 7 years he has worked in the venue, patrons have been responsible and have behaved appropriately. Mr. Langmia said when people see police vehicles they are more well-behaved.

Mr. Njinimbot testified they have off-duty officers sit in their vehicles at 1:45 a.m. for 15 - 30 minutes with their lights on while people vacate the premises. Mr. Njinimbot stated they have 3 exit doors and it takes 10 to 20 minutes for all the patrons to leave. Mr. Njinimbot stated he doesn't want to rush people out, rather he wants patrons to leave in an orderly fashion. Mr. Njinimbot stated if people take longer to vacate, they will start the process earlier.

Detective Mark Baxter was sworn in and testified before the Board. Det. Baxter stated that the call history was run for this location with details. Det. Baxter stated that the older the call, the more difficult it is to retrieve the information and that there were approximately 23 calls since 2015. Det. Baxter stated there were 3 calls in 2020 and 11 calls in 2021 but some of the calls were just area checks. Det. Baxter stated there was a shooting call in 2021 from a caller who stated there was a party there, but the officers didn't find anything. Det. Baxter stated his concern was the Executive Order violation, but the owner wasn't found responsible. Det. Baxter said there were no issues with underage drinking and that his concern was more with the after parties that can occur.

Shasa Letts, in support, was sworn in and testified before the Board. Ms. Letts stated

that Buena Vista has been a safe space for African Americans and is free from discriminatory pricing. Ms. Letts stated she is a certified bartender and Buena Vista has a strong security presence, a mindful venue owner, close caption televisions, contracts with a moral clause and usefulness of resources. Ms. Letts stated that you can't always control who attends events, but the venue owner shouldn't be penalized for that.

Tierry Fornishi, in support, was sworn in and testified before the Board. Mr. Fornishi stated he has known Mr. Njinimbot for a long time and even with managers on-site Mr. Njinimbot is always present at the venue. Mr. Fornishi stated Mr. Njinimbot respects the law and knows what is required. Mr. Fornishi stated Mr. Njinimbot will abide with the policies of what is needed if he receives the license.

Henry Yi, in support, was sworn in and testified before the Board. Mr. Yi stated he has known Mr. Njinimbot since 2003 and attests to his honesty and integrity. Mr. Yi stated Mr. Njinimbot transformed the space from a tire shop to the event hall and he has seen him grow. Mr. Njinimbot is impressed and admires what Mr. Njinimbot is doing. Mr. Yi provided financial support to Mr. Njinimbot during the pandemic.

Amos Fosam, in support, was sworn in and testified before the Board. Mr. Fosam stated he has known Mr. Njinimbot for 4 years and he is a role model for his friends and family and is a law-abiding citizen.

Byogah Herring, in support, was sworn in and testified before the Board. Mr. Herring stated he is a sound system provider for Mr. Njinimbot's venue every 2 months and that he feels safe there. Mr. Herring stated Mr. Njinimbot is very trustworthy and follows everything by the book.

Emmanuel Abbey, in support, was sworn in and testified before the Board. Mr.

Abbey stated he has known and worked with Mr. Njinimbot for 12 years. Mr. Abbey stated Mr. Njinimbot is honest and hardworking and open to everyone. Mr. Abbey stated that Mr. Njinimbot will do everything he can to run a successful business, he always has good intentions and abides by the law.

Davean Smith, in support, was sworn in and testified before the Board. Mr. Smith stated he has worked as a deejay at the venue and Mr. Njinimbot sticks to the rules and makes sure his events are safe.

Anthony Salazar, in support, was sworn in and testified before the Board. Mr. Salazar stated he worked with Mr. Njinimbot and has been a patron at his venue and has never encountered ill-behavior. Mr. Salazar stated Mr. Njinimbot provides attention to detail and would like the liquor license to be granted. Mr. Salazar stated when he had events, he would get the license himself and that his charity was registered in the State of Maryland.

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 Kehbuma Langmia and Gabriel Njinimbot (the "Applicants") on behalf of Buena Vista Conference Center, LLC t/a Buena Vista Ballroom ("Buena Vista") for a New Class D, Beer, Wine and Liquor, 7-day on-sale license for a 5,000 sq. ft. Conference Center with a 2,000 sq. foot outdoor area located at 8844 Washington Blvd., Suite E, Jessup, MD 20794.

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 Kehbuma Langmia is a Howard County resident.

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 Kehbuma Langmia and Gabriel Njinimbot (the "Applicants") on behalf of Buena Vista Conference Center, LLC t/a Buena Vista Ballroom ("Buena Vista") for a New Class D, Beer, Wine and Liquor, 7-day on-sale license for a 5,000 sq. ft. Conference Center with a 2,000 sq. foot outdoor area located at 8844 Washington Blvd., Suite E, Jessup, MD 20794.

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 Kehbuma Langmia 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 this application would not unduly disturb the peace and safety of the neighborhood.

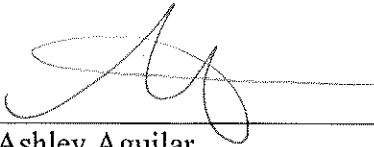
ORDER

For the foregoing reasons, it is this 3rd day of May, 2022, by the Alcoholic Beverage Hearing Board of Howard County, **ORDERED** that the application of Kehbuma Langmia and Gabriel Njinimbot (the "Applicants") on behalf of Buena Vista Conference Center, LLC t/a Buena Vista Ballroom ("Buena Vista") for a New Class D, Beer, Wine and Liquor, 7-day on-sale license for a 5,000 sq. ft. Conference Center with a 2,000 sq. foot outdoor area located at 8844 Washington Blvd., Suite E, Jessup, MD 20794, be and the same is hereby **GRANTED**, subject to the following conditions:

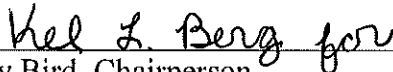
- (a) That the Applicants comply with all State and County Rules and Regulations; and
- (b) That the Applicants satisfy any requirements necessary to obtain the license by July 11, 2022, unless that deadline is extended by the Board upon good cause shown; and
- (c) Failure to comply with these conditions shall render this Proposed Decision and Order null and void.

ATTEST:

**ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE HEARING
BOARD OF HOWARD COUNTY,
MARYLAND**



Ashley Aguilar
Board Administrator

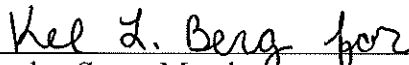


Mary Bird, Chairperson

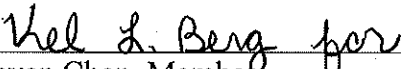


Harry Evans, Vice-Chairperson


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



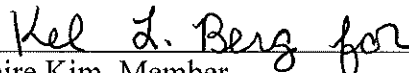
Charley Sung, Member



Steven Chen, Member



Jamar Herry, Esquire
Senior Assistant County Solicitor



Claire Kim, Member