

May 31, 2024

Chabolla Corp. dba Tequila Mexican Restaurant
515 West Ave. N.
La Crosse WI 54601

City of La Crosse
Judiciary & Administration Committee Members
Council Member Chris Kahlow
Council Member Chris Woodard
Council Member Jennifer Trost
Council Member Mac Kiel
Council Member Mackenzie Mindel
Council Member Tamra Dickinson

Dear Council Members:

I am an owner of Chabolla Corp., which owns and operates Tequila Mexican Restaurant on West Avenue in La Crosse. It has operated as a family-owned restaurant since 1999, and over its years, has employed hundreds of workers in the community.

Last week, we received notice that the City was considering suspending, revoking or nonrenewing the Class B beer and liquor license issued to the restaurant. We were given a little over a week to prepare for a hearing regarding the loss of the license which, in the food and beverage industry, will realistically mean a permanent closure of the doors of our business. It is not an exaggeration to state that at the hearing on June 4th, the Judiciary & Administration Committee will be deciding whether our family-owned business will survive and, perhaps, make it to the 25th anniversary of our opening in September.

For those on the Committee who have not owned or worked in a restaurant, there are many governing regulations, between the regulations at issue about the handling and service of alcohol, or the variety of regulations relating to food safety, labor, or other issues. All serve important purposes and all are necessary. We take each very seriously and do not take any of them for granted.

We cannot dispute that we have encountered challenges with keeping up with the advances of technology and college students' efforts to bypass measures to preempt their access to alcohol. The errors have been few, but we recognize that any error is one too many.

Under Wisconsin Statutes, the City may exercise discretion in determining whether to renew Chabolla Corp's Class B beer and liquor license. In other words, any period of suspension, revocation or non-renewal is not mandatory under either ordinance or Wisconsin Statutes. To that end, we ask that you consider not only the many years our restaurant has thrived and employed persons within the community, but we also implore you to consider the measures that have been undertaken to address the concerns of underage drinking shared by the City, Law Enforcement, and our restaurant.

In order to prevent any future occurrences of underage drinking in our restaurant, we have taken the following steps (or begun the steps to implement the following):

1. Additional licensure of staff as beverage operators (to increase overall training among staff at the restaurant)
2. Increased training of staff, including both licensed and non-licensed staff
3. Incentivizing servers with money for every fake ID they find per shift
4. ID checking mandatory for any order of alcohol (bar or restaurant) for customers appearing under 40 years of age

There is frustration that comes with playing by the rules of the hospitality industry, while the rules and regulations are ever-changing – at the same time that the technology and measures used by students are evolving even faster. We continually make improvements in our processes to keep up to date, but our ultimate goal is to partner with law enforcement to thwart attempts at underage activity. In order to do so successfully, that will take open communication and partnerships with law enforcement.

We respectfully request that you consider the efforts that have been undertaken, as well as the proven record of our family business in the community, and elect to exercise discretion to and renew the Class B beer and liquor license issued to the business.

Sincerely,



Miguel Guerrero