

NARRATIVE TO APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL PERMIT

Subject Property: 30 Bow Street, Somerville, MA 02143
Assessing Parcel ID. No. 74-C-10

Applicant Name: Modern Love LLC d/b/a Wild Child
1 Bow Market Way, Suite 32, Somerville, MA 02143

Applicant's Representative: Adam R. Barnosky, Esq., & Michael J. Barone, Jr.
RIW, 255 State Street, 7th Floor, Boston, MA 02109

Owner of Record: 30 Bow LLC
30 Bow Street, Somerville, MA 02143

Narrative

Modern Love LLC d/b/a Wild Child (the “**Wild Child**”), as a prospective tenant of the existing ground floor commercial space (the “**Premises**”) at 30 Bow Street (the “**Property**”), seeks to build out and improve the Premises into a boutique bottle shop selling fine and rare natural wines, as well as beer and a curated cheese selection. The Premises previously served as office space for an architectural firm.

The Property is located on the southwesterly side of Bow Street and is located in Somerville’s MR3 (mid-rise 3) zoning district, located between Walnut Street and Wesley Park.

Wild Child currently operates a smaller space located in Bow Market Square and has successfully done so for the past five (5) years. The Bow Market location is set up as a very welcoming space offering natural wines, food related literature, and culinary ephemera. Wild Child also uses the space to host regular food and wine related events and education experiences including wine classes, speaker series, and author talks. The Bow Market location also currently serves as the base of operations for Wild Child’s very popular wine club. In short, Wild Child has significant experience and expertise in not only selling rare and fine natural wines, but also education and experiences related to wine culture.

By relocating its operations to the Premises, Wild Child would have the space and ability to continue its existing operations while also (i) expanding sales and selection of beer and wine, (ii) establishing ecommerce and delivery services, and (iii) expanding the existing wine club to include more variety and offer shipping beyond its current radius. Although the proposed use is classified as retail alcohol sales, it is important to note that operations at the Premises will not resemble a typical package store. Items for sale will remain of a more niche nature and will not include traditional convenience items such as nips/shooters, cigarettes, and lotto tickets. Operations at the Premises will continue the tradition of warmth and inclusivity at Wild Child’s current Bow Market location, but with more space and an ability to expand its offerings.

With the exception of potential fencing (requested by neighbors at the information meetings hosted by Wild Child’s principal) and such alterations as may be required to make the rear

entrance ADA accessible (subject to the review of the Historic Preservation Commission), Wild Child's proposed alterations at the Premises will be limited to the interior renovations.

Requested Relief

In order to to utilize the Premises for alcohol sales (retail), Wild Child requires a Special Permit pursuant to Table 4.1.13 and Section 4.1.13.b of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. Accordingly, Wild Child now seeks a Special Permit under the provisions of Section 15.2 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to permit the operation of a retail wine and malt store in the MR3 zoning district.

Pursuant to Section 15.2.1.e of the Ordinance, in considering whether to approval or deny a Special Permit, the review board shall make findings considering, at least, each of the following: (a) the comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City; (b) the intent of the zoning district where the property is located; and (c) considerations indicated elsewhere in the Ordinance for the required Special Permit, which, in this case, includes Section 9.2.12.b.ii.a.

The requested relief is in harmony with the comprehensive plan and would further several goals of SomerVision2040. In particular, the requested relief would enable Wild Child, an existing small business, to grow by allowing it to relocate from its existing Bow Market Square location to its very own larger space granting the business the opportunity to expand its wine selection, programs, and wine club. Much like its sister space, Rebel Rebel, Wild Child embraces and embodies a business model intent on protecting and fostering Somerville's diversity of people and culture.

The proposed use also aligns well with the purpose and intent of the MR3 zoning district. According to the Ordinance, the MR3 district is primarily commercial, with ground story uses address the needs of residents in the neighborhood. Moreover, the Ordinance indicates that the district was established so as to create smaller scale, multi-use buildings that provide quality commercial uses serving the neighborhood. Wild Child's proposed bottle shop aims to provide the area with a small-scale, quality use readily available (and already often frequented) by those in the neighborhood. By mixing education and community into its business model, Wild Child provides more than simply an offering of rare and natural wines, but also culture.

Pursuant to Section 9.2.12.b.ii.a of the Ordinance, the concentration of packaged liquor uses in the neighborhood is to be considered. Notably, the granting of the requested relief will not increase the number of packaged liquor stores in the area, as Wild Child is relocating from its existing space in Bow Market, thus maintaining the same concentration of packaged liquor stores. It should also be noted that the proposed bottle shop offers a unique selection compared to the other packaged liquor stores in the area. Whereas many of the stores are all-alcohol shops, Wild Child will focus on its specialty of fine and rare natural wines and does not intend to sell any spirits. Although there may be some overlap of wine offerings amongst all of the neighborhood shops, Wild Child's wine offerings are strictly natural wines. Accordingly, the shop will offer a boutique experience and a unique selection unlike other stores in the area.