



**City of Somerville
Licensing Commission**

Regular Meeting Agenda

**Tuesday
October 21, 2025
6:00 p.m.
Remote Participation ONLY**

DRAFT MINUTES

NOTICE: This is NOT the official version of the Licensing Commission's Minutes. While reasonable efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the date provided, do not rely on this information without first checking with the Secretary of the Licensing Commission.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Joseph Lynch at 6:01 p.m. and adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Attendance:

Chair Joseph Lynch – Present
Commissioner Christopher Allen – Present
Commissioner Jacques Thomas Jr. – Present

Others present:

Michael Potere – Licensing Operations Manager; Lieutenant Francis Otting – Fire Department;
Captain Sean Sheehan – Police Department.

Communications

1. Minutes of the Licensing Commission Regular Meeting of 9/16/2025.

The Licensing Commission accepted the minutes on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

2. Minutes of the Licensing Commission Special Meeting of 9/23/2025.

The Licensing Commission accepted the minutes on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

3. Communication from Commissioner Lynch in his capacity as Chair that the 2025 Outdoor Dining Program on public property (sidewalks and parklets) ends on November 30, 2025. Licensees must remove all furniture and accessories no later than midnight on November 30.



The Licensing Commission placed this item on file.

4. Communication from the Licensing Operations Manager regarding changes to the 2026 Licensing Commission annual license renewal process.

Manager Potere explained that changes to the renewal process for 2026 would streamline the 304 Certificate inspections and align them with the alcohol license renewals, which will reduce delays in processing them.

The Licensing Commission placed this item on file.

5. Communication from the Chair regarding complaint received for Mike's Bar Inc. d/b/a Mike's Bar, 97 Washington Street, AL17-000049.

Chair Lynch stated that this item is on the agenda to address additional complaints made against this licensee from a city councilor and neighboring residents. Chair Lynch noted for the record that this licensee was before the Commission in February for a Show Cause hearing based on similar complaints, and during that meeting determined that a disciplinary action was warranted, but held it in abeyance for six months, during which time the Licensing Commission received not additional complaints. Chair Lynch asked Captain Sheehan if there have recently been complaints filed with the police, which was confirmed, and added that an additional 911 call was placed to this licensee's establishment based on a patron being intoxicated.

Chair Lynch stated that a second Show Cause hearing would be held for this licensee, and Commissioners Allen and Thomas agreed that a special meeting was not necessary and that this Show Cause hearing could take place on the regularly scheduled Licensing Commission meeting on November 18, 2025. The Licensing Commission asked Manager Potere to prepare and send notice to the licensee.

6. Licensing Commission requesting a status report from Somerville City Club Inc., d/b/a Somerville City Club, 20 Inner Belt Road, AL17-000025, regarding the use of their All Forms Alcohol Service License.

Donald Johnson, the licensee, appeared before the Commission and explained that the relocation of the license is 90% complete and estimated it would be in use again in or around March 2026.

The Licensing Commission continued this item to the February 17, 2026 meeting.



7. Licensing Commission requesting a status report from Distinct Beer and Wine, Inc., d/b/a Distinct Beer and Wine, 14 McGrath Highway, AL17-000323, regarding use of their Wine and Malt Package Store License.

The licensee for this item did not appear. The Licensing Commission continued this item to the November 18, 2025 meeting.

Special Alcohol Licenses

8. The Lawn Bar Inc., 300 Assembly Row, requesting approval of a Special Alcohol License (Wine and Malt) for The Lawn Bar at Club Volo, to be held outdoors at 300 Assembly Row, from 10/18/2025 through 10/31/2025 from 12:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. (Alcohol Service).
(SAL25-000017)

Lindsay Smith, the applicant, appeared before the Commission and explained that this is the last requested special alcohol license for this location for the year, and that their operations wind down on October 31, 2025. Commissioner Allen asked if they have had any issues during the year, and the applicant stated they have not.

The Licensing Commission approved this Special Alcohol License on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

9. Boston Boulderling Project, 12A Tyler Street, requesting approval of a Special Alcohol License (Malt Only) for Boulderfest, to be held indoors at 12A Tyler Street, on 11/1/2025 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (Alcohol Service).
(SAL25-000016)

Cece Herrmann, the applicant, appeared before the Commission and explained that this license is for their annual climbing competition, that the beer would be served by Aeronaut Brewing, and that they will be checking IDs and issuing wristbands to those over 21.

The Licensing Commission approved this Special Alcohol License on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

10. Dormition of the Virgin Mary, 29 Central Street, requesting approval of a Special Alcohol License (All Forms) for Wedding Celebration, to be held indoors at 29 Central Street, on 11/22/2025 from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. (Alcohol Service).
(SAL25-000018)

John Kourafalos, the applicant, appeared before the Commission and explained that this is for a wedding that will host around 200 people. Commissioner Allen asked if



they were purchasing alcohol from an authorized distributor, who replied they intended to purchase the alcohol from a local package store. Chair Lynch and Commissioner Allen noted that the applicant is required to purchase the alcohol for their special alcohol license from an authorized distributor, and conditioned approval of the license on the same. Chair Lynch asked Manager Potere to contact the applicant and provide the list, and Manager Potere confirmed that he would.

The Licensing Commission approved this Special Alcohol License, with the condition that the alcohol must be purchased from an authorized distributor, on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

Special Farmer Winery Licenses

11. Blisspoint Meadery, 1 Fox Run Road, Bedford, requesting approval of a Special Farmer Winery License for Somerville Winter Farmers Market, to be held indoors at 191 Highland Avenue, on Saturdays from 11/1/2025 through 4/11/2026, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Alcohol Service).
(SFW25-000006)

The applicant did not appear for this item. Chair Lynch asked if this applicant has been before the Commission in the past, and Manager Potere confirmed that they have regularly appeared for several years. Chair Lynch proposed approving the request dates between this meeting and the November 18, 2025 Licensing Commission meeting as a one-time exception to the policy of appearing before the Commission for license applications. Commissioner Allen further stated for the record his preference to only allow for this type of exception for businesses that have been working with the Licensing Commission and have an existing presence in Somerville.

The Licensing Commission approved this Special Farmer Winery License for the requested dates of 11/1/25, 11/8/25, and 11/15/25 ONLY on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed. The Licensing Commission continued the remaining dates to the November 18, 2025 Licensing Commission meeting.

12. Saltbox Cidershop, 22 North Broadway, Haverhill, requesting approval of a Special Farmer Winery License for Somerville Winter Farmers Market, to be held indoors at 191 Highland Avenue, on Saturdays from 11/1/2025 through 4/11/2026, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Alcohol Service).
(SFW25-000007)

Nate Chase, the applicant, appeared before the Commission and stated that this will be their first event in Somerville, that they will be selling various types of hard cider, including one that has a champagne flavor. Chair Lynch asked where the business



is located, and the applicant replied they have a business office in Haverhill and a production facility in Lawrence. Chair Lynch asked how many farmers markets the applicant has attended, who replied around ten and has not had any issues at any of them.

The Licensing Commission approved this Special Farmer Winery License on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

New **Common Victualer License**

13. Mikura Group LLC d/b/a Kokoro Don Café, 66 Summer Street, requesting approval of a common victualer license.

Hours of Operation:

Monday-Sunday: 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Indoor Seats: 5

(AL25-000027)

Phitinunt Pohnthisomboon, the applicant, appeared before the Commission and explained that this license is to offer seating at their Japanese style restaurant that focuses on comfort food. Commissioner Allen asked if the applicant has any experience in the restaurant industry, who replied they have around 4-5 years of experience with their business partner.

The Licensing Commission approved this Common Victualer License on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

Existing All Forms Restaurant License **Change of Location**

14. Ebi Sushi Inc. d/b/a Ebi Sushi, 290 Somerville Avenue, requesting approval of a change of location.

Current location: 290 Somerville Avenue

Proposed location: 10 Prospect Street

(AL25-000010, amending AL17-000109)

Commissioner Thomas recused himself from voting on this item as an abutter.

Estefania Ladner, the applicant, appeared before the Commission and explained this is an amendment to change the location of their restaurant into a larger location across the street. Commissioner Allen asked when they expect to open, and the applicant replied by the end of February of 2026. Commissioner Allen asked if they would be expanding their floor plan, and the applicant replied that they would be



and that they intend to operate two concepts in the same establishment. Manager Potere clarified that, although he was not aware of the planned DBA name change, this applicant has two amendments that will appear before the Commission for their November meeting, and that he would work with the applicant to include the DBA name change amendment with them as well.

Chair Lynch opened the public hearing. There being no speakers, Chair Lynch closed the public hearing.

The Licensing Commission approved this Change of Location license amendment on a roll call vote: 2 in favor (Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed, 1 recused (Thomas).

Existing All Forms Restaurant License
Alteration of Indoor and Outdoor Premises

15. Soba Ya LLC d/b/a Sugidama, 234 Elm Street, requesting approval of an alteration of indoor and outdoor premises.

Current number of seats: 36 (Indoors)

Current number of seats: 16 (Outdoors)

Proposed number of seats: 57 (Indoors)

Proposed number of seats: 0 (Outdoors)

(ALM25-000028, amending AL22-000010)

Attorney Kristine Lee appeared on behalf of the applicant and stated that the purpose of this amendment application is to close the licensee's outdoor dining and return those seats to their indoor space, which was necessary for this licensee to comply with state bathroom plumbing regulations.

Chair Lynch opened the public hearing. There being no speakers, Chair Lynch closed the public hearing.

The Licensing Commission approved this Alteration of Premises license amendment on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.



Existing All Forms Restaurant License
Change of Manager

16. Earl's Restaurant (Somerville, MA) Inc. d/b/a Earl's Kitchen and Bar, 698 Assembly Row, requesting approval of a change of manager.
Current manager: Wesley Zambrano
Proposed manager: Sarah Rosenstein
(ALM25-000031, amending AL17-000098)

Attorney Patricia Farnsworth, representing the applicant, Sarah Rosenstein, who was also present, appeared before the Commission and stated that the applicant has been with the licensee since 2017, including at their Prudential Center location in Boston, and is familiar with state law and local alcohol service laws. Commissioner Allen asked if there were any issues that arose during the applicant's time as a manager in Boston, and Attorney Farnsworth said there were not.

The Licensing Commission approved this Change of Manager license amendment on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

17. RSCH Operations Inc. d/b/a Ruth's Chris Steak House, 375 Revolution Drive, requesting approval of a change of manager.
Current manager: Srdan Bajas
Proposed manager: Scott Swintek
(ALM25-000030, amending AL19-000026)

Scott Swintek, the applicant, appeared before the Commission and stated that they have managed restaurants, country clubs, and event spaces at Disney World in Florida, and was recently hired by this licensee to be the General Manager of their Somerville location. Commissioner Allen asked if the applicant had any issues with alcohol service when they managed any of those establishments in the past, and the applicant replied they have not.

The Licensing Commission approved this Change of Manager license amendment on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

18. Somerville BBQ Co LLC d/b/a Smoke Shop BBQ, 325 Assembly Row, requesting approval of a change of manager.
Current manager: Aimee Magner
Proposed manager: Joseph Depina
(ALM25-000032, amending AL17-000304)

Joseph Depina, the applicant, appeared before the Commission and outlined his 30 years of experience managing restaurants with alcohol service licenses in



Massachusetts. Commissioner Allen asked if the applicant had any issues with alcohol service when they managed any of those establishments in the past, and the applicant replied they have not.

The Licensing Commission approved this Change of Manager license amendment on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

Existing All Forms Package Store License
Change of Stock Interest and DBA Name

19. Mahantguru Corporation d/b/a Liquor World, 225-231 Elm Street, requesting approval of a change of stock interest and change of DBA name.

Current stock interest:

Shivam Patel: 30%

Harmit Raval: 70%

Proposed stock interest:

Shivam Patel: 0%

Harmit Raval: 100%

Current d/b/a name: Liquor World

Proposed d/b/a name: Liquor Hub

(ALM25-000029, amending AL23-000022)

Attorney Sydney Prokos, representing the applicant, appeared before the Commission and explained that this is a straightforward transfer of ownership and DBA name change amendment application, and that aside from these two items, there will be no other changes to the operation of the business. Harmit Raval, the applicant, also appeared before the Commission and explained that they currently have three other package store licenses, and if this is approved it will be four; two of these are located in Somerville. Chair Lynch asked if the applicant has had any violations with any of their licenses, and the applicant replied they have not.

Chair Lynch opened the public hearing. There being no speakers, Chair Lynch closed the public hearing.

The Licensing Commission approved this Change of Stock Interest and DBA Name license amendment application on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.



Transfer of License and Pledge of License
All Forms 7 Day Package Store License
Sunday Hours License

20. VJRP LLC d/b/a Joe's Liquor, 168 Broadway, requesting approval of a transfer of an All Forms Package Store License and Pledge of License from Joe's Liquor Inc. d/b/a Joe's Liquor.

Hours of Operation:

Monday-Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Sunday: 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

(AL25-000026, transferring from AL18-000014)

Attorney Benjamin Levin, representing the applicant, appeared before the Commission and stated that the applicant has had experience in the industry for approximately 15 years, was the manager of record at a package store in Boston, and has had no violations in the past. Chair Lynch asked if this transaction included transfer of real estate, and Attorney Levin replied that it does not.

Lt. Otting stated for the record that a condition of approval for this license transfer is that the building fire protection systems must be upgraded, and that because of this change of ownership and transfer of license, the previous use of only battery-operated smoke detectors is no longer permissible.

Chair Lynch opened the public hearing. There being no speakers, Chair Lynch closed the public hearing.

The Licensing Commission approved this Transfer of License and Pledge of License application, with the condition that a fire prevention system is installed and approved by Fire Prevention, on a roll call vote: 3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.

Late Item

21. Warehouse XI, 255 Washington Street, requesting approval of a Special Alcohol License (Wine and Malt) for Live at Warehouse XI, to be held indoors at 255 Washington Street, on 11/2/2025, 11/4/2025, 11/5/2025, 11/7/2025, 11/8/2025, 11/9/2025, 11/11/2025, 11/14/2025, 11/20/2025, 11/21/2025, 11/22/2025, 11/28/2025 from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. (Alcohol Service).
(SAL25-000019)

Peggy Morrissey, the applicant, appeared before the Commission and explained that this is a continuation of Warehouse XI's live music events and that they expect to have around 40 people attend each event.



**The Licensing Commission approved this Special Alcohol License on a roll call vote:
3 in favor (Thomas, Allen, Lynch), 0 absent, 0 opposed.**