

I'm writing to you today on my own behalf and not in my capacity as president of the Marquette Neighborhood Association.

Emotions sometimes get in the way of reality. Unfortunately I think some of that is happening here. Plan B has not been a problem bar in the neighborhood. On the contrary it has injected some life into the street, stimulated business in the 900-block of Williamson and is an asset to the neighborhood.

We have a very popular neighborhood and people want to live here. We do not live in the suburbs. It's an urban environment. The neighborhood is very walkable and amenities like Plan B add to that appeal. I've long felt that the health and vitality of Williamson Street will be key in attracting businesses and the young creative class to the East Washington corridor and Marquette neighborhood. Plan B has become part of that vitality.

I don't like disagreeing with my neighbors on the 900-block of Jenifer St, but I do in this case. I had tried my best to facilitate meetings between neighbors and the business. Neighbors had legitimate concerns and those early meetings resulted in a lot of improvements to the business. However, that cooperation and productive discussion fell apart when it was clear that there was a lack of trust on both sides. From my perspective, emotions have taken over reason.

I live within two blocks of Plan B and have seen absolutely no change since they have opened. I am not sure why some in the neighborhood, some far further removed than myself, would see them as a problem. There are some strong opinions against alcohol and liquor licenses in general from some in the neighborhood and that I'm sure is part of it. For some, any establishment with a liquor license is a problem and any restaurant with a license surely will turn into a bar.

When Plan B first opened I received a lot of complaints about parking. Taking them seriously, as I've taken all complaints seriously, I'd get out of bed and walk over to see what was going on. While the 900-block may have been parked full, there was always street parking available within a half block on Williamson Street. There were also complaints about sound from the back door and headlights from the parking lot. Both were addressed by the owners. Then the focus became the bass. Even reports that it was rattling windows. The owners installed bass traps and a limiter. That seemed to calm things for a while and then the complaints started again.

I have walked down to the 900-blocks of both Jenifer and Williamson Streets on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights to see what is going on. I have never experienced an overwhelming amount of noise and in fact sometimes could not distinguish between sound coming from the corner of Williamson and Patterson, the Wisco, and Plan B which I was sitting directly across from.

I have never witnessed anything to the level described by neighbors on the 900-block of Jenifer Street. If any hint of a sound is detected, is that a nuisance? I suppose if you let it bother you one could think so. Are car doors shutting a nuisance? Buses? General traffic? Where do you draw the line?

Some suggest that it is not the right location for Plan B. I completely disagree. I personally bristle when I hear it, as gay and gay-friendly bars have a history of being hid in communities where they can't be seen. While this may not be the intent of such statements, it is surely something that will be felt by the LGBT community especially since no one is suggesting that any other bar doesn't belong on Williamson Street. I have never heard anyone suggest that the Wisco or Crystal Corner be moved off of Williamson to some hidden location.

I'm sorry that I am not available to attend Monday's hearing. I'm sure that I'll hear some grief from this letter, but I believe only an honest discussion should take place and these are my views and opinions as a resident of the neighborhood and someone who has been involved in a lot of the issues that are being discussed.

I urge you to renew the license for Plan B as is.

Sincerely,

Scott B. Thornton  
1104 Jenifer Street