

TO: **Alcohol License Review Committee Members**

Amanda Javaag
Amy Westra
Fernando Cano Ospina
James Boxrud
Jim Verbick
Karen Reese
Kelly Donahue
Linda Vakunta
Alder Michael Verveer
Michael Donnelly
Patrick Grady
Alder Paul Skidmore
Asst. City Attorney Roger Allen
ASM Representative Seamus McWilliams
Alder Sheri Carter
Stefan Fletcher

CC: Alder Marsha Rummel
Alder Syed Abbas

From: Joel Gratz
10 N. 4th Street
Madison, WI 53704

Date: December 16, 2020

RE: Request to Oppose New (Class A) Licenses for Kwik Trip dba Stop N Go at 2002 Winnebago Street
ALRC 12/16/2020 Agenda Item #7, Legistar File # 62957

Thank you to both the Committee and Alder Rummel for allowing the delay at last month's ALRC meeting so a neighborhood virtual meeting could be held to discuss concerns with Kwik Trip representatives. I do ask you again to deny issuing a new Class A License to Kwik Trip for the Stop N Go location they have purchased at 2002 Winnebago Street. I will also appear at tonight's meeting to speak on this issue and be available for questions.

The neighborhood meeting with Kwik Trip re-affirmed my belief that the should not be granted the privilege of a city license to sell alcohol at this location.

Kwik Trip as part of each of their presentations maintains that they are a good community member and, in fairness, they do cite a number of positive aspects of their business such as their wage rates and profit sharing, their contributions to a number of worthy causes and similar actions. But Kwik Trip is largely mute, at best, in their response to any question to explain how terminating, on fairly short notice and without public discussion, the postal services provided at the Stop N Go location on Winnebago Street demonstrate a commitment to our local community and neighborhood.

Kwik Trip announced the agreement to purchase the Stop N Go stores on July 29, 2020, over four months ago. While there is no dispute that it can be their purgative to discontinue the post office they could have in the intervening several months engaged in discussions with the Alder, the community and stakeholders of the possibility the post office may close thus allowing the community to perhaps find an alternative location before the disruption they have caused. That was not done. Instead the community and customers were given little notice and further, Kwik Trip has tried to, at times, pass off responsibility for this decision to the previous Stop N Go owners, even though the decision was made after the agreement to purchase and closely timed to the closing. There can be no doubt this was a Kwik Trip decision. From Kwik Trip's due diligence, they certainly knew in the summer that the Stop N Go location housed a post office, and had they been committed to being good community members they would have initiated a public discussion at that time to either learn of the value of the post office to the community or allow the community to seek an alternative arrangement. Kwik Trip has no response as to why they failed to take such reasonable action.

A number of ALRC members at the November meeting indicated that committee should approve this license and the post office issue was essentially irrelevant to the alcohol licensing decisions. I disagree.

First, if Kwik Trip, or any applicant, is going to tout their good deeds and community commitment as reasons to approve their applications then it leaves it very fair and relevant to determine if those are true statements supported by their actions.

Second, the applicant's actions are relevant directly to the issues of determining if an applicant will be responsible and responsive with any future issues with their license. When Kwik Trip chose not to engage the community in a timely manner to at least mitigate the effects of their decision to cease postal operations it raises real concerns as to how they will engage with the community and neighborhood if alcohol issues arise in the future. We have, or will hear, from other community members with legitimate concerns about licensing an additional store in such close proximity to a neighborhood high school. Kwik Trip's failure to adequately connect with the community in this situation should raise doubts as to their responsiveness if they are licensed and issues of underage access to alcohol sales are raised. They have not proven through their actions that they are worthy of being licensed here.

The decision to unilaterally cancel the post office contract and close the post office which had served the community for decades, all without any consultation with the community or its leaders, shows that Kwik Trip has failed to support and strengthen our community and has failed to be a good neighbor even before they move in. The closure by Kwik Trip shows contempt for the community they wish to be part of.

The committee should ask the question: "Has Kwik Trip earned the privilege to get an alcohol sales license when they have taken away a community resource at the location where they seek that license?" Further can Kwik Trip be trusted to be that responsible alcohol seller at this location when they have already indicated a willingness to hurt the neighborhood by closing this community resource abruptly and with no input of discussion from stake holders

I ask you to please oppose and deny Kwik Trip a new license for 2002 Winnebago Street. At the least, a decision to grant a license should be delayed until Kwik Trip has time to do the follow up on a number of questions and promises for more information made to neighbors at last weeks meeting.