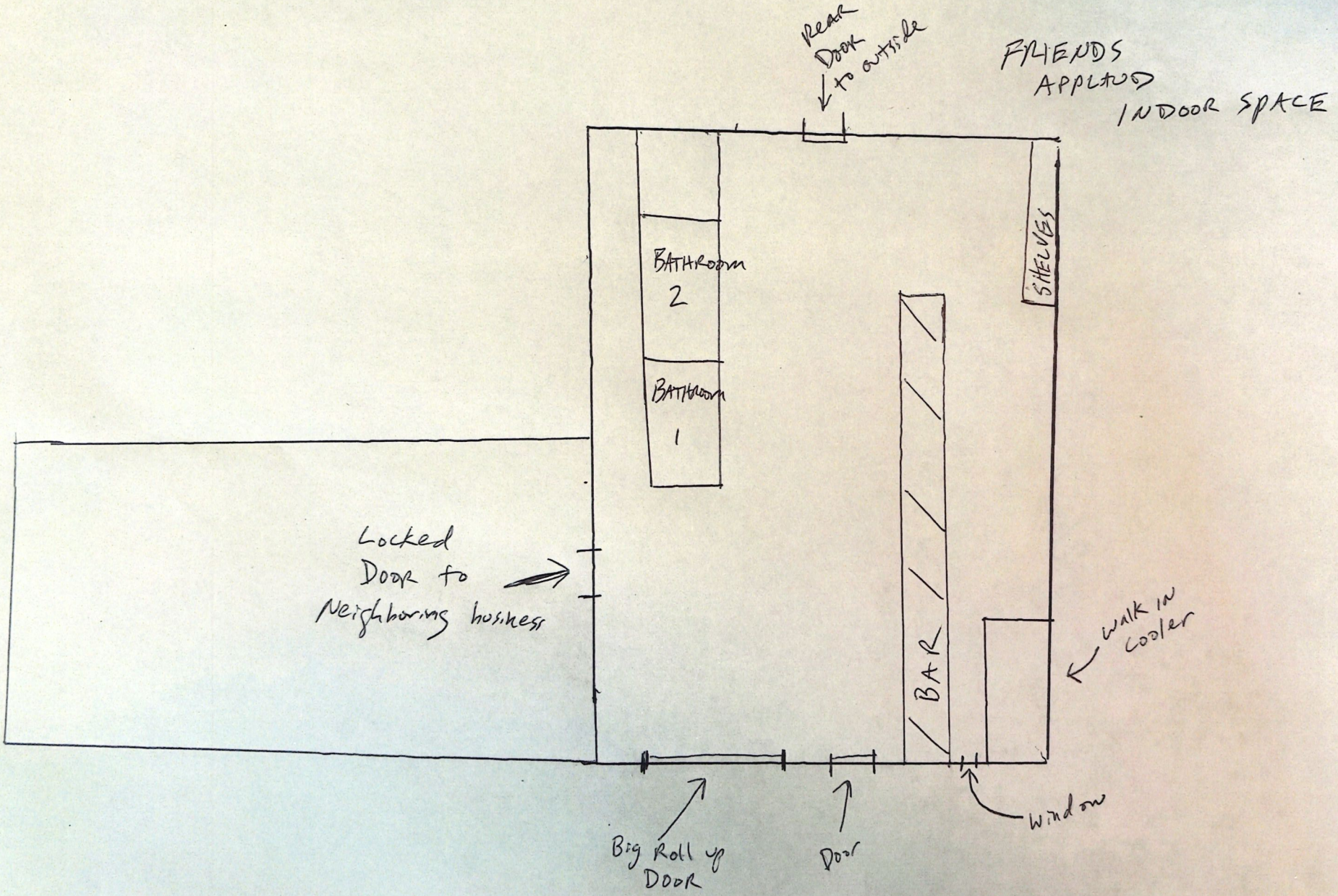
Rear Door to outside
FRIENDS APPROVED INDOOR SPACE
BATHROOM 2
BATHROOM 1
SHELVES
Locked Door to Neighboring business
BAR
walk in cooler
Big Roll up DOOR
Door
Window

“Friends Applaud”
Opening Business Plan

By Adam Benedetto

Email: benadamdetto@gmail.com

Phone: 718.501.4306

Executive summary

Friends Applaud will be a full-service restaurant that specializes in Detroit style pizza. It will also regularly offer soups, salads, desserts, beers on tap, mixed drinks and fantastic Old World and New World wines. The restaurant will seat 10 people at the bar, 30 people at tables in-doors and an array of picnic tables for outdoor seating when the weather is nice.

With 3280 square feet of outdoor space, there will be a lot of opportunities to create an environment that neighborhood people will want to spend time in. We’ll have outdoor dining and an intimate stage that features live music and other performances.

Friends Applaud will continually keep the Madison public curious and the immediate neighborhood well fed.

Highlights

The ultimate highlight of Friends Applaud will be the charm of the service. The food, the beer, the wine, the atmosphere, the excellent lighting, the music, and whatever events we have going on outdoors will only be tools for the people who work there to invite guests to feel a part of the space. It will be the people working that will connect the guests with the space enough to make them want to find their way back.

Objectives

Step 1. An Introduction to the Neighborhood: January 2026 - July 2026

When the restaurant opens it will have a full liquor license and serve pizza, handmade pasta, soups and ornate salads. The reason for this is that we will not have a hood; making pizza doesn’t require one. Pizza is also easy to keep tight food costs on. Every day, we will hand make pizza dough in the morning to serve the following day (24-hour dough). We will offer a series of toppings and have a few specialty pizzas. We’ll also offer deliveries.

The most important aspect of our menu is that it won't require a lot of labor. One person can prepare pizza dough, pizza toppings, and soup. Salads can be prepared with fresh ingredients, every day, from 12-4pm before dinner. The idea is that three people can serve drinks and cook for a space that seats 40 people.

The menu may look something like this:

Dinner Menu (Items that we don't need a hood to serve)

10" x14" Handmade Detroit Style Pizzas

Assorted specialty pizzas

Toppings: Pepperoni, Toasted Fennel Sausage, Burrata, Hen of the Wood Mushrooms, Pickled Jalapenos, Greek Olives, Anchovies, Fennel, Anchovies, etc.

Four Cheese Veggie Lasagna

Kale Tofu Salad – with pickled red onion, red cabbage, pepita seeds, honey, tahini

Sabine Salad - A creative rotating salad based on 8 fresh ingredients.

Curt's Famous Popcorn Piled High Over Spicy Chili

Avgolemono (Greek Lemon Chicken Soup)

A Cheese Plate Featuring the top 5 Cheeses in Wisconsin as determined at the world Dairy Expo.

Specials: Handmade pasta and a rustic red sauce.

Eventually we will be able to open for brunch on the weekends. This menu again reflects No Hood.

Brunch Menu Available Saturday and Sunday from 9AM-2PM

Toast with smoked Chubb, a hard-boiled egg and mixed green salad

Avocado toast with hard-boiled egg and mixed greens

Quinoa with Red Pepper, Green Pepper warmed with Spiraled Ham a soft-boiled egg and touched with vinaigrette and everything bagel seasoning

Pesto Burrata on Rye with Honey and a poached egg

Overnight Steel Oats with assorted berries

Assorted Pastries

We will have a large learning curve to do with the 3000 square foot outdoor space. Using the outdoor space effectively is critical for us to be highly profitable. So between January and July we will listen to the neighborhood to figure out what to do with the outdoor space. We do plan to put out games like Bocce Ball, Corn Hole, and the popular Scandinavian yard game Kubb; the games and music events will present the opportunity to bring the community together and begin to understand how to tailor to the local vibe.

Step 2. Putting in a Kitchen: July 2026

The city of Madison offers a building upgrade worth $50,000. Every other business in the building has taken advantage of that. We will apply for that as soon as the lease goes into effect. With 50,000 we will be able to put a hood in the space to the left of the bar and then add a stove, a grill.

With a stove and a deep fryer in the kitchen we will have the ability to cook more food in a timely manner. That will mean we can serve more people, offer pizza deliveries/to go, and we can serve more expensive products. For example, entrees like steak and more sides like french fries will bring the overall check average up.

For a more ambitious menu we'd probably have to bring on a chef with some skills to manage the kitchen. It would be their job to oversee food costs and ordering at that point.

Below is an example of the menu:

Dinner (with the hood vent):

10" x14" Handmade Detroit Style Pizzas

Assorted specialty pizzas

Toppings: Pepperoni, Toasted Fennel Sausage, Buratta, Hen of the Wood Mushrooms, Pickled Jalapenos, Greek Olives, Anchovies, Fennel, Anchovies, etc.

Crab Cake BLT on a bun.

Marinated Hanger Steak with Fries

Curt's Old-Bay Popcorn Encrusted Chicken - Pickle brined chicken thighs, peppercorn braised and then deep fried to order in a seasoned popcorn dredge

Trujillo Burger - Jalapeno Pepper jelly, brie cheese, with tomato mayonnaise with crispy shallots

Chicken Liver Mousse - served with cherry preserve and sour dough toast

Bone Marrow with Wisconsin Wild Cat Piled on Top - served with rye bread and French Fries

Kale Tofu Salad -with or without chicken

Sabine Salad - A creative rotating salad based on 8 fresh ingredients.

Avgolemono (Greek Lemon Chicken Soup)

Sides:

French Fries

Pesto Burrata on Rye

A Cheese Plate that features the top 5 Cheeses in Wisconsin as determined at the world Dairy Expo.

Caramelized Cauliflower with capers, mustard vinaigrette and pine nuts

Side Kale Salad

Mission statement

The mission of Friends Applaud will be a community hub with excellent food, wine, and live music/events. It will be a success when people consider it a true example of Madison's personality, and it creates a sense of place on the South Side. When people think of Friends Applaud as the number one thing to "go to" when they want to experience the culture of Madison, we will have succeeded.

Key to success

There are Two Keys to Success:

1. Location. Location. Location. Being a new neighborhood restaurant and live entertainment spot in a developing part of town is a challenge but it is exactly what we need to capitalize on. There is a sense of intriguing mystery to a new and awesome place in a part of town no one expects – think Roberta's Pizza place in Brooklyn; when they first opened, it was an intimidating place to get out of a cab. But mainly claim that Roberta's presence changed the neighborhood. We can do the same for South Park Street.

2. Excellent customer service will be paramount. Every restaurant and bar is doing the same thing; offering food and drinks. Few places dedicate their staff to creating a customer experience that goes far beyond a transactional exchange. The food, the wine, the music... Those are all tools to help people become infatuated with us but they will fall in love with us because of how they are treated in our space and how they remember it later. That's the real magic.

Description of business

Friends Applaud will bring a P.M. hangout to the southside of Madison. We will feature great food, select wines, beer people like, and mixed cocktails in a comfortable setting built with beautiful natural wood. We will have great lighting that everyone looks amazing in. There is no bar like it on the South Side. Cordial makes nice drinks but has no food. No other place is open. The neighborhood is badly in need of a 3rd space, a hangout space, a place for neighbors to talk over coffee, beer or dinner. We will have an outdoor fire for people to sit around. We will have live entertainment– music, plays, comedy, an open mic – anything a stage can accommodate.

We will strive not only to be a neighborhood restaurant but a place all of Madison is proud of. When people think of Madison, they add Friends Applaud to the list of things to see and experience.

Company ownership/legal entity

A proposal, all options are still on the table.

- Owner: Adam Benedetto
- Adam likes the idea of having a food focused business partner as we grow. It may be that he will hire a chef and offer them profit sharing. If they prove themselves, they can become a partner.

Location

A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE 1602 GILSON LOCATION

- 1602 Gilson is in a unique part of Madison. It is located just one block from Wingra Creek Bike Path, half a mile from the Goodman Pool, 2.2 miles from the Wisconsin Capitol Building, and 2.2 miles to the Memorial Union Terrace, and 1 mile to the city's beltline of HWY 12/18