

Mary,

As you know, last week City staff and I met with Joe Johnson, Jason Wells, and his father Dale Wells. As expressed previously, both Jason and Joe have felony drug convictions and other criminal arrests. Both have numerous traffic related offenses and both have a violation for urinating in public. Joe Johnson has two previous OWI offenses. Their full criminal/civil histories are available if you request them. Based upon the information in those histories there is concern about allowing Jason and Joe to “be in charge of a large tavern.” Based upon this information, as well as what has been shared with you from Chief Manthey in Portage and Lt. Redman in McFarland I am even more concerned about their ability to manage an operation as proposed. The four months that Jason and Joe managed the bar in Portage did not go well. Both Chief Manthey in Portage, Chief Gould in Cottage Grove, and Lt. Redman in McFarland were adamant in their opinions regarding our approval of this license application.

In addition to these concerns, neither I nor other City staff felt much better following our meeting last week. It was obvious that Dale, who is applying for the license would not be running the operation on a day to day basis. He admitted this to us but claimed he would still be the boss and ultimately in charge. When asked about the business plan he deferred to Jason and Joe.

* Jason and Joe minimized their criminal histories. They live together in Madison. Dale Wells lives in Marshall.

* Both Joe and Jason admitted they have little to no experience running a successful bar/restaurant.

* Joe admitted that he would be the marketing and PR guy, while Jason would be the general manager.

* They stated the two of them would be on-sight all the time.

* When asked about a security plan, we were told that they will “hire their friends” who will watch their back. They later stated that if we required, they could hire a professional security service.

There was a short discussion following our meeting but it was quite clear that Lt. Strong, Mark Woulf, Jennifer Zilavy, and Alder Clausius were in full agreement that it was not in the City’s best interest to support this endeavor.

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