

Members of the ALRC:

I am writing in support of the neighbors who are asking for the attachment of conditions to a renewal of Plan B's liquor license. I have lived on the south side of the 900 block of Jenifer Street for almost 40 years. Because of the acoustics of the street I am not affected as much by sounds emanating from Willy street as residents on the north side are. But in the past I have been involved in noise issues related to loud bands at Wil-Mar or from after-hours house parties across the street.

But perhaps more relevant to the present case, i have spent a considerable amount of time on the boards of both the Marquette Neighborhood Association and the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center where these noise issues are dealt with not only from the perspective of immediate neighbors, but also from the perspective of the entire neighborhood. In the last few years the number of existing entertainment venues on Willy Street, as well as proposed new ones, has increased dramatically. Many of them, even those that are primarily restaurants, are also music venues. Almost all of them want some type of liquor license, and most also want outdoor seating. Taken together all of these desires are clearly a potential recipe for noise production. If each of these venues is granted the right to cause serious disturbance to their immediate neighbors, the combined effect could easily be a change in character not only of Willy Street (which is at least 50% residential) but of Jenifer, and possibly side streets as well.

Are these changes in character necessarily negative? In this case, almost certainly yes. Almost all of the Marquette neighborhood, including Willy Street, are in one of two historic districts. One of the major concerns in this area is preservation of the buildings, both residential and commercial. This preservation is closely tied to owner occupancy and maintenance. For the residential properties this means to a great extent occupancy by families, often with children. But it is exactly this type of occupancy that is most threatened by such factors as noise, especially at night.

The moral of this story is that if this kind of commercial enterprise is allowed to continue and to expand on Willy Street it needs to be done with almost zero "pollution" into the surrounding areas. In the case of Plan B, in spite of the fact that sound level measurements by the city indicate levels within legal limits, it is clear from the stated experience of neighbors that noise produced by Plan B, particularly bass frequencies emanating from the building, is causing serious disruption in the lives of these families. And from the report of the consultants hired by Plan B itself, it is clear that not only is this type of sound "pollution" emanating from the roof of the building, but there is also a good chance that a known roof treatment is available that will ameliorate the situation. However, for whatever reason Plan B has chosen to try to avoid this course of action and in the process has publicly distorted the situation as well as the motives of both the neighbors and the alder. The neighbors are asking, not that you deny an extension of Plan B's license, but that you attach as a condition the requirement that they deal effectively with the noise-related problem they have created. I strongly support this course of action.

Sincerely,  
Peter Wolff

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