

From: Gregory Conniff
Sent: July 23, 2018 12:51 PM
To: Parks, Timothy <TParks@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Change of Thought

Hello Tim

On Thursday there was a neighborhood meeting with regards to the proposed deck at Grampa's. I had to leave early, but things I learned at that meeting have given me pause about my support of the project. I'm now more inclined to oppose the construction of the deck, but am talking with other people to better understand what is going on. Please do not make my support email part of the record for the Planning Commission. I will write another in a few days.

I was interested that Gilbert Altschul did not attend the meeting. Instead, his older brother Phil represented the restaurant. He revealed that he and his wife had just finalized an agreement with Gilbert to make them part owners of his businesses. Asked about the percentage of ownership, Phil said "it's sort of a sliding scale," a statement that could mean a number of things. On reflection I take it to mean that Gilbert is selling the business to his brother over time. (Here is an article where Gilbert talks about the unknown character of his future in Madison: https://madison.com/wsj/entertainment/dining/gib-s-bar-owner-and-former-manager-reeling-from-facebook/article_8b54f981-9e9f-54f6-a75e-e414d1e6a7d7.html).

One thing for certain, however, the business that applied for the conditional use permit is different than the one moving forward. Phil said that he and his wife will bring management expertise to Grampa's and Gib's, to balance Gilbert's creativity. As far as I can learn online, neither of them has experience in restaurant management. I wish them well, but the neighborhood has not lived with what the restaurant and bar will be like under their management. My immediate thought is that we shelve the project until we have some history with the new firm.

One possibility that concerns me — but is pure speculation on my part — is that the addition of the deck is about making the business more attractive to an unknown buyer rather than about any immediate need the restaurant has to deal with crowds. The stated reason for opening Gib's was to relieve wait times for Grampa's by giving patrons a place to gather with friends and beverages while their table became free. It is my understanding that the social media kerfuffle has reduced traffic at both sites, rendering moot the question of a need for more seating, but I could be wrong.

My property, right behind Grampa's, was vacant last year so I have no information about noise from either of the Altschul businesses. However, neighbors at the corner of E. Wilson talked about disturbing late-night noise from the rear of Gib's. They were not at home when I dropped by to talk with them, so my understanding of their issue is incomplete. My intention is to pursue a conversation with them in the next few days. Phil Altschul said that this was a matter of management and that under his and his wife's control this situation would not continue. Again, the neighborhood lacks experience with the new team.

Before Gramap's opened I met with Gilbert and talked about my concerns as his backyard neighbor, principally about noise and about there being no rear deck. I have had no problems

with him or the restaurant. All of the businesses owned by the Altschul family have been positive additions to their neighborhoods, from my point of view. My immediate concern is with the depth of what I don't know about the current movement within Gilbert's businesses — and long-term what it means to maintain a *neighborhood* in the heart of an exploding entertainment district.

Thank you. I'll get back to you with something more clear in a bit.

Greg Conniff