Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission
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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES CONTROL COMMISSION ADVISORY REGARDING LOCAL LICENSING AUTHORITIES' APPROVAL OF OUTDOOR SEATING

On June 1, 2020, Governor Charlie Baker issued an Order Clarifying the Progression of the Commonwealth's Phased Workplace Re-Opening Plan and Authorizing Certain Re-Opening Preparations at Phase II Workplaces, which, in part, details the process for reopening establishments for on-premises consumption. The text of the Governor's Order can be found HERE.

When the Governor declares that the Commonwealth has entered Phase II of its reopening plan all licensees for on-premises consumption of alcohol may commence outdoor table service only. Indoor service will remain prohibited until further order from the Governor.

The Governor's Order also grants the local licensing authorities ("LLA") the authority to expand alcohol licensees' licensed premises for outdoor seating in an expedited process.

Pursuant to the Governor's Order, on application from a licensee that serves alcohol for on-premises consumption[1], the LLA may alter the description of the licensee's licensed premises to expand for outdoor seating that the LLA deems "reasonable and proper." The LLA does not need to comply with M.G.L. c. 138, § 15A, and therefore does not need to provide advance notice to abutters or hold a public hearing on the application. LLAs must continue to follow the ABCC's guidelines issued in 2015 for the approval of outdoor seating, which can be found HERE.

ABCC approval is not required on these applications. Upon approval from the LLA the LLA may issue the amended license forthwith. The LLA must provide notice by mail to the ABCC on all application approvals. For further guidance on the process of approving and issuing these amended licenses LLAs should consult with their counsel.

Please be aware that all expanded premises approved pursuant to this Order are only effective through November 1, 2020, or until the Order is rescinded, whichever is sooner, and revert to their original licensed premises on that date.

The ABCC continues to retain supervision and oversight of all alcohol licensees, including those that expand their licensed premises pursuant to this Order. As always, all licensees must ensure that they comply with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and that sales of

[1] This includes restaurants, bars, hotels, general-on-premises, clubs, war veterans' clubs, continuing care retirement communities, pub-brewers (M.G.L. c. 138, §§ 12 and 19D), farmer-series pouring permits, and manufacturers' pouring permits (M.G.L. c. 138, §§ 19(b), 19B(n), 19C(n), and 19E(o)).

alcoholic beverages take place only as authorized by federal, state, and local law. All questions should be directed to Executive Director Ralph Sacramone at (617) 727-3040 x 731.

(Issued June 1, 2020)