

Good Neighbors Report

To: PS&L Committee

RE: **Taqueria Gran Morelos LLC, 1141 N. Memorial Dr.**

Cinthia Esqueda, Applicant (Agent)

Vincent Esqueda, Applicant (President)

Date of meeting: Thursday, July 11, 2019

Date of PS&L agenda: Tuesday, July 23, 2019

Departments present: City Attorney, City Clerk, Building, Health, City Development, Police Department

Topics discussed:

- **Potential issues with location and hours:** RPD and other staff have concerns given the applicant's plan to operate his restaurant until 1:00a.m., in what is a very residential neighborhood with very little available parking. Currently, the only other restaurant in the area that serves alcohol is Taqueria Arandas, which closes at 10:00p.m. RPD relayed concerns that this will become a gathering spot for late night attendees looking for food and alcohol. These concerns were relayed to Mr. Esqueda, who stated that he will stay open until 1:00a.m. and reassess in the future, if necessary.
- **Agent/management unclear:** Mr. Esqueda indicated that the agent for the license is his daughter, Cinthia Esqueda, but that his other daughter, Diana, will be in charge of the restaurant. Neither daughter appeared at the Good Neighbors meeting and it is unclear what, if any, experience they have in operating a restaurant or serving alcohol.
- **Background check:** Statement on application by Vincent Esqueda reflects no prior convictions and no pending cases; however:
 - **2017.** Mr. Esqueda was charged criminally with domestic disorderly conduct in March '17; he completed an educational course for domestic violence and resolved the matter with a non-criminal conviction for domestic disorderly conduct in July '17.
 - **2019.** Mr. Esqueda was charged with domestic unlawful use of telephone (threatening harm) on July 11, 2019—initial appearance only minutes before Good Neighbors mtg. The false statement on the application is grounds for disqualification. If convicted of the second offense, then Mr. Esqueda is also disqualified under Guideline #3. Explanation or amended application?
- **Misc. issues:**
 - Construction of restaurant nearly complete. Mr. Esqueda is aware of the conditional grant of the license, which must be surrendered if not open within 6 mos (w/ potential 3 mo extension).
 - Licensed premise description required clarification and now includes: first floor dining room, basement storage room, exterior deck and patio, and walk-in cooler in storage shed.
 - A brief review of local and state regulations governing alcoholic beverages was given to Mr. Esqueda, along with information on where to find relevant law/regulations.

Overall summary:

Mr. Esqueda has been a businessman for over 30 years, and, more specifically, has operated Taqueria Gran Morelos for 21 years as a family-oriented, carry-out restaurant. However, this will be his first experience holding Class "B" and "C" licenses, as well as operating a restaurant until 1 a.m. The sale of beer and wine coupled with these closing hours in a residential neighborhood was an area of concern for the Racine Police Department. Although the municipality may not restrict the hours for a Class "B" premises once the license has been approved, it can deny a license based on the above concerns. If Mr. Esqueda would like to amend his application to change his hours, the Committee may wish to defer the application and reconsider it once the amendment has been made and approve the application with the specific condition that he only be open until a certain time every night. Mr. Esqueda functions as the president of Taqueria Gran Morelos LLC, and his daughter, Cinthia, is the listed agent (and will be responsible to the City). However, Mr. Esqueda's daughter, Diana, is the restaurant manager. It is uncertain how often the responsible persons/licensees will be present at the restaurant to handle matters when they arise. Generally, Mr. Esqueda is a familiar face and established businessman within the City, and he seems to generally understand what the City expects from him in regards to this establishment; however, his daughters may not have the same familiarities and restaurant know-how.