

Council supports some alcohol licenses

By Jessica M. Smith

Wed Jan 30, 2008, 11:38 AM EST

From the West Roxbury, MA, Transcript.

West Roxbury - The West Roxbury Neighborhood Council continued its struggle last week to decide which alcohol license-seeking establishments should receive the group's support.

The organization voted on Jan. 22 to support a license sought by Comella's restaurant on Centre Street, while Speedy Mart on Washington Street was not backed.

For members of the organization, who are appointed by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the predicament is balancing what's good for the residents with how to continue to attract businesses to West Roxbury.

Comella's, at 1844 Centre St., failed to receive support for a license when its owners sought one a year ago, but this time received overwhelming support from the council.

According to J.P. Comella, any alcohol at his restaurant would be served by an owner or a manager — all of whom are TIPS (Training for Intervention ProcedureS) trained. TIPS is education and training for the responsible service, sale and consumption of alcohol. It is designed to prevent intoxication, underage drinking and drunken driving.

"I don't think we're going to have a problem with people walking out plastered," said Comella.

Peter Patel, proprietor of the Speedy Mart at 4889 Washington St., asked that the council support his application for a license to sell beer and wine. According to Patel's attorney, Arthur Pearlman, Patel wants to sell alcoholic beverages from a vacant and dilapidated store adjacent to his business. In return for getting a license, Patel promised to renovate and revitalize the space he rents.

Patel, who failed to receive much support in November from the West Roxbury Civic and Improvement Association, declined to sway the council.

"We don't want it period," testified Civic and Improvement President Olivia Waishek, who added that she had nothing against the applicant.

According to Boston Police Community Service Sergeant Ken Jameson, who described the BPD's position as unbiased, there are no convenience stores in West Roxbury that only sell beer and wine without hard liquor.

Both applicants will next plead their cases before the Boston Licensing Commission. Although the commission is an independent body, it customarily takes the wishes of residents and neighborhood groups into account.