
Restaurant and cigar bar in Bethlehem gets city OK for liquor license transfer

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BETHLEHEM, Pa. — City Council on Wednesday approved an intermunicipal liquor license transfer for what developers described as an upscale American restaurant and cigar bar planned for Bethlehem's southern corridor.

Council voted 5-1 on the transfer request from Cigar Page-Bethlehem LLC, with Councilwoman Colleen Laird dissenting. City Councilman Michael Colón was absent.

Concerns from council members included calling for ample ventilation for the 225-seat establishment at 1010 Harvard Ave. and requesting collaborations with local businesses in the food and alcohol offerings.

Located in a predominantly commercial and industrial area just east of Route 412 and north of the city's border with Hellertown, the restaurant is planned to be open by this time next year, serving burgers, flatbreads and other American-style food.

The design includes a main ground-level floor and second-floor mezzanine, and an outdoor patio facing Route 412, with access from that roadway and Harvard Avenue.

Hours are expected to be 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays.

"This is not designed to be a late-night establishment," said Anthony Brichta of Norris McLaughlin firm, representing the applicant.

"It's primarily a bar and restaurant, and cigar sales."

Developers said the project will create 25 jobs. The applicant also plans to relocate its corporate headquarters from Bath to the Bethlehem site to offer another 50 jobs.

"I just thank council for considering it. The license is an integral part of the plan there. We planned at least 75 jobs to be brought into the city and hopefully grow from there."

Cigar Page CEO Keith Meier

The cigar distributor's website says it offers "America's best cigar deals" and other accessories, such as lighters, cutters and humidors.

Bethlehem City Council's approval of the liquor license transfer came following a public hearing, one that drew no takers, to determine "whether allowing the liquor license at this location would adversely affect the health, safety and general welfare of the community," Brichta said.

Regarding council concerns on the conditions for patrons, city officials confirmed additional code requirements are included in the development process for this type of establishment.

"Significant air filtration systems" would be worked into the build, they said, and Cigar Page confirmed it would seek proper clean-air exemption as required.

"There's not a lot of restaurants down that row as far as Bethlehem restaurants — Hellertown has some great ones — but it'd be great to see some restaurants down there. We definitely appreciate the addition of 75 jobs."

Bethlehem City Councilwoman Rachel Leon

"It's really interesting to see a restaurant in an industrial area — I appreciate that," Councilwoman Rachel Leon said.

Following council approval, the applicant still has to apply and be approved for the transfer by the state Liquor Control Board.

Cigar Page acquired the license from Spring Mineral Restaurant and Bar LLC, which last used it at 702-706 Main St., Northampton.

Meier said his business also operates a warehouse distribution center in East Allen Township.

Triple Net Investments LX LLC, the owner of the 5-acre lot at 1010 Harvard Ave., got a \$175,000 Enterprise Zone tax credit back in 2022 — at one point planning to spend \$6 million to build a 53,000-square-foot manufacturing facility at the Bethlehem site.

Cigars International, where Meier was the founder and chief executive officer from 1996-2011, operates its headquarters and distribution facility about a mile to the north on Spillman Drive at Lehigh Valley Industrial Park VII.