

City of Costa Mesa
Development Services Department

APR 06 2010

VII.4
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April 6, 2010

Dear James Righeimer,

The Avalon Bar is instrumental in the drive to improve the Westside of Costa Mesa, specifically the block along 19th street between Placentia and Monrovia. The Avalon Bar has spent thousands of dollars and an untold amount of man hours to refurbish the exteriors of three properties along 19th street. (827 W. 19th Street, 814 W. 19th Street and 820 19th Street). New paint, exterior lighting, fencing to cut down on noise and obscure the Avalon patrons who smoke from public view, and new landscaping as a few examples. Since that was completed, Detroit Bar has modified their exterior to mimic the upscale look of the Avalon Bar. In the recent years, the homeless population in the immediate area has diminished due to our efforts. We recycle all of our own glass and plastic to cut down on the trash digging. We have even taken it upon ourselves to paint over graffiti on neighboring businesses and have repainted and replaced damaged and decaying signage on buildings that neighbor ours, at our own expense.

We have recently modified our sound system in the following ways to eliminate the exterior noise impact. The two interior speakers have been modified to aim away from any doors or openings and have been angled down and towards the center of the building. Before, they had been pointed towards the rear of the building. Along with that, a master volume control has been added to the system to eliminate any chance that the music will exceed a certain level. We have also began phasing out bass, heavy music and are leaning towards jazz and instrumental types of music. We have had a company perform a sound decibel reading and the noise from the interior to the exterior of the Avalon Bar has been effectively eliminated.

The five bars in the immediate area, Tiki Bar included, have been active establishments for decades. There have been no new bars added in decades either. The only progressive movement towards improving these local establishments in the last 20 years has been the changes made to the Avalon Bar and the adjoining properties listed above. Proudly, the Avalon Bar has the best police record in Costa Mesa in the last 6 1/2 years, with zero police calls and zero actions taken against it by the Police Department, the City of Costa Mesa, and the Alcohol Beverage Control board.

The arrow sign was an original sign to the bar that we painstakingly restored and re-installed. The alternative was a banner, which the neighboring tire shops utilize and we feel degrade the area and cheapen the street. The arrow sign is not a flashing or strobe type of sign, which is prohibited in the city. We felt that it was a significant architectural landmark sign that deserved to be restored and put back on display. The city supports protecting visual landmarks and the process to restore this sign was costly, but is now considered a symbol that the area is changing for the better.

We have studied our patrons over the last few years and find that they tend to park either in our rear parking area or directly across the street and beside Alejandro's restaurant. We have always reminded our patrons to keep the noise down when exiting the establishment, which they respectfully do. Our customers tend to be between the ages of 25 to 40 and college educated. We don't attract the usual "dive bar" crowd and believe the exterior rehabilitation and interior atmosphere reflect this. In the last 6 1/2 years of ownership, we have never had a fight of argument at the bar and are very proud of this fact. Patrons are monitored carefully by our doorman and never exit the bar with glasses, bottles, cans or anything purchased from the Avalon Bar.

Our smoking patio was constructed to lessen the visual impact of patrons standing outside to smoke. We used a rare and stainable wood with stainless fasteners and added appealing landscaping along the front, so our guests would not be visible to the traffic passing along 19th street. The smoking patio would not be modified and would stay as it is with the approval of this modification. Without approval, our patio would be removed and the visual impact would be negative. I personally believe that blocking the patrons who are outside the bar from the traffic on 19th street, is both visually pleasing and safer for both the guests and traffic along this street.

The main reason we wish to modify our license and increase our hours of operation is that we cannot compete with Detroit, Garibaldi de Noche, or Tiki Bar, who have a full bar menu and can undercut us to the point that they eliminate almost all customers. If we cannot compete, we must sell and this bar will likely follow the latest trend and become a bikini bar or possibly another mariachi bar, which will certainly attract a different crowd.

I am a widowed mother of two young girls and the work that I put into this establishment is specifically for them and my goal is to bring a positive element to this run down and long ignored block of Costa Mesa. I am a Costa Mesa resident myself and I do hope that you will support me in my desperately needed license modification. I just cannot compete against the other, larger establishments and need our help now more than ever.

Sincerely,

Shelly Leonard