



CITY OF OAK PARK

Mayor
Marian McClellan
Mayor Pro Tem
Paul Levine
Council Members
Michael Seligson
Carolyn Burns
Kiesha Speech
City Manager
Erik Tungate

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**The First Bottle from the First Box of the First Shipment to the First Establishment
to Receive a Class C Liquor License in the City of Oak Park**
The Former Dry Community Has Spirit

August 25, 2015, Oak Park, Michigan – You are cordially invited to participate in the unveiling of the first bottle from the first box of the first shipment to the recently licensed establishment to receive a Class C liquor license in the City of Oak Park. On Thursday, August 27, at 1 p.m. Sahara Restaurant & Grill, located on the corner of Coolidge and 10 Mile Road, in Oak Park, will mark the historical occasion by inviting City of Oak Park officials and the press. Sahara co-owner Zeana Attisha made her first purchase after receiving her Class C Liquor License and would like to invite those entities which played a role in bringing the issue to the forefront, and to voter discretion, together to witness the unveiling of the first bottle delivered under the new liquor license classification.

“It’s a historic moment for the city,” said City Manager Erik Tungate. “It memorializes the will of our electorate from the May 5 election, and delivers the promise of economic viability to a city that has missed out on attracting local commerce and national restaurant chains. With this additional business recruitment tool, we now have a full array of incentives to attract new restaurants and bolster the ones we already have.”

The ability to serve beer, wine and mixed drinks by the glass at licensed establishments within the City will enhance the City’s tax base. Under the Michigan Liquor Control Commission guidelines, a liquor license can be issued to one business for every 1,500 residents, allowing for approximately 20 available licenses within the City of Oak Park. The City can now attract national chain restaurants that were previously unable to consider Oak Park a viable location until the Class C Liquor License was available.

“This is a courageous step forward for a vibrant future,” said Mayor Marian McClellan. “Allowing family restaurants - such as Sahara’s - to serve beer, wine and mixed drinks from the glass with meals, over pleasant and neighborly conversation, and in accommodating environments shows promise in attracting the type of commerce that can spur economic development within our city while delivering amenities to the citizens who would love to patronize businesses close to home.”

“Passage of the Class C liquor license by voter approval was a sign that our community is ready for change,” said City Manager Tungate. “However, the delivery of the first shipment to the City is a symbolic confirmation that the City’s economic strategy, along with Sahara Restaurant & Grill and the Oak Park business community, is moving forward.”

It is noteworthy, to mention the role that the press has played in delivering the news, uncovering the debate, and informing the public so they can become a part of the approval process. This is one of those rare occasions

when we can symbolically mark the moment when residents, businesses, the press, and the government worked together on a plan to improve the economy.

The big question of the occasion scheduled for 1 p.m. on Thursday, August 27 at Sahara Restaurant & Grill will likely be, "What brand will be the first bottle unveiled to mark this wonderful occasion?" Be assured, it's not planned, but rather by design, and will surprise us all.

We hope you will join us!

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Location: Sahara Restaurant & Grill, 24770 Coolidge Highway, Oak Park, MI 48237 (at the corner of 10 Mile Road and Coolidge)

Time/Day: Thursday, August 27 at 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Relevant History:

- Oak Park, a village until 1945, voted in 1945 on a city charter which included a prohibition on the sale of alcohol.
- Voters and city council, on several occasions, refused to repeal the prohibition on beer, wine and alcohol on several occasions, including 1954, 1966 and 2005.
- In July 2013, the Oak Park five-member City Council voted 3 to 1, with one absent council member, to approve measures to allow restaurants to serve beer and wine by the glass with city-issued tavern licenses, under certain conditions. Restaurants:
 - are required to be at least 500 feet from any school, park or place of worship
 - must seat at least 40 individuals
 - must have at least 10 food items on the menu
 - must limit their income from alcohol to 50 percent of their total sales
 - must stop selling alcohol after midnight
 - will not be considered for a license if they permit nudity or topless activity
- The Michigan Liquor Control Commission allows cities to authorize one tavern license per 1,500 residents. With over 29,000 residents, Oak Park qualifies for approximately 20 licenses.
- In May 2015, with 58% supportive vote, residents voted to allow the City of Oak Park to issue Class C license to qualifying establishments. Establishments in the City of Oak Park that get approval for a Class C liquor license will allow them to serve mixed drinks by the glass to their patrons under the same conditions set forth under tavern license requirements mentioned above.

About The City of Oak Park:

The City of Oak Park is situated on the southern-most border of Oakland County, Michigan, and serves as a suburban ambassador to Detroit. Incorporated as a city in 1945, Oak Park's current population exceeds 29,300 and is home to more than 500 local businesses, including corporate headquarters.

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