

September 9, 2022

Vincent P. Bertoni, AICP (vince.bertoni@lacity.org)
Director of Planning
Los Angeles City Planning
201 N Figueroa St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Conditional Use Permit for 5122 York Blvd.

Dear Mr. Bertoni:

The Historic Highland Neighborhood Council represents more than 60,000 Los Angeles stakeholders who reside, own property, or conduct business in our neighborhood. The neighborhood council is a public forum for discussing community issues and its board members are elected representatives who consider and discuss community concerns, opinions, and requests.

At the July 19 and August 16, 2022 meetings of the HHPNC Land Use Committee, Mark Blatty of Byron Blatty Wines spoke to the committee and residents about his plans for opening a wine tasting room and retail business at 5122 York Blvd. In the first meeting, he presented his blueprints for his retail space and the history of his company, which was founded in 2014 as an online retail operation that makes wines from sustainably grown Los Angeles County grapes. His interest in opening a tasting room and brick and mortar retail space was born from the financial challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to have a physical presence in his community for residents to taste and purchase Blatty wines and wine club memberships.

His proposed tasting room will have 400 square feet of retail space and seating for 15 people. A small patio in the back may have additional seating for 12 more people. The back patio is approximately 50 feet from the property line to the parcel immediately behind his leased space and should not present a nuisance to his closest residential neighbors. He plans to be open to the public four days per week. On weekdays, the business will be open from mid-day or mid-afternoon to 8:00 or 9:00 pm. On Fridays and Saturdays, the business will be open to 10:00 pm. The tasting room could also be available for third-party events. Blatty, a 10-year resident of Mount Washington, spoke passionately about his love for the Highland Park community and his interest in becoming an active community member that supports community and civic causes. He also spoke about his interest in working with other York Blvd. businesses to enhance the appearance and cleanliness of York Blvd. sidewalks and other public places. He hopes to open the Byron Blatty Wines Tasting Room in early 2023.

A dozen or so residents participating in the July 19th Land Use Committee meeting expressed their concerns regarding the area's lack of parking, which could be exacerbated by the opening of another business with a conditional use permit selling alcohol. Residents were also concerned about the business being able to provide a wine tasting flight affordable to lower-income residents, and the physical appearance of businesses and sidewalks on York Blvd., which several residents identified as dirty and unpleasant. At the August 16th Land Use Committee meeting, approximately a dozen customers and

neighbors of Mr. Blatty expressed their support for his proposed brick and mortar retail venture, speaking to the quality of his products and the strength of his character. Responding to a few residents voicing their concerns about his enterprise, Mr. Blatty reaffirmed his commitment to be an upstanding member of the York Blvd. business community and his interest in improving the four-block area that has seen a proliferation of restaurants, bars, and boutique businesses over the last 15 years.

While the HHPNC Land Use Committee appreciates the input and concerns of residents regarding parking, the committee feels that the York business district is inherently a walking community. The site of the proposed Byron Blatty Wine Tasting Room at 5122 York Blvd. is within walking access for hundreds if not thousands of residents living nearby. Metro bus and DASH bus access is also available. Regardless, a lack of parking affects most residents of densely populated Highland Park. As such, all residents are encouraged to walk or use ride sharing or public transportation options as our city increases in density.

After thoughtful consideration, the Highland Park Neighborhood Council supports Mr. Blatty's application for a Conditional Use Permit for the on-premises sale and consumption of wine at 5122 York Blvd. pending this project's alignment with all City of Los Angeles and ABC codes and permits. The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council strongly encourages Mr. Blatty to heed the concerns of residents regarding the responsible sale and consumption of alcohol and to follow through on his expressed desire to be a model member of the York Blvd. business community who is committed to enhancing this popular community destination for all residents.

The HHPNC thanks all for their participation in this public discussion.

Sincerely,

Harry Blumsack
President
Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council