

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

IN THE MATTER OF

Café Studio 1537
1537 Dixwell Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut
Evanisha P. Kidd, Permittee
Studio 1537, LLC, Backer
Permit No. LCA.8107
Case No. 2020-783

December 9, 2020

SUMMARY SUSPENSION ORDER

This premises operates under a café liquor permit issued by the Department of Consumer Protection (“DCP”). It operates under the trade name “Café Studio 1537,” and is also known as “Studio 1537.” A permit was first issued on January 18, 2019, and it was renewed on January 24, 2020 with an expiration date of May 17, 2021.

We find that during the evening hours of December 4, 2020, Café Studio 1537 was the scene of a large gathering that violated Governor Ned Lamont’s Executive Orders 7NNN, 7PP, 9, 9D, and 9K and corresponding Phase 2.1 Sector Rules, which were passed in response to the declared COVID-19 public health crisis. The actions of Café Studio 1537 thereby created a public health emergency.

Specifically, in a letter dated December 9 2020, from Hamden Deputy Chief of Police Bo Kicak to DCP Liquor Control Director John Suchy, Deputy Chief Kicak states that Hamden police were dispatched to the premise for an anonymous complaint of an over-capacity crowd. When officers arrived, they observed that the parking lot was completely full and that cars had begun parking on the main road with patrons running across four lanes of traffic to the premise, resulting in traffic congestion. Officers entered the premise, noting that there were no staff members or security guards at the door checking identification or counting the number of patrons gaining entry. Once inside, officers observed approximately 25-30 patrons in the bar area and approximately 150 people “packed” into the right side of the building on what appeared to be a dance floor. These patrons were not practicing social distancing and were dancing in “close proximity” to each other. The investigating officer estimated that over one-half of the patrons were not wearing masks at all, that about one-quarter of the patrons had masks around their chins, and that the remainder of the patrons were fully or partially wearing masks over their mouth and nose.

Officers questioned the permittee, Evanisha Kidd, about the patrons in the premise. Ms. Kidd stated that the event was a private party, and she did not know how many patrons were inside. She stated that patrons entered the premise wearing masks, but she told the officers that she cannot control who wears them once they are inside the premise.

At the time of the event, Sector Rules limited indoor private, social, and recreational gatherings at commercial venues to a cap of twenty-five persons. Moreover, premises were required to ensure that all patrons practice social distancing and wore face masks while not eating. As a result of the activities discovered on the premise by the Hamden police, the Quinnipiac Valley Health District ordered the premise to cease and desist all operations immediately and closed the premise in an order dated December 7, 2020. The order noted the following violations: “(1) Failing to ensure that customers are wearing masks except when dining; (2) Failing to ensure customers remain 6’ apart from each other; (3) Permitting a large gathering inside [the] establishment; [and] (4) Permitting a public health nuisance on your property.”

In sum, as Deputy Chief Kicak stated in his letter: “With a worldwide pandemic currently on the rise, we need to have businesses follow the basic guidelines in order to curb the spread [of] COVID-19. I believe that Ms. Kidd’s reckless behavior during this event at her establishment puts the public at great risk of exposure to this pandemic.”

We find that the December 4, 2020 party and corresponding violations of Governor Lamont’s Executive Orders 7NNN, 7PP, 9, 9D, and 9K and corresponding Phase 2.1 Sector Rules demonstrates that the premise is operated in a manner that imperils public health, and demonstrates the need for better control of the premise by the permittee, backer, or their agents.

Based upon the foregoing, DCP finds that public health, safety and welfare imperatively requires emergency action, in accordance with section 4-182 (c) of the Connecticut General Statutes, and **ORDERS** your café liquor permit **suspended immediately and premises closed** pending proceedings for revocation or other action.

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Michelle Seagull
Commissioner of Consumer Protection
Chairperson, Liquor Control Commission