



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, April 8, 2019

Crest seeks input from residents regarding potential sale of alcohol in borough

Passage of potential referendum would allow for potential issuance of ONE liquor consumption license based on borough's population

WILDWOOD CREST – The Borough of Wildwood Crest is currently soliciting opinions from its residents on whether the borough should permit the sale of alcohol in the borough.

Those who wish to express their thoughts are invited to attend any upcoming meetings of the Wildwood Crest Board of Commissioners, which meets twice per month at Wildwood Crest Borough Hall. A schedule of meetings is available on the borough's website, www.wildwoodcrest.org.

Should a referendum allowing for the sale of alcohol in Wildwood Crest be passed, the borough would be permitted to issue just one plenary retail consumption license (restaurant/bar license) and one plenary retail distribution license (liquor store) based on a New Jersey statute that limits the issuance of liquor licenses by a municipality with respect to its total year-round population. The borough is not required to issue any such license, however.

Should a referendum pass, the Wildwood Crest Board of Commissioners may elect to issue the borough's allowable one consumption license for use in a restaurant and within a designated business zone, which could stimulate additional business growth within that district. The borough can also place restrictions on hours of use of such a license.

If such a license is approved, special event permitting could also be considered by the Board of Commissioners on a case-by-case basis for those events that are in accordance with the character of the borough.

There is an exception to the population limitation statute for hotels or motels that contain at least 100 sleeping rooms. Currently, there are a number of such hotels, motels or condotels in Wildwood Crest. Such hotels and motels would qualify for a consumption license, should the borough decide to issue such licenses upon the passage of a referendum allowing for the sale of alcohol.

Any potential issuance of a liquor license would serve as a one-time financial benefit to the borough via the sale – through auction, bid or other process – of said license.

Wildwood Crest has been a “dry” town since a referendum prohibiting the sale of alcohol in the borough was passed in November 1940. Prior to that referendum, alcohol sales were permitted in Wildwood Crest, in which, at one time, there were two liquor licenses.

The 1940 referendum can only be reversed by another referendum, which could be placed on the ballot for the general election this November. In order for the matter to go to referendum, a petition signed by a minimum of 212 registered voters must be presented to the Board of Commissioners. This petition would have to be organized by a registered voter who cast a ballot in the 2017 general election. Following the submission of such a petition, the governing body must then adopt a resolution requesting the Clerk of Cape May County to include this potential referendum in the next general election.

The Borough of Wildwood Crest Police Department and many of the borough’s various volunteer boards – including the Tourism Development Commission, Recreation Commission, Green Team and Wellness Committee – are currently reviewing the issues related to the potential sale of alcohol in the borough. In addition, the borough has already met with several professional planners, all of whom have stated that the addition of one liquor consumption license is vital to a town that prides itself on being a tourism destination, particularly when all of Wildwood Crest’s surrounding communities all permit the sale of alcohol.

Residents of Wildwood Crest may also express their thoughts on this issue via email to borough administrator Connie Mahon at cmahon@wildwoodcrest.org, borough clerk Patricia Feketics at pfeketics@wildwodcrest.org or to the borough’s general email address, info@wildwoodcrest.org.

For further information, contact the borough clerk’s office at (609) 729-8040.

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