

Christy Teague

From: Ken Robertson
Sent: Monday, January 13, 2020 7:36 AM
To: Christy Teague
Subject: FW: New Permit for M1 Zone

FYI

From: Michael Collins <drmichaelcollins@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 12, 2020 4:03 PM
To: DG_PlanningCommission <DG_PlanningCommission@hermosabeach.gov>
Cc: Suja Lowenthal <suja@hermosabeach.gov>; Ken Robertson <krobertson@hermosabeach.gov>
Subject: New Permit for M1 Zone

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to thank you for the time and energy you have committed to the M1 questions, but even more, for your service to the community. Public service is a big deal and, as we all regularly observe first hand, can often be a pretty thankless job. So... Thank you for your time and service.

As you are considering the new (additional) permit for the M1 zone, and maybe even begin the process of changing some of the code and language, I'd like to highlight a bit about ShockBoxx and what we have observed down on Cypress.

When we moved into the space at 636 Cypress, we replaced tenants who were not paying their rent, hosting after hours parties, causing fights that literally spilled blood in the street and was known to be a location where drugs and money were changing hands. When we moved in, we cleaned out the mess and started an art studio where we would paint and show artworks. In addition to our own work, we started having art openings and inviting the public. Not once did we knowingly or willfully break a rule, law, or feel like we were causing a problem. What we were (and are) doing was welcomed and celebrated by the community. Our efforts and behavior was in line with everything we saw happening on the street.

Since opening we have turned the gallery over to students (for free) to host school art shows, to Keoni Boyd to host a retrospective of his life's work in Hermosa, hosted multiple art shows that served as fundraisers for local charities, and also opened the gallery for several students to install and film art projects as part of their applications to college. Occasionally we hosted larger art shows and would provide beer or wine to the patrons. Alcohol has never been sold at ShockBoxx, and there has never been a single complaint filed from an actual neighbor about noise, crowds, alcohol or any other reason.

The only complaint that has ever been filed about an art event on Cypress was filed by the owner of the Crossfit gym, at a time that coincided with initiating its now ongoing litigation with the city. They targeted ShockBoxx in their lawsuit to attempt to prove a point that they felt they were treated unfairly and forced to close their business. The night they complained about ShockBoxx is when I was made aware that we were out of compliance with needing a business license, a sign permit and an event permit. I was issued the citation on a Saturday night and was standing at City Hall at 9am the following Monday to rectify the entire situation. Within less than 48 hours the ball was rolling toward all permits and licenses being obtained. This was in November of 2018 and we have been completely in compliance since that time.

Alcohol is never a driving force at an art show. Art is the driving force of an art show.

November of 2018 was also the last time there was alcohol at a ShockBoxx event. I point this out because during the last Planning Commission meeting one of the commissioners stated something to the effect of, "all I've seen of the social media and videos of the area suggest that these events are fueled by alcohol." This caused me pause at the moment and then I scoured our social media to look for this evidence. The only thing I can think of that might have mislead the commission about what has been going on at ShockBoxx is that some of you might have been shown a propaganda video made by somebody affiliated with the gym's lawsuit and spread by them on Facebook, Youtube and via email to people in Hermosa Beach. This video is sourced from a video advertisement for an art show that took place at another galley (not Shockboxx, yet it was doctored to appear to be a ShockBox event). Reality not being helpful to their cause, I can only assume that the video was altered and dispersed as a tool for the gym to continue to try and make a case that they feel they were treated unfairly. The truth of the matter is this: we have not provided a drop of alcohol at ShockBoxx

since the November 2018 art show where we were made aware that we are not allowed to do that at public art opening unless we utilize a catering company that has proper ABC permits to provide alcohol. The fact is that alcohol is never a driving force at art openings. And, while we could serve alcohol within the proper guidelines, we've chosen not to go down that path. Why? Because alcohol is not important to what we do and we also understand that we are still in the crosshairs of an ongoing dispute between the city and that gym. In addition, this same video is what was likely shown to the trustees of the Noll building and what has fueled their misguided and factually ill-reasoned opposition to what they think is happening on our end of Cypress. Watch the video again. It is painfully obvious it was doctored and sent around to stir the exact reaction that was mentioned in your previous meeting.

What has happened at ShockBoxx since November of 2018 is that we have been in alignment with all city codes, business licenses, event permits, noise ordinances and anything else related to what we do down at 636 Cypress. We've continued to make art and hold art openings that have captured the attention of artists from as far away as New York and even Europe. People from all over Los Angeles are talking about what's happening in the Hermosa art scene and when they come to the area they stay awhile and enjoy the rest of our city. Not once has there been an incident related to parking, fighting, noise, alcohol consumption, property damage or any need to call or involve police officers or the fire department. We are creating good, enhancing our culture, and providing opportunities, in *our* community, not causing problems.

As you continue to deliberate on this issue and consider language, freedoms and restrictions around the new additional event permit, please take these realities into account and also understand that the paranoia fueled video designed to drum up fears about alcohol and parties at art galleries was just that, a propaganda video made to be a tool for the gym owner to continue to perpetuate his lawsuit against the city.

I write this from our perspective at ShockBoxx, but I can also attest to the events that I've seen take place at the music studios, the surf shop, and at Resin Gallery. The events and the results are all the same. Good people hosting interesting and inspiring, family friendly good opportunities for the community to come together and celebrate creativity.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with any of you to discuss these topics, or to answer any questions about what we have done, are doing, or hope to see happen in the future.

Thank you for your time,

Mike Collins