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COMMUNITY BOARD 12-MANHATTAN

SLA LICENSING MANUAL

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I. Introduction

The purpose of this SLA Licensing Manual (this “**Manual**”) is to provide applicants for a restaurant wine or liquor license – or for some related application – with the information necessary to appear before and receive an opinion from Community Board 12-Manhattan (“**CB12M**” or the “**Board**”) on their application.

In New York City, restaurants and bars (together with any other legal entity required to submit a notice for alcohol-related purposes, “**Establishments**”) are required to submit a notice to their local community board when first applying for a license issued by the State Liquor Authority (the “**SLA**”) and every two years after receiving a license to renew it. Certain other actions by Establishments holding a license also require notice to the local community board. Establishments must provide this notice at least 30 days prior to the decision being rendered.

For CB12M, all notices are paired with the review and consideration of the Board’s Licensing Committee. The Licensing Committee meets monthly to deliberate on applications presented to it by Establishments. This Manual provides a comprehensive guide for Establishments to review as they prepare for their notice and related submission to CB12M. This Manual does not provide detailed information about other aspects of SLA’s licensing process, except that it provides useful links to resources that may provide that additional detail.

II. Scope

CB12M is a community board with authority granted under the Chapter 70 of the [New York City Charter](#). CB12M represents the Washington Heights and Inwood neighborhoods of Manhattan (New York County). This district runs from 155th Street to 220th Street / Ninth Avenue – “river to river,” meaning both the eastern and western borders of Manhattan. This Manual applies to any Establishment that is located within the description of the district.

In New York, the legal requirements regarding licensing related to alcohol are set forth in the Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) Law, which could be found [here](#).

III. Community Board 12-Manhattan

CB12M requires that Establishments for any application provide the following materials no later than the Friday prior to the meeting (check the Board’s calendar on [its website](#) for scheduling details) for consideration by its Licensing Committee. The members of the Licensing Committee may ask any question related to these materials for their edification, and failing to provide a response at a meeting of the Licensing Meeting *could* result in a recommendation to withdraw or a vote to object the application.

a. 30 Days' Notice

After applying through the SLA, Establishments within the district must provide 30 days' prior notice to CB12M using the [Standardized Form](#) provided by the SLA. This form must be completed in full and submitted to the CB12M Office by the prescribed deadline. The form may be completed electronically, including with an e-signature (see [here](#) for New York's Electronic Signatures and Records Act, or "ESRA," and the implementing regulations by OTI with further details). The form may also be completed by hand and signed with blue or black ink. In either case, the form can be submitted:

- (1) *PREFERRED METHOD*: Via email to cb12m@cb.nyc.gov; or
- (2) Via certified mail with return receipt requested; or
- (3) Overnight delivery service with proof of mailing; or
- (4) In-person at the Board's office during business hours.¹

An application is automatically deemed incomplete if the notice is not provided with 30 calendar days' advance notice. The application may be considered during the following month's Licensing Committee meeting or otherwise requested for resubmission.

For the purposes of this Manual, the notice must be received on the 30th day – meaning, any service used to deliver the notice must ensure the notice is provided no later than the 30th day. If the 30th day falls on a weekend or holiday, Establishments should take all efforts to provide notice on the business day immediately preceding the 30th day (e.g., if the 30th day falls on a Saturday, then the notice should be made on the preceding Friday).

An application is automatically deemed incomplete if the notice is signed by anyone other than a "principal" of the Establishment. It is generally understood that a "principal" of a legal entity is someone with ownership interest in that legal entity. It is not a person authorized to act as agent for the legal entity, including a representative or legal counsel.

The completed notice will be provided to the Licensing Committee with the other application materials for review. This notice may be used to confirm the accuracy of details across application materials, so it is strongly recommended that the comparable fields are completed using the same information as appropriate.

b. CB12M Materials for All Applications

For all applications submitted to the Board with respect to an SLA-related application, Establishments must submit the following materials by the deadline set by the Board's office in the receipt of the 30 days' notice.

i. *Applicant Questionnaire Form*

Establishments must complete all applicable fields of the Applicant Questionnaire Form

¹ The Board's office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00a.m. ET to 5:00p.m. ET, except for holidays prescribed by the City of New York as shown [here](#).

(the “**Questionnaire**”) for submission to CB12M. If it is determined at the relevant meeting of the Licensing Committee that the Questionnaire is not complete because one or more applicable fields were left blank at the time of submission, the Licensing Committee may exercise appropriate discretion as follows:

- If the missing field is necessary for the Licensing Committee to render a decision, the Licensing Committee shall recommend withdrawal of the application and resubmission for the following month.
 - The Establishment may proceed with a vote, to which the members of the Licensing Committee enter as they please.
- If the missing field is not necessary for the Licensing Committee to render a decision, the Licensing Committee may proceed with a stipulation requiring the Establishment to update and re-submit the Questionnaire by the Friday prior to the general meeting of the Board for that month.

Once the form is complete, the Owner of the Establishment must print their name on the last page and sign the form. While the form calls for a wet-ink signature in blue or black ink, the Board will also accept electronic signature pursuant to the ESRA and its implementing regulations. The Questionnaire will be deemed incomplete if the Owner does not print and sign the Questionnaire by the deadline and when submitted. CB12M will ask the Establishment to return during the following month’s meeting in this case.

If the Establishment is being represented by an agent – including legal counsel – before CB12M, this representative must also print and sign their name on the last page of the Questionnaire. If the representative does not print and sign their name on the Questionnaire by the deadline and when submitted, the representative ***may not*** speak on behalf of the Establishment at the meeting. For the avoidance of doubt, signatures will not be accepted at the relevant meeting of the Licensing Committee to bypass this requirement.

The Questionnaire is available on CB12M’s website in [PDF](#) and [Word](#) format. Establishments should come prepared to answer questions about their Questionnaire’s responses. Common questions include whether the hours of operation are appropriate for the proposed business, whether the staffing and security plan is sufficient for the proposed operations, and information about disclosed SLA violations and penalties.

ii. CB12M Public Hearing Notices

Establishments must post on or around the entrances to their Establishments the CB12M Public Hearing Notice, which contains the name of the Establishment and the relevant details of the meeting of the Licensing Committee where the Establishment’s application is being considered. There are two postings – one in the English language and one in the Spanish language – and ***both*** must be posted. These postings must be visible to any passerby on the sidewalk.

If the Establishment uses a gate to secure their premises, the Establishment must move

the postings to the outside of the gate when the gate is closed; conversely, the Establishment must move the postings to the entrance when the gate is opened.

For the application to CB12M, Establishments must submit a photograph of the postings. One or more photographs may be necessary to demonstrate that the postings were presented in both languages. It must be easily demonstrable from the photographs that the postings are viewable by the public without needing to step into the Establishment. Grainy photographs are not acceptable for the application.

If the Establishment fails to submit one or more photographs proving the postings were made and in both languages by the deadline and at submission, the application will be deemed incomplete. The Licensing Committee will typically recommend withdrawal of the application; however, if the Establishment chooses to proceed with a vote, the members of the Licensing Committee may enter their votes as they please. An Establishment may not provide photographs at the meeting in the effort to make their application complete.

c. CB12M Materials for Applicants for a New License

For applications for a new SLA-related license submitted to the Board, Establishments must submit the following materials in addition to those set forth in Section III.b.i above.

i. *Proposed Floor Plan*

The Establishment must submit a copy of the proposed floor plan of their premises. The floor plan must display the general dimensions of the premises, the anticipated table-and-seating arrangements, and the access points to the premises and the restrooms. It is encouraged that the floor plan is designed digitally and not completed by hand without proper training. The Licensing Committee may reject an application if these basic elements are not presented on the floor plan.

Establishments should come prepared to answer questions about the floor plan. Common questions include whether the premises are accessible by the standards set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), whether the restrooms are accessible by customers, and whether the table-and-seating arrangement conforms with the occupancy limits set for the premises.

If the Establishment seeking a new license fails to submit a floor plan by the deadline and at submission, the application will be deemed incomplete. The Licensing Committee will typically recommend withdrawal of the application; however, if the Establishment chooses to proceed with a vote, the members of the Licensing Committee may enter their votes as they please. An Establishment may not provide the floor plan at the meeting in the effort to make their application complete.

ii. *Proposed Menu*

In general, Establishments that serve alcohol must provide food options for sale to their patrons. The permissibility of food options varies depending on the type of license being sought. Further, Establishments that would face restrictions under the “500 Foot Rule” (see Section IV below for more details) would need to attend a [hearing](#) with the SLA to pursue their license, where the SLA considers if the public interest would be served by the Establishment. For CB12M’s consideration, the Licensing Committee typically wants to understand the genre of food options to consider whether they’re too similar to other offerings in the area.

Thus, the Establishment must submit a copy of the proposed menu, presenting the offerings available at the time in which the Establishment is open. The menu must provide the current and proposed food offerings – if different – as well as include the types of alcoholic beverages to be served once licensed. If the Establishment plans to open for multiple seatings (e.g., Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner), the menu should include the offerings for each seating. The menu must include pricing for the offerings.

If the Establishment seeking a new license fails to submit a menu by the deadline and at submission, the application will be deemed incomplete. The Licensing Committee will typically recommend withdrawal of the application; however, if the Establishment chooses to proceed with a vote, the members of the Licensing Committee may enter their votes as they please. An Establishment may not provide the menu at the meeting in the effort to make their application complete.

iii. Health Inspection Card (if available)

If available, the Establishment must submit a copy of its most recent health inspection card as provided by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“**DMHM**”). DMHM makes information about health inspections publicly available on [ABC Eats](#); thus, Establishments should come prepared to answer questions about the findings of their inspections and especially if the grade is less than an “A.” The Licensing Committee wishes to ensure that Establishments in the district can operate safely and soundly, and negative findings regarding food service – which is mandatory for most alcohol service – is indicative of the likely quality of service to be rendered for alcohol.

The Licensing Committee understands that DMHM is operating with a backlog and does not need to be reminded of this fact each month. If asked during a meeting of Licensing Committee about a missing health inspection card, the answer that one has not yet been issued suffices, provided that ABC Eats confirms this assertion.

d. CB12M Materials for Applicants for Renewals

For applications to renew an SLA-related license submitted to the Board, Establishments must submit the following materials in addition to those set forth in Section III.b.i above.

i. Existing SLA-Related License

The Establishment must submit a copy of the existing SLA-related license for their premises. Grainy photographs of the license will not be accepted. Establishments should come prepared to answer questions about the license, as applicable. For example, if the license had already expired by the time the meeting takes place, the Licensing Committee is likely to ask questions about current operations or whether a new license card was already issued.

If the hours submitted in the Questionnaire are different from the hours printed on the license, the Establishment will be required to submit a separate application for a “Change in Method of Operation.” This separate application will not be reviewed and considered at the meeting where the renewal is determined, and the former hours will remain in place.

If the Establishment seeking a renewal fails to submit a copy of its existing SLA-related license by the deadline and at submission, the application will be deemed incomplete. The Licensing Committee will typically recommend withdrawal of the application; however, if the Establishment chooses to proceed with a vote, the members of the Licensing Committee may enter their votes as they please. An Establishment may not provide the copy of the license at the meeting in the effort to make their application complete.

ii. Health Inspection Card (if available)

If available, the Establishment must submit a copy of its most recent health inspection card as provided by the DMHM. DMHM makes information about health inspections publicly available on [ABC Eats](#); thus, Establishments should come prepared to answer questions about the findings of their inspections and especially if the grade is less than an “A.” The Licensing Committee wishes to ensure that Establishments in the district can operate safely and soundly, and negative findings regarding food service – which is mandatory for most alcohol service – is indicative of the likely quality of service to be rendered for alcohol.

The Licensing Committee understands that DMHM is operating with a backlog and does not need to be reminded of this fact each month. If asked during a meeting of Licensing Committee about a missing health inspection card, the answer that one has not yet been issued suffices, provided that ABC Eats confirms this assertion.

iii. (EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 2026) Good Neighbor Sign

Eff. September 2026: The Establishment must submit a photograph displaying the posting of the CB12M Good Neighbor Sign (available via email to cb12m@cb.nyc.gov or at the Board’s office). The Good Neighbor Sign must be visible to any patron and contain information for contacting management of the Establishment with complaints.

If the Establishment seeking a renewal fails to submit a copy of its posted Good Neighbor Sign by the deadline and at submission, the application will be deemed incomplete. The Licensing Committee will typically recommend withdrawal of the application; however, if the Establishment chooses to proceed with a vote, the members of the Licensing

Committee may enter their votes as they please. An Establishment may not provide the copy of the Good Neighbor Sign at the meeting in the effort to make their application complete.

e. Other SLA-Related Applications

Other applications for SLA-related licenses includes a change in method of operation (including a change in hours of operation); a corporate change (meaning a change in the ownership of the Establishment); an alteration (including a change in the floor plan); and a removal (meaning the license is being removed from the premises and placed at a separate location).

In general, CB12M does not require materials in addition those required under Section III.b.i above. However, the Licensing Committee is likely to ask questions that are germane to these applications.

IV. Important Considerations for the Licensing Committee

Beyond what is covered in the above sections, the Licensing Committee will also factor in other pertinent details for each application, including the following factors. The SLA provides a [quick reference guide](#) that should be reviewed by all Establishments.

a. 200 Foot Rule

The ABC Law and its implementing regulations prohibit the issuance of a *liquor* license where the Establishment would be within 200 feet of and on the same street as a building exclusively used as a school or place of worship. Thus, if the Licensing Committee determines that an application for a *liquor* license would violate this rule, it will consider this fact in its recommendation decision. This rule does not apply to beer and wine licenses.

b. 500 Foot Rule²

In general, the ABC Law and its implementing regulations prohibit the issuance of a *liquor* license where the Establishment would be within 500 feet of three other establishments with an active *liquor* license, unless the SLA determines there is a public interest served by issuing the license. The SLA holds a hearing to assist in making the determination and is required by law to factor in the considerations of CB12M where applicable.

When considering whether it would be in the public interest to approve the application, the SLA may consider the following:

² This rule applies only to municipalities with a population of 20,000 or more, which Manhattan falls within.

- the number, classes and character of other licensed premises not only in the area where the proposed establishment will be located, but also in the particular municipality or subdivision of the municipality;
- whether the applicant has obtained all other necessary governmental licenses and permits;
- the effect on vehicular traffic and parking in proximity to the location;
- the impact on the existing noise level;
- the history of ABC violations and reported criminal activity at the location; and
- any other factor specified by law or regulation that would be relevant to deciding whether public convenience and advantage, as well as the public interest, would be served by approving the application.

Thus, CB12M also considers these factors if a proposed establishment falls within the rule.

c. Police Input

CB12M solicits the input of its local New York Police Department precincts (*i.e.*, the 33rd Precinct and the 34th Precinct) as applicable to each application. Such input includes criminal history taking place at the location of the Establishment, as well as recorded 311 complaints related to the Establishment. While the input of these precincts is not dispositive in the Licensing Committee's consideration, the input is strongly considered by the Licensing Committee when rendering its decision.

d. Community Input

CB12M is an advisory board serving the interests of the community, as described in Section II above. Thus, CB12M solicits the input of members of the community for each application. While the input of community members is not dispositive in the Licensing Committee's consideration, the input is reviewed and weighed by the Licensing Committee, as appropriate, depending on the content and tenor of the input.

e. Staffing and Training

CB12M is an advisory board serving the interests of the community, as described in Section II above. Thus, CB12M has a particular interest in (1) seeing that members of its community benefit from the addition of an Establishment and (2) that the Establishment is capable of operating in a safe and sound manner. To accomplish these goals, the Licensing Committee is empowered to probe about the operations. In addition to the information provided in the above sections, the Licensing Committee is likely to ask about:

- Staffing – whether the Establishment intends to hire from members in the community.

- Training – whether the Establishment will ensure that staff are properly trained to handle alcohol, and especially whether the bartenders obtain tailored training such as [ATAP Certification](#).

V. Licensing Committee Voting Process

Unless withdrawn, each Establishment appearing before a meeting of the Licensing Committee will receive a vote by the Licensing Committee. The Licensing Committee must reach quorum (which is at least a majority of the voting members) to vote on matters. See Chapter 70 of the New York City Charter; see *also*, Section 10.7 of the CB12M Bylaws.

Of the voting members, a majority of those present must vote “Yes” for the Licensing Committee to recommend a non-objection to the Board. If a majority of those present vote in combination “No” and “Abstain,” the Licensing Committee recommends an objection to the Board. A voting member that has a conflict of interest may not vote, and the number of members voting will change by minus one when determining the outcome. In such a case, the voting member must state for the record what their conflict of interest is. Chapter 68 of the New York City Charter specifies the meaning of “conflicts of interest.”

The Licensing Committee may stipulate their non-objection on certain actions. Common stipulations include (1) installation of a sound limiter, where proof of purchase suffices for the non-objection; (2) posting of certain signage, like no-double-parking and a good neighbor sign; and (3) posting of management’s information to submit complaints to. The Licensing Committee may set deadlines for submitting proof that a stipulation was satisfied, and failure to meet the deadline will result in changing the Licensing Committee’s recommendation from a non-objection to an objection.

The Licensing Committee presents its recommendations to the next general meeting of the Board, where the final recommendation made to SLA is determined. When the vote is entered, the Chairperson of the Board will sign a letter addressed to the SLA containing information about the Establishment and the Board’s recommendation.

VI. Additional Board Action

The Board may, in its sole discretion, appear before the SLA at hearings to convey and / or emphasize elements of its findings and recommendations. The purpose of the Board’s appearance at such hearings is particularly of relevance if an Establishment fails to come to an agreement with the Board regarding one or more stipulations.

VII. Confidentiality of Materials

CB12M is a governmental agency and is subject to New York’s Freedom of Information Law (Public Officers Law §§ 85 *et seq.*). When submitting materials, Establishments are required to request confidential treatment of their application materials to protect the possibility of disclosure. See Public Officers Law §§ 87(2)(d), 89. A failure to request confidential treatment may subject application materials to disclosure if a person makes a

request to CB12M pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law.

As follows, Establishments are encouraged to include the words “Confidential Treatment Requested” on all materials for which they seek such treatment, and to provide to CB12M a note stating that the Establishment is seeking such treatment under the applicable provisions of the Public Officers Law and why.

VIII. Acting as Agent

It is common for Establishments to hire a representative or attorney to act as agent on their behalf. Unless otherwise provided in the application materials, Establishments appearing before CB12M may be represented by such agent. However, the responsibility for the application ultimately rests with the Establishment and its principals. Therefore, if an agent is unable to adequately answer a question about the application, the Licensing Committee may count such failure to answer against the application, which could be considered as part of their vote and recommendation.

It is equally as important that agents are clear to Establishments about the services they offer. It is unlawful in New York to hold oneself out as an attorney without being barred in the State of New York – this is commonly referred to as unauthorized practice of law. See New York Judiciary Law § 487. Presenting one’s services as legal services, or promising treatment of materials as being privileged, is not lawful if the person rendering the services is not admitted and registered in New York. If an agent is not admitted and registered in New York as an attorney and is suspected of violating this law in CB12M meetings, CB12M reserves the right to report such information to the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office.

IX. Related Information and Questions

The Executive Committee of CB12M may review applications under certain circumstances, including failure of the Licensing Committee to reach quorum.

Establishments should direct questions about this Manual and the Licensing Committee’s process to cb12m@cb.nyc.gov, where they will be appropriately routed or fielded. Please visit the Board’s website [here](#) for additional details about this process, as well as the SLA’s website [here](#) for additional information about applying for a SLA-related license.