



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB445 - Baltimore City – 41st Legislative District –
Alcoholic Beverages – Marketplace License -
Before the Baltimore City Senate Delegation
On February 11, 2022**

Chairman McCray and Members of the Delegation:

Senate Bill 445 establishes a marketplace liquor license in the 41st Legislative District and authorizes the Board of Liquor License Commissioners for Baltimore City to issue such a license.

The bill defines a marketplace as open to the public, made up of at least three food and beverage establishments, where at least one of the three is licensed for off-premise sales. The license requires a minimum capital investment of \$5,000,000 at an intended marketplace, and the daily receipts must be 51 percent from food sales. The legislation provides for an annual license fee of \$6,000.

The geographic parameters for the license is between Cross Keys Road on the East; Village Square to the South; Interstate 83 to the West; and Hamlet Hill Road on the North.

The redevelopment of the Village of Cross Keys began in late 2020 after Baltimore-based development firm Caves Valley Partners (CVP) bought it from Ashkenazy Acquisitions Corp., the owner of several former Rouse Company projects locally and across the country. Ashkenazy had allowed the property, along with Harborplace, to fall into a level of serious disrepair, putting the viability of the once vibrant commercial area of the project in peril. Not only would the failure of the center have been problematic for the City, but it would

have put the diverse values of the existing homes and condominiums making up the residential community at Cross Keys at risk of further decline.

Thankfully, from the time CVP bought Cross Keys, the project has started to experience a renaissance. Office leasing has increased significantly and major renovations, repairs, and upgrades have already occurred on the common areas, with a major façade and courtyard renovation planned for 2022.

Looking ahead, CVP is attempting to revitalize the once successful dining scene at the property, based largely around the mature, landscaped courtyard. Throughout the years, restaurants like The Roost, the Cross Keys Deli, the bar at the Cross Keys Inn, the Village Square Café, and Donna's were important meeting places for business people and members of the community. Today, there is not a single food or beverage establishment remaining at Cross Keys.

With the support of the Cross Keys Maintenance Corporation, the parent organization encompassing all 13 individual homeowners associations at Cross Keys, CVP is requesting the addition of a Marketplace license at Cross Keys, which would greatly simplify the process to convince new restaurants, cafes, and a wine shop to lease space and locate at Cross Keys, bringing the retail component of the project back to life.

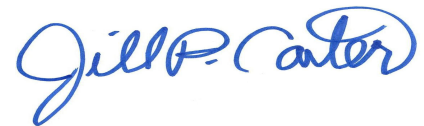
The concept proposed through Senate Bill 445 is that each individual new tenant would still be required to get approval from the Liquor Board for its use under the umbrella license, but that patrons could purchase food and alcoholic beverages at any of the new establishments at Cross Keys and enjoy shopping and socializing within the confines of the retail component of the project.

The unanimous feeling is that this atmosphere would make Cross Keys desirable once again, for local residents, businesses choosing to locate at Cross Keys, and existing and future retailers looking to serve an active commercial area. This request, like all of the rezoning and redesign that has already occurred, has been met with

enthusiasm by the community, which has a strong, ongoing working relationship with the developer.

As such, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 445.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Carter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jill P. Carter