

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: March 16, 2022

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development

SUBJECT: Liquor License Application No. LL100177

Applicant: Walter McCue for Treasure Cove Casino Inc., Inc. No. 86274
Location: 2003 Highway 97S

ATTACHMENTS: Location and Existing Zoning Map
Supporting Documents

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council:

1. CONFIRMS that its comments on the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch's prescribed considerations are as set out in the report dated March 16, 2022 from Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development for Liquor License Application No. LL100177
2. CONFIRMS the methods used to gather the views of potentially affected property owners were in accordance with the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* and that the views of affected residents are as summarized in the minutes of the Council Meeting held on April 11, 2022; and
3. SUPPORTS the approval of the Liquor License Application located at 2003 Highway 97 S to:
 - a. Change hours of Liquor service to be 11:00am to 2:00 am Monday through Sunday; and
 - b. Structural change to increase occupancy load from 2016 patrons to 3004 patrons to include bingo area (500 patrons) and upper mezzanine (488 patrons) for the Treasure Cove Casino, for the following reasons:

This application is not expected to have a negative impact on the community or produce any significant negative land use impacts on adjacent properties.

PURPOSE:

The applicant has applied to the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) for changes to the hours of liquor service and occupancy load for the Treasure Cove Casino. The following changes are being facilitated through this application:

- a. Hours of Liquor service to be 11:00am to 2:00 am Monday through Sunday; and
- b. Structural change to increase occupancy load from 2016 patrons to 3004 patrons to include the bingo area (500 patrons) and upper mezzanine (488 patrons) for the Treasure Cove Casino.

Currently, the Treasure Cove Casino is operating under a Liquor Primary License with hours of operation from 11:00 am to 12:00 am Sunday to Thursday, and 11:00 am to 1:00 am Friday to Saturday. Further to this, the applicant has an existing occupancy load of 2016 patrons (i.e. Casino Floor, Show Lounge, and café area).

The proposed change in hours would allow the casino and show lounge to have hours of operation from 11:00 am to 02:00 am Monday to Sunday. The proposed occupancy expansion to the show lounge area (i.e. bingo area (500 patrons), and upper mezzanine (488 patrons)) would increase the occupancy to 3004 patrons. Please see attached drawings indicating the proposed expanded liquor service area.

The LCRB is the authority for liquor licensing, and must therefore approve liquor licenses. The LCRB requires that the local government reviews the application, gathers the views of residents that will be affected by the proposal and passes a resolution on the application. Once Council reviews this application, the resolution will be forwarded to the LCRB.

Background

Site Characteristics

Location	2003 Highway 97
Legal Description	Lot 1, District Lot 913, Cariboo District, Plan EPP87364
Site Area	3.3 ha (8.16 acre)
Current Use	Treasure Cove Casino
Zoning	Z6: Casino and Accommodation; P1: Parks and Recreation and AG: Greenbelt

Liquor License Information

Type of License	Liquor Primary License No. 304261
Current Hours of Service	Sunday through Thursday: 11:00 am to 12:00 am Friday through Saturday: 11:00 am to 1:00 am
Proposed Hours of Service	Monday through Sunday: 11:00 am to 2:00 am
Current Occupant Load	2016 patrons- Casino (941 patrons), Show Lounge (1000 patrons) and Café (75 patrons)
Proposed Occupant Load	3004 patrons- Casino (941 patrons), Show Lounge (1000 patrons), Café (75 patrons), Bingo area (500 patrons) and Upper Mezzanine (488 patrons)

Background

Liquor License Application No. LL100102: On July 16, 2012, Council approved the amendment to the Treasure Cove Casino Liquor Primary License to increase the licensed area to include the casino gaming area and increase the occupancy load from 257 to 1216 patrons.

Liquor License Application No. LL100162: On February 24, 2020, Council approved the amendment to the Treasure Cove Casino Liquor Primary License to increase the licensed area to include the lower show lounge area and increase the occupancy load from 1216 patrons to 2016 patrons.

POLICY / REGULATORY ANALYSIS:

Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch

The LCRB is the provincial authority for liquor licensing and is regulated by the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* and the Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation. All liquor licenses and changes to existing licenses are approved and issued by the LCRB. The applicant has concurrently submitted an application to the LCRB for a Liquor Primary License.

City of Prince George Liquor and Cannabis License Policy

The [City of Prince George Liquor and Cannabis Licensing Policy](#) (LCLP) establishes guidelines for the operation of licensed liquor establishments and cannabis retail stores within the City. The LCLP provides guidelines on hours of operation and location. Staff have evaluated the criteria outlined in the LCLP and have considered their relevance to this application, as noted below.

Purpose of the Establishment

The purposed changes to the applicant's liquor license will not change the intent of the establishment. The primary intent of the Treasure Cove Casino will remain as an establishment for casino gaming (i.e. slot machines), gaming tables, bingo and occasional spectator entertainment (i.e. live music, stage performances and comedy shows) in the show lounge. The proposed change of hours and increase in the patron occupancy load and would facilitate consumption of liquor for patrons within the expanded license area for the Casino and show lounge.

Location of Establishment

The Treasure Cove Casino is located at 2003 Highway 97 at the intersection of Highway 97 and Highway 16. As indicated previously, the Treasure Cove Casino is a gaming facility (i.e. slot machines, gaming tables and bingo) with occasional spectator entertainment.

The nearest liquor primary establishment is the Prince George Playhouse, which is located west of the subject property and fronts Highway 16. Access to the Prince George Playhouse is from RecPlace Drive, and is separated from the subject property by Highway 16. Further to this, the existing Treasure Cove Casino has a buffer strip of 33.0 m along the south property line that provides screening and noise reduction to the nearest residential properties. Therefore, Administration does not anticipate significant impacts from an expanded licensed area within the existing building.

Surrounding Land Uses

North	Prestige Hotel, Highway 97 and Residential
South	Greenbelt and Residential
East	Prestige Hotel, Upland Street and Residential
West	Highway 16, Prince George Playhouse, Pomeroy Hotel and Montana's BBQ & Bar Restaurant

Hours of Liquor Service

The LCLP guidelines suggest that Liquor Primary Licenses outside of the downtown have hours of liquor service between 9:00 am and 1:00 am, however hours of operation may be increased on a case by case basis. The hours of liquor service are currently 11:00 am to 12:00 am Sunday to Thursday and 11:00 to 01:00 Friday to Saturday.

The applicant is proposing to change the hours of operation to 11:00 am to 2:00 am Monday to Sunday to have consistent liquor service seven days a week for the Casino and Show Lounge areas. The expanded hours of

operation is not anticipated to impact nearby uses due to its location and buffering. Therefore, Administration is supportive of the application.

Occupant Load

The LCLP guidelines suggest liquor primary licenses outside of the downtown should have a maximum occupancy of 125 seats with the occupant load calculation to be determined by a Qualified Professional, as defined in the City of Prince George Zoning Bylaw. The applicant's increase in occupancy from 2016 to 3004 patrons as determined by Qualified Professional as shown in the supporting documents.

Currently, the Treasure Cove Casino has a liquor primary license that permits 2016 patrons (i.e. Casino Floor, Show Lounge and café), which exceeds the suggestion provided in the LCLP, and was previously supported by Council on February 24, 2020. The intent of the requested increase in occupant load is to expand the licensed area to include the areas accessed by patrons (Casino Floor, Show Lounge and café).

Community Impacts

The proposed liquor primary license is not expected to have significant impacts on the surrounding properties. Administration has considered the following potential community impacts:

Noise

The subject property is located at the intersection of Highway 97 and Highway 16, which is a major controlled access highway that sees a high volume of traffic throughout the day. The location of existing buildings located near the rear of the property line, and increased buffering with landscaping and a vegetated berm, reduces the impact of the site use and highway noise on the nearest residential area. Administration does not anticipate significant concerns with noise with this proposal.

Parking and Traffic

The increase in the patron occupancy is not anticipated to impact parking and traffic to and from the site. The Casino and Prestige Hotel has a shared parking agreement under Title Charge No. BW19787 and BW197886. The required parking under Section 7 of the Zoning Bylaw No. 7850, 2007 indicates the minimum number of parking spaces to be provided is 500 parking stalls for the proposed use. The site has provided a total of 706 parking spaces including nine (9) accessible spaces which exceeds the parking stall requirements.

Administration supports this application as the increase in occupancy is consistent with LCLP direction to review uses on a case-by-case basis, and is not expected to significantly impact the surrounding uses.

Referrals

This application was referred to internal City divisions and external agencies with no outstanding concerns.

Notification to Adjacent Property Owners

During the COVID-19 pandemic, City Council authorized by resolution to discontinue informal hearings for Development Variance Permit applications, Temporary Use Permit applications and other applications where such hearings are not legally required to be held. Members of the public wanting to provide comment on the application may submit written correspondence.

As per the requirements set out in the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, the City of Prince George will mail or otherwise deliver a public notice to property owners and tenants whose interests may be affected by this application and publish this notice in accordance with the *City's Liquor and Cannabis Licensing Policy*.

Written submissions received in response to the public notice for this application will be provided to Council for their consideration at the time the application is being considered. Submissions received after the Council

meeting agenda has been published will be provided to Council as a handout on the day of the Council meeting for consideration during deliberations on the application.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the resolution
2. Approve the resolution as amended
3. Refuse the resolution
4. Defer or otherwise deal with the resolution

Administration recommends that Council approve the resolution as written in the recommendation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The applicant has applied for an extension of liquor service hours and increase occupancy load for the Treasure Cove Casino located at 2003 Highway 97. Administration recommends that Council approve the recommendation and forward it to the LCRB.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development

PREPARED BY: Melissa Nitz, Planner

APPROVED:

Adam Davey, Acting City Manager

Meeting Date: 2022/04/11