



People take photos while hanging out in the sprinkle pool at the Museum of Ice Cream in San Francisco, Calif. Thursday, September 14, 2017. (Jessica Christian/S.F. Examiner)

## Supervisors freeze out Museum of Ice Cream bar proposal

No wine-filled sundaes after company's second attempt to get a liquor permit is rejected

Joshua Sabatini Apr. 23, 2019

Ice cream and alcohol don't mix.

That's according to the Board of Supervisors, which on Tuesday for the second time rejected a permit for the Museum of Ice Cream to open up a mezzanine bar at their location at 1 Grant Ave.

There was no discussion before the board voted 11-0 to reject the permit. That means no wine-filled ice cream sundaes.

The vote was in line with the recommendation from the board's Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee recent decision to oppose the permit.

Maryellis Bunn and Manish Vora, founders of the Museum of Ice Cream, said in a statement to the San Francisco Examiner after the vote that “We strongly disagree with the Board’s decision.”

“This delay will not deter us from our steadfast mission to offer a city so deeply imbued in technology and dominated by multi-billion dollar tech companies, with a safe, family-friendly, offline space that fosters happiness and joy,” the statement said.

The statement also said the museum “will be appealing this license decision,” but it’s not exactly clear how they plan to do that. Supervisor Aaron Peskin, who represents the area of the business, said no appeal was possible. A follow up email asking for clarification was not responded to.

The business’s first attempt at a Type 42 beer and wine sales permit was rejected by the board in February. The owners returned with some slight modifications in hours, but were met with opposition again.

Peskin said that “it’s an area of The City that has the highest concentration of beer and wine and liquor in the city and they didn’t really make a good case for it.”

Asked if he worried that it would lead to a vacant storefront, Peskin said, “When it first originally came to committee Supervisor [Hillary] Ronen indicated that she could never even get a ticket to get in because it was so popular.”

Another factor seemed to bother Peskin. He added that “a number of us were taken aback” that the business had announced their plans publicly to open the bar “before they even had their permit from the Board of Supervisors. It was presumptuous.”

Mayor London Breed did not sign the legislation rejecting the permit the first time in February, indicating she didn’t agree with the board’s decision. A request for comment to the mayor’s office was not immediately returned.

Breed joined the business in October 2018 to host a voter registration effort.

The private business, which has locations in other cities like New York and Los Angeles, opened in September 2017 and has seen 400,000 visitors from 82 countries. Tickets are \$38 for such experiences as “The largest sprinkle pool party in the world!”

Some speakers at the recent committee meeting slammed the notion of combining alcohol and ice cream. The application called for beer and wine to be served during the hours of 11 am and 12 am Sunday through Thursday and 11:00 am to 1:00 am Friday to Saturday. The plan was to have the bar open to the public and no alcohol allowed outside of the bar area.

Bruce Livingston, executive director of Alcohol Justice, a national alcohol industry watchdog, said while alcohol sales may be a “great business model” to have the money “to pay for the high rent for getting prime location,” “it’s not necessary and it is uncalled for.”

“We have to take seriously alcohol consumption and its effect on youth,” Livingston had told the committee. “Having a bar at a mezzanine at an entirely youth-oriented venue is just ludicrous.”

But SF Travel’s Jessica Lum told the committee the idea should have The City’s support.

“The more that we can create and enhance attractions, the better it is for our city,” Lum said. “We support the museum’s efforts to continue to grow and expand and drive tourism to San Francisco.”