

# LOCUST POINT CIVIC ASSOCIATION

*A Message to Our Members*

## **Re: How LPCA Works with New Bars and Restaurants**

*May 2025*

Dear Locust Point Neighbors,

If you've ever wondered what happens when a new bar or restaurant wants to open in the neighborhood — or how LPCA is involved — this letter is for you.

Our Board has spent the past several months developing a clear, principled framework for how we engage with businesses seeking liquor licenses in Locust Point. The result is a set of Core Principles, a standard Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) template, and a step-by-step process guide. We are sharing these with you now because we believe our members deserve to understand how LPCA represents their interests — and because transparency about our process makes us more credible and more effective.

### **What Is an MOU, and Why LPCA Uses One**

A Memorandum of Understanding is a written agreement between LPCA and a business applying for a liquor license. It sets out the operating conditions — hours, noise management, parking practices, community engagement — that the business commits to as a neighbor. It is not a regulation; it is a relationship.

MOUs give businesses a clear picture of community expectations before they open, not after their first complaint. They give residents documented commitments they can point to. And they give LPCA a credible, constructive role in the licensing process — one focused on helping businesses succeed as genuine partners in neighborhood life.

### **What We Stand For: Three Core Values**

The framework rests on three values that we want every applicant — and every member — to understand:

1. **Shared success.** LPCA is not an obstacle. Our first question is not “how do we limit this?” but “how do we help this business succeed in a way that works for the neighborhood?” We represent residents honestly, and we commit to never using the MOU process to punish applicants who engage in good faith.
2. **More gathering places.** The 2023 LPCA Community Survey showed that residents want more restaurants and better retail. Walkability and local gathering places are among the top reasons people chose to live here. LPCA's job is to help channel that demand productively — not to stand in its way.

3. **Mutual respect as neighbors.** Locust Point grew by more than 43% between 2010 and 2020. A bar's patio may be separated from a neighbor's bedroom by a single alley. We ask businesses to understand this context before they open, and to commit to being good neighbors — not just technically compliant operators.

## Key Points Every Member Should Know

- **LPCA does not endorse or oppose licenses.** Signing an MOU means we have documented operating conditions we both agree to — not that LPCA is vouching for the business.
- **No MOU is binding until the Board votes to approve it.** Individual board members cannot commit LPCA on their own.
- **We negotiate based on the specific business and location,** not a one-size-fits-all approach. A neighborhood wine bar and a late-night venue with outdoor amplification require different conversations.
- **Businesses commit to a community liaison,** annual attendance at an LPCA meeting, and proactive communication when things change — ownership, hours, programming.
- **If a business breaches the MOU, LPCA has recourse.** We can document violations and present them to the Baltimore City Liquor Board at license renewal.
- **We engage early.** LPCA commits to reaching out — or responding — before a Liquor Board hearing is scheduled. Better conversations happen before positions harden.

## What This Means for You as a Member

The full framework document — core principles, MOU template, and process guide — is available to any member who wants to review it. We welcome your input. If you have concerns about a specific application or want to understand how a particular negotiation is proceeding, the right channel is through the Board's designated MOU committee lead.

Our goal is to be the kind of civic association that businesses are glad to work with, and that residents can trust to represent their interests honestly. In Locust Point, commercial and community life have always been woven together. This framework is our effort to make that relationship as honest, clear, and productive as possible.

*With appreciation for this community,*

**Mike Mitchell**

*Committee Chair & LPCA Board Member*

*Ad Hoc Task Force on MOUs with Bars and Restaurants in Locust Point*

*Locust Point Civic Association, Inc.*