

Dear Planning Board Members,

Please note that this is NOT a form letter but a letter drafted to explain our adamant opposition to allowing 713 Caroline Street a Conditional Use to become a bar. This is a plea for quality of life from a full-time resident of 20 years. Does Key West really need yet another bar, especially one that faces into a residential neighborhood? If this Conditional Use is approved, we will be facing noise directed at our house all day long up until 11:00 pm. We will not be able to open our windows and doors to allow fresh air into our house. We will not be able to use our front porch to sit in the rocking chairs and enjoy Key West life. We will not be able to watch television without turning up the volume to be able to hear it over the noise coming from the bar. From time-to-time we have already had to turn up the volume of the television to hear over some of the conversations taking place on the porch at 713 Caroline Street. These conversations can be heard even at the back of our house. Short of closing all our doors and windows even on nice days there will be no way to escape the noise. If you allow 713 Caroline Street to become a bar thus adding alcohol and additional music then our only chance at a quality of life will be before they open and after they close. That is not quality of life.

When we purchased our home and moved here in 2000, this house (713 Caroline) sat on the back of the 713-715 Caroline Street property, it was facing sideways behind a one-story concrete block condo building. At that time, four (4) low-income families resided in the house and participated in the community. One (1) of the kids who lived in the house is now an adult but still stops us to say "Hi!" and remind us she was that little girl. After the condo building was demolished in 2004, the renters were asked to find housing elsewhere and the house was returned (moved) to the location shown in the 1965 photo in the Staff Report. The apartment building containing 6 apartments was constructed. To my knowledge, none of those low-income renters returned to the address.

713 Caroline faces the residential neighborhood, there is nothing to stop the noise from coming into the residential neighborhood especially the three (3) residences (704, 706, and 710 Caroline) directly across the street. Currently, I can attest to times the noise from the front porch of 713 Caroline can be heard as far back as our upstairs living area and our downstairs kitchen area. When alcohol is added, I am sure the noise will be worse. Go into any bar and listen to how loud the conversations are. The proposed hours of operation will give little to no rest from noise for the neighborhood.

I see numerous Form Letters of Support loaded to the system; I feel compelled to respond to these form letters: (I attached the spreadsheet I created to assist in evaluating the data from the Letters of Support.)

- 1.** We were never approached by the applicant and we are the closest across the street neighbor. We are full-time year-round therefore it is not difficult to find us at home.
- 2.** I do not see any support letters from any of the four (4) neighbors directly across the street.
- 3.** All the letters are form letters. All these individuals had to do was write their names and sign a piece of paper. Maybe I should have all my friends sign a form Letter of Opposition for the approval the Conditional Use of 713 Caroline as another bar especially if there are no boundaries as to where those letters come from.
- 4.** Of the total of twenty-five (25) Letters of Support, there are nine (9) from individuals who rent at the 713-715 Caroline address. Isn't being asked by your landlord to sign a form Letter of Support a conflict of interest? How many of those individuals have been at that location longer than even 2 years?
- 5.** Of the total of twenty-five (25) form Letters of Support, there are five (5) with an address in New Town, one (1) who used an Old Town Holding Companies office address but lives in New Town, and one (1) with an out-of-town address, these are nowhere close to where the bar is proposed and would not be impacted by the approval of the Conditional Use.
- 6.** Of the total of twenty-five (25) form Letters of Support, there are five (5) are owners of the address listed on the form all rest are renters (Nine (9) renters are from 713-715 Caroline). I understand that renters are important, but a renter can easily break a lease and move, whereas an owner is vested in their residence. Of the five (5) owners only one (1) has a residential address within 300 feet radius of 713 Caroline Street and one (1) has a residential address within 600 feet radius of 713 Caroline Street.

According to City Licensing, their records indicate, one (1) business license for a coffee shop with 20 seats and 6 non-transient rental licenses for the 713-715 Caroline address. Where are the business licenses for the 713 Caroline Upstairs which were on two (2) of the form Letters of Support? Was the 713 Caroline Upstairs occupancy included in the Scale and Intensity as part of the Staff Report?

According to the application, they do not think there will be any additional traffic generation. That being true, then how do they intend to stock the bar?

Are they planning to use the one (1) existing bathroom and is it ADA compliant?

The Staff Report mentions surrounding restaurants. I am not sure why these establishments were chosen since there are plenty of locations nearby that someone can obtain alcohol but here is my take as a long-term full-time resident of the area on those establishments:

- Only Wood – New to the area. Mainly serves food prepared on site. Has a bar area which is mainly used by people waiting for their table.
- Pepe's Cafe – Has a new owner but has been in business for a long time. Mainly serves food prepared on site. Has a small bar as part of the restaurant area. They face away from the residential area.
- Schooner Wharf Bar – Has been in the area for a long time. Is a bar that also serves food prepared on site. Throughout the years Schooner has had numerous noise complaints from the neighborhood across Caroline.
- Harpoon Harry's – Has been in the area for a long time. Has low-income housing above the restaurant. Serves food prepared on site. Sells Bloody Marys, Bloody Harrys, Mimosas and beer. Also, sells alcohol by the bottle to go. They face away from the residential area.
- B.O's – Been in the area for quite some time. Mainly serves food prepared on site. When they have live music it can be heard in the neighborhood across Caroline Street and there have been complaints. Some early evenings, I can rock out to Barry Cuda on my front porch. I am almost a full block away.
- Fisherman's Café – New to the area. Located on Lazy Way Lane. Mainly serves sandwiches prepared on site. To my knowledge they do not serve alcohol. They face away from the residential area.

If this Conditional Use Application is approved, how difficult will it be for them to add any kind of music (live or recorded). Music on their front porch might as well be piped directly into my house – if voice on the front porch carry into my house (and they do) that tells me that no matter of noise mitigation will stop music.

If this Conditional Use Application is approved, what is to stop more people from conjugating on the front porch to drink and get loud?

I would like a phone number of the property owner, so I can contact them when the noise becomes too much. Sorry, the neighborhood has been through this before and to call the Police or Code does not get as quick

response. The owner of Schooner Wharf gave us her number when the neighborhood was having issues with noise from her business. It only took a couple of calls for her to resolve the issue completely.

In conclusion, I am not only concerned about the quality of life but I am also concerned out the property values of our homes. I am sure having a bar right across the street will make it harder to sell a single-family residence.

Lastly, I would be willing to bet that if someone were to try to open a bar directly across the street from the owners' residence, they would be adamantly opposed to living across the street from a bar and having to endure the noise.

Thanking you in advance for your time and energies in understanding my plea for continuing a quality of life that Key West Old Town can and has afforded me since we moved here 20 years ago.

Respectfully,
Jo Bennett
706 Caroline Street