

3 eateries win liquor licenses

By Ethan Forman

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DANVERS — While Sunnyside Bowladrome struck out in its attempt to win a full liquor license last night, three Danvers Square restaurants struck gold, in a sense, when selectmen granted them the right to serve all types of booze.

In the past, a liquor license in Danvers might fetch \$200,000 on the open market, but in recent years, there have been few takers for licenses that have languished.

The three licenses became available because the town revoked one license, one was turned back to the town, and one came about because of 2010 Census figures.

Those granted licenses were: I Pazzi Italian restaurant, 50 Maple St.; Nine Elm American Bistro, 9 Elm St.; and Hong Kong Cafe, 12 Maple St.

The establishments won the licenses for far less than they would have paid, though they still have to pay a \$4,500 annual fee plus \$300 in application fees (not to mention the cost to stock up on booze).

The decision to grant three licenses still faces state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission approval.

Granting three licenses at once is unprecedented, selectmen said.

Since selectmen granted full liquor licenses to three businesses that already have beer and wine licenses, the board's actions should free up beer and wine licenses for those businesses that struck out last night: the Danversport bowling alley at 176 Water St., the Sawasdee Danvers Thai restaurant at 49 Maple St., and the proposed 140-seat Oye's sushi and Japanese restaurant at 29 Andover St. (Sawasdee has a beer and wine license, but it's restricted in that it cannot be transferred.)

Selectmen Chairman Dan Bennett voted against granting the Hong Kong Cafe a full license, favoring the proposed Route 114 Oye's get a shot at it instead.

Some selectmen said they preferred the bowling alley apply for a beer and wine license.

Manager Nicholas Cameles asked for a full liquor license so he could serve corporate clients.

"We currently have a lot of elite bowlers asking for a beer," Cameles said.

"I just hit the lottery," Matthew Sanidas joked after the public hearing. Sanidas is a Danvers resident and manager of Nine Elm who runs the restaurant with his wife, Jean. The license will allow him to expand the hours of his small, 39-seat restaurant.

"By us getting a license, it would allow us to open for brunch, open on Sundays," Sanidas said.

Selectman Bill Clark, the liaison to the Downtown Improvement Committee, was one of several residents to praise I Pazzi, which is owned by chef Tani Blea and his wife, Anna, who live above the restaurant.

"This business has really brought some dynamism to Danvers Square," Clark said.

"Our business is very well-loved and embraced throughout the Danvers community," said Orjeta Taka, I Pazzi's manager who also works full time as a software engineer and is Tani Blea's sister.

The board voted last night instead of waiting a month, despite the absence of Selectman Mike Powers, who had to attend to a death in the family out of town, selectmen said. The feeling among the board was they did not want to tie up the liquor licenses any longer.

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