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EMERGENCY SUSPENSION ISSUED FOR BUDDHA TEA HOUSE
State Liquor Authority Lifts License Following Stabbings, Fights, Assaults

Albany, NY – The New York State Liquor Authority (SLA) issued an emergency suspension of the Buddha Tea House, at 69 North Pearl Street in Albany. The suspension was ordered by Members of the SLA, Chairman Dennis Rosen, Commissioner Jeanique Greene and Commissioner Kevin Kim at a meeting of the Full Board on Tuesday, November 18, 2014. Effective immediately, no alcohol may be served or consumed on the premises.

On November 9, 2014 at approximately 1:45 am, an Albany Police Department (APD) patrol unit witnessed a victim of a stabbing exiting the Buddha Tea House. APD officers responding to the victim were impeded by a violent altercation involving patrons of the Buddha Tea House, an altercation that erupted directly outside the bar in the immediate aftermath of the stabbing, resulting in the injury of two additional patrons. APD officers report the licensee and staff were uncooperative with the investigation; by attempting to deny police officers access to the bar, denying the incident occurred inside the premises, denying APD access to security video, in addition to attempting to clean up the crime scene. The SLA charged the bar with three violations of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law, including disorderly premises and deliberately interfering with a police investigation.

Buddha Tea House has a history of violence since opening in September of 2012. On October 25, 2014, APD patrol officers responded to a large brawl directly in front of the premises involving a patron striking other patrons with beer bottles. Buddha staff again were uncooperative with police, with the APD reporting bouncers from the bar allowing a suspect to reenter the bar and escape through an emergency exit, in an apparent attempt to evade police. On July 6, 2014, APD patrol officers again responded to a large fight involving patrons and security staff from the bar, directly in front of the premises. Again, police report the licensee's staff were uncooperative. Buddha Tea House was previously fined \$8,000 by the SLA on July 1, 2014 for five separate assaults occurring on October 19 and 20, 2013, and in 2014 on January 1st, February 1st, and March 9th.

“This bar has shown a disregard for the law and a total lack of concern for safety of patrons, police and residents,” said SLA Chairman Dennis Rosen. “This should serve as a message that we will not hesitate to take a license when a bar poses a danger to public safety.”

The State Administrative Procedure Act authorizes a State agency to summarily suspend a license when the agency finds that public health, safety, or welfare requires emergency action. When the SLA summarily suspends a license, it also serves a Notice of Pleading alleging one or more disciplinary violations. In invoking a summary suspension, the SLA has deemed the violation, considering each licensee’s disciplinary history, to be sufficiently serious upon initial review to warrant an immediate suspension. The SLA’s decision to summarily suspend a license is not a final determination on the merits of the case. The licensee is entitled to an expedited hearing before an administrative law judge. An order of summary suspension remains in effect until such time as it is modified by the SLA or a reviewing Court.

The SLA regulates and controls the manufacture, sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages within the state. The Authority works with local law enforcement agencies and localities across the State to ensure compliance with the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law. In addition, the Authority issues and renews licenses and permits to manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers of alcoholic beverages.

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