

David Rosen
347-489-8899
rosen_david@yahoo.com
302 Bedford Ave, #346
Brooklyn, NY 11249

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Thank you for providing me the time to speak today. In particular, I would like to thank Council Member Espinal for bringing long overdue attention to critical issues affecting the nightlife industry.

My name is David Rosen. Before I delve into speaking about the proposed legislation, I need to provide a summary of my background, since my name and reputation certainly don't proceed me. I am a bar and restaurant operator, having operated 6 establishments over the past 13 years in Brooklyn and Queen. 2 of those establishments failed, but the remaining 4 are fortunately still operating.

I am also the co-founder of Brooklyn Allied Bars and Restaurant, affectionately known as BABAR. BABAR was formed in 2011 as a local industry association within the geographic confines of Brooklyn Community Board 1, which represents Williamsburg and Greenpoint. A handful of owner operators like myself formed BABAR because we recognized that our industry needed to build a tighter bond with our community, beyond simply serving neighborhood patrons on a daily basis. As an organization BABAR's mission is to represent our industry on a hyper-local basis. We always understood that the city-wide associations like the Hospitality Alliance and the NY State Restaurant Group were doing great work on the big-ticket items which affect all establishments, regardless of location.

But we felt that local issues that were unique to our neighborhood were naturally missed by this city-wide focus. Over the past 6 years, we have grown and maintained BABAR on a completely volunteer basis without any staff or operational budget. We use a Google Group as the main means of organizing and staying in touch with each other. We now have well over 150 participating BABAR members. Our group is inherently cooperative and we use our online forum to help each other—topics range from plumber recommendations, to the merits of a water-cooled vs. air cooled ice machine, to warning each other about a spree of counterfeit bills. We also do our best to host a few in-person meetings a year--- past examples include, annual meeting with our local police precincts, forum on the future of tipping, and sessions with the health department.

Beyond working to educate each other, we have strived to build relationships with other local stakeholders including, the Community Board, local NYPD precincts, non-profits, elected officials, other industry associations, and prominent local figures. I served on Community Board 1 from 2012 to 2014 and we presently have three BABAR members who continue to serve on the board. We have strong relationships with local groups like Churches United for Fair Housing, Neighbors Allied for Good Growth, the Open Space Alliance, Evergreen, and the Grand Street BID to name a few. And I am proud to say that we have helped raise nearly a half a million dollars for the Northside Townhall community center through the annual Taste Williamsburg Greenpoint event.

Ultimately, the reputation of our industry within our community hinges upon respect for our neighbors. BABAR has placed a tremendous focus on encouraging and helping our members operated responsibly and build good relationships with local residents. But this isn't easy and requires ongoing maintenance and attention. When I served on the Community Board, I was dispatched by the SLA Committee to help resolve noise complaints from residents about individual establishments. The 90th and 94th precincts have also requested my assistance in the same manner. I have attended dozens of meetings at various bars with their immediate neighbors to address complaints and concerns.

I am confident in stating that we have succeeded in resolving conflicts in most circumstances. I think we have achieved success for two reasons. First, we have been able to share information about successful operational strategies to mitigate noise and other problems. And these strategies are often simple---for example, training your bar back staff to pay attention to the volume level when they are taking the trash outside, installing a computerized volume limiter on a sound system, or building a vestibule at the front door. Second, and more importantly, building personal relationships between people is often the best way to resolve conflict. In other words, we have been able to improve situations simply by helping to facilitate constructive conversations between residents and nightlife operators. And as I will reference later in my remarks---this is why it is critical for the legislation at hand to include a local organizational component.

With that said, I think it's reasonable for me to say that a hundred or so business owners would agree that the title of "Night Mayor" is appropriate for me in Williamsburg and Greenpoint. I've noticed since the terms "Night Mayor" and "Nightlife Ambassador" have been thrown around recently in the press and through social media that there is a sense that the position is to serve as the official New York City party animal.

For better or worse, I can assure you that the position of Night Mayor, at least in my case in Williamsburg and Greenpoint, is not glamorous. It certainly does not include stepping out of a limousine each evening and being whisked away to a dance floor. It does however involve:

- serving hotdogs and hamburgers to community residents at the NYPD National Night Out in 90 degree August weather for 6 hours 4 years in a row
- attending Citizen's Police Academy for 14 weeks while my wife was pregnant with our third child
- braving a Community Board SLA meeting for nearly 7 hours to get through a full docket of applications
- waiting in seemingly endless security lines at One Police Plaza, the Brooklyn District Attorney's office, and One Centre Street
- attending audio trade shows to learn about new sound proofing method and technologies
- sitting in the street for hours handing out pamphlets for local non-profits
- ironically getting a ticket while parking in an NYPD spot as a guest of the NYPD
- and staying up to 1 AM on Father's Day to draft your City Council testimony, only to wake up your 3-year old daughter upon returning upstairs and finally getting her back to sleep at 3am. I guess that does qualify as nightlife on some level.

And for the record, owning a bar isn't that glamorous either—but I'll save that analysis for another time.

I'd like to highlight two important initiatives that have grown from BABAR in the past few years. First, the Brooklyn Nightlife and Restaurant Coalition. Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams and I created the Brooklyn Nightlife and Restaurant Coalition which is aimed replicating the BABAR model by creating similar local industry groups within each Community Board district. Brooklyn Borough President Adams has been a leading advocate for our industry by leveraging the resources of his office and events like Dine in Brooklyn and the BK Sings Karaoke competition.

Second, OutSmart. OutSmart is a collaborative public safety campaign which we created with the 90th Precinct in 2015. OutSmart engages the community to take ownership of safety awareness by creating their own messaging content—instead of relying on the content provided by the NYPD. We launched our first campaign, OutSmartBK in the summer of 2015 in North Brooklyn, which targeted millennials in Williamsburg, Greenpoint, and Bushwick. We accomplished this by creating an Instagram campaign which translated safety messages like “have your keys ready when you approach your front door” into compelling visual content. The online content was supported by multiple offline in person events such as self-defense training and a bike-safety workshop.

We assisted NYPD with the launch of OutSmart LGBTQ in the summer of 2016 which focused on LGBTQ nightlife establishments in Manhattan such as The Stonewall Inn. And now we are working on OutSmart NYC, an anti-violence prevention and bystander intervention program that builds upon the existing expertise of nightlife staff. The OutSmartNYC collaborators include: The New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault, The Crime Victims Treatment Center, Mount Sinai Beth Israel's Victim Services Program, The Bowery Collective, and the New York Hospitality Alliance. OutSmartNYC is now finalizing its plans to launch nightlife staff training and is in talks with the Night Mayor organization with hopes of collaborating on a global basis.

I want to highlight that OutSmartBK started as a hyper-local initiative and is now a blossoming city wide movement. In fact, OutSmartBK started as a simple conversation between Inspector DiPaolo when he was the Commanding Officer of the 90th Precinct and me. Inspector DiPaolo asked for our industry's help in reaching out to the millennial population, since that demographic was not in touch with the NYPD through traditional means and community groups. Hipsters probably don't attend church, but they do frequent bars. Let's just absorb this collaboration for a moment since I think it speaks volumes: the NYPD asked the local nightlife community for help in disseminating safety information, in the same way it relies upon churches, schools, and other civic organizations. Again, I want to stress that this degree of trust was built by working together on a personal level for years solving local problems.

Ok, so enough of my background. Again, I would like to thank Council Member Espinal for proposing legislation to create a Nightlife Task Force and Office of Nightlife. I cannot begin to express how excited I am by this legislation after working for the past 6 years on industry advocacy. Despite that excitement and my unwavering support for these measures, I do think we need to go further and be bolder. And I think that we should do our best to do so now, instead of revisiting this legislation in a few years with addendums.

Fundamentally, I think we need to expand the dialogue around the nature of nightlife and the context of nightlife within our city in three key ways:

First, we need to openly recognize that nightlife in New York City is incredibly expansive and diverse. This might seem as a given, but it's crucial that we don't take diversity for granted within the nightlife space. I'm not going to pretend that I have experienced every aspect of nightlife in NY, so I can't provide a list of examples to demonstrate my point. But it's fair to say that a city which represents hundreds of different national and ethnic backgrounds, has well over a hundred neighborhoods, and over 8 million people, must have a diverse nightlife by default. And I don't just mean diversity in the traditional sense of the word.

To be clear, though, the traditional sense of the word needs to be considered---how do we craft solutions which engage every demographic group who enjoy the nightlife our city offers? But there is also the diversity of experience---large dance club vs. live music venue---and space---sprawling warehouse vs. basement lounge---and ownership---large hospitality group vs. mom and pop operator. My experience is that the word "nightlife" often gets boiled down and loses this sense of diversity, to a point at which the meaning of nightlife becomes monolithic. The big fancy celebrity bound clubs and unlicensed underground parties receive the lion's share of the press and often our attention---but these are aberrations and don't represent the thousands of small neighborhood businesses that form the true meaning of nightlife.

Second, we need to focus on local neighborhoods. Beyond the impact of building personal relationships, working on a local level allows us to address the vastly different nightlife realities that various neighborhoods experience. Nightlife in the Lower East Side is different than nightlife in Bay Ridge. In that vein, I'd like to this thought: unless the nightlife office has a staff of about 300 how is it possibly going to build bridges between industry and community across 77 police precincts, 59 community boards, and nearly 20,000 licensed premises?

Third, let's set high standards for our desired outcomes. With all due respect, I think we can do better than simply reducing noise complaints and speeding up the permitting process. That's just the low hanging fruit. And if we focus on these issues we continue to feed a narrative based on conflict. We need to expand our goals and create a vision of civic engagement for nightlife. A vision where we are proactively working together on counterterrorism as the global threat to soft targets increase, a vision where nightlife staff are regarded as auxiliary safety officers, a vision where industry in every neighborhood is raising money for community centers and supporting affordable housing groups, a vision where residents are proud to have a local bar around their corner.

Therefore, I propose that a permanent nightlife council be added to the structure proposed by the existing legislation. The council would be comprised of 59 local chapters representing each community board district. Each local chapter would include: one Community Board member, one industry member, and one representative from each local NYPD precinct. The proposed Nightlife Office would be tasked with facilitating the establishment of this council and local chapters. The local chapters will be responsible for addressing neighborhood issues and building community relationships---and will report into the Nightlife Office and Task Force to share results in hopes of building city wide best practices.

At first glance, this concept of a council based on 59 local chapters might seem tremendously difficult to establish and manage. But in truth the Community Board structure and the Police Precincts already exist city wide. So we would only need to recruit 59 members of industry to serve on their local chapters. I just cannot accept that we can't achieve that. In fact, I own establishments in 2 Community Board districts, so we only need 57 more.

Thank you again for providing me the opportunity to speak to you today. I am committed to this cause and look forward to more conversations and working together to build a better city.