



February 12, 2018

Alderman Brian Hopkins
City of Chicago
121 N. LaSalle Street, Room 200
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: Wildberry Pancakes & Cafe
Sidewalk Cafe-196 E. Pearson

Dear Alderman Hopkins:

Thank you for the opportunity to review Wildberry's site plans for their proposed Sidewalk Cafe at 196 Pearson. We understand that the current code and City processes do not provide for review and/or input by the public as long as the proposed site plan meets the City code for an Outdoor Cafe. We understand that the original site plan presented by Wildberry did meet the current code but that Wildberry agreed to consider the concerns of the community. Therefore we are extremely thankful that you gave us the opportunity to provide you with some feedback.

Representatives of SOAR's Land Use & Development Committee have reviewed both the December, 2017 site plan and the January 2018 site plan and appreciate the modifications made by Wildberry, however SOAR still has some concerns and cannot support a Sidewalk Cafe at this location. So that you have the full picture, we will summarize all our concerns, the changes made by Wildberry and our on-going concerns.

AREA OF SIDEWALK CAFÉ

Use of Corner:

We welcome Wildberry to the neighborhood and from all appearances; it appears that they have been embraced already by residents and visitors alike. However, as we stated in our initial verbal comments to your office, the intersection of Pearson Street & Mies van der Rohe is currently a very congested corner and we are very concerned with this popular new restaurant now and how it will be when the summer season arrives and the neighborhood welcomes many tourists. Currently, the corner area deals with:

- * drop off and pickup of residents and guests of 180 E. Pearson, many who are older
- * hotel guest drop off & pickup by cabs, private car services, tours, etc.
- * professional sports teams with larges buses loading & unloading team members
- * adoring fans of sports teams hoping for autographs

The introduction of a sidewalk cafe at this already congested corner, will only add to a corner that barely works now. The popularity of Wildberry on Randolph Street, is such that many people now have to wait outdoors even in the winter. (witnessed this last Saturday). We do not see where people could wait without causing more congestion to an already congested area. With or without a sidewalk cafe, Wildberry is going to have to address how it will control the restaurant guests waiting for tables. As currently proposed, SOAR does not believe that a Sidewalk Cafe is in the best interest of neighborhood.

Streeterville Organization of Active Residents

Seating area:

Original plan (Dated December, 2017) showed 10 tables with seating for 40 including one table at the eastern most end of the cafe for individuals with disabilities. The access within the cafe showed 36” but we were concerned that once people sat down, 36” access would not be feasible. Also, we felt that the seating for individuals with disabilities was at the wrong end of the cafe.

Revised Plan: (Dated January, 2018) shows 8 tables with seating for 32 with the accessible table at the western corner, which is an improvement. In addition, the tables have been turned so the 36” clearance between tables should be able to be maintained.

While the revised plan is an improvement to the internal circulation of the Sidewalk Cafe we still believe that there are too many tables. We are concerned with a significant number of guests waiting for tables that guests will be standing in the public right of way and/or standing under the canopy of the Ritz Carlton or 180 Pearson. Both of these situations would not be acceptable to SOAR nor the residents in the surrounding buildings. We are also concerned that to notify the guests of the availability of their table that an amplified voice system might be used and we are most definitely against such a system.

Ventilating System:

Many of us have visited the site during early morning when there is a lot of prep cooking underway and while there is some cooking smell evident, we would recommend that the City inspects the premises on

a regular basis to be sure that they comply with the City Codes. The inspection of all restaurants in Streeterville is critical since most restaurants are in very close proximity to residential units. In so many neighborhoods, but especially Streeterville, there is often not an adequate separation of uses. That is certainly the case here with Wildberry.

SUMMARY

Again, SOAR is mindful that we do not have a role in the City review process for Sidewalk Cafes and we do appreciate you reaching out for our opinion since we do have concerns as outlined herein and therefore SOAR cannot support Wildberry’s application for a Sidewalk Cafe. In summary our concerns are:

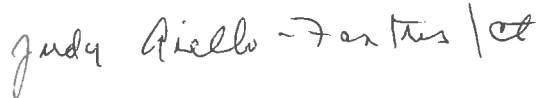
1. Area is already congested with multiple uses and the Sidewalk Cafe area is not adequate to allow for safe passage of pedestrians.
2. Eight (8) tables or four (4) are still too many.
3. Area does not allow for tables and clear space for pedestrians to walk and might require utilizing the area that has the Com Ed vault for walking.
4. Waiting area on the sidewalk may impose upon the space for residents of 180 Pearson and guests of the Ritz Carlton.
5. Ventilation may require modification.
6. Wildberry may need to remove some interior tables so as to have guests wait for a table indoors.
7. Wildberry may have to have a staff person outside keeping the sidewalk clear for pedestrians.
8. Adding some landscaping, planters or a bench might be more appropriate.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide you with our thoughts to maintain Streeterville a welcoming community and look forward to working with Wildberry.

Sincerely



Deborah Gershbein
SOAR President



Judy Aiello-Fantus
Co-Chair
SOAR Land Use Development Task Force



Gail Spreen
Co-Chair
SOAR Land Use Development Task Force

Cc: 200 E. Pearson Cooperative
180 E. Pearson Condominium Association
Magnificent Mile Association

SOAR Board of Directors