



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Klein Applauds Sla Vote Suspending Karma Liquor License

JEFFREY D. KLEIN August 5, 2008



Troubled establishment characterized by disturbances, drugs, and gun violence temporarily closed

BRONX-After months of protests to the State Liquor Authority (SLA) and the Governor's office, Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester), Councilman Jimmy Vacca (D-Bronx), Assemblywoman Naomi Rivera (D-Bronx), and outraged members of the Morris Park and Van Nest communities have convinced the SLA to suspend Karma's liquor license. At the Authority's full board meeting on Wednesday, August 6th, SLA legal counsel submitted a successful petition for an emergency summary suspension at the Senator's urging, which passed with a unanimous 3-0 vote.

A similar petition failed at the board's July 17th meeting with Commissioner Healy voting for an immediate suspension and Chairman Boyle voting against it on the grounds that evidence was insufficient to support a suspension. Since that time, another member has been added to the board, Commissioner Jeanique Greene, and new information came to light which Klein was confident met the Authority's emergency suspension standard of a: "immediate threat to the safety and health of the community".

"Karma has flagrantly violated the law since its inception, and our community has had enough. It's time to end the late nights, gun violence, and illegal activity that have kept police working overtime and disrupted the entire neighborhood. I applaud the State Liquor Authority's decision to immediately suspend Karma's license and hope this long nightmare is finally over," said Senator Klein.

Adding to the community's outrage is the fact that Marcia Brigett, the owner of Karma, originally came before Community Board #11 at their November meeting in 2007, and falsely represented her new business as a family-style restaurant. Despite the Community Board's letter to SLA opposing the liquor license, Karma was allowed to open in January and quickly became a neighborhood nuisance hosting weekend bikini parties and wet t-shirt contests, and attracting crowds of rowdy club goers well into the mornings. The situation escalated even further in June as two people were shot in front of the club and a reporter from News 12 Bronx was threatened with a gun.

Klein's efforts to close the establishment began in April in response to several calls from the surrounding community. At that time, Senator Klein convinced the SLA to undertake a secret investigation of the club that revealed numerous violations including marijuana on the premises, insufficient security, false representations on the license application, and disorderly conduct. Both the SLA counsel and constituents in both the Morris Park and Van

Nest communities were kept informed by Senator Klein as updates of the investigation emerged.

In July, A Notice of Pleading detailing the aforementioned violations was issued to owner Marcia Brigett who had until Wednesday, August 6th to enter a plea of either "not guilty" or "no contest". Typically a hearing date is assigned at that time, but the process can drag on for months. At Klein's urging, counsel instead presented its successful petition for an emergency summary suspension that will close the establishment pending an upcoming administrative hearing to determine if the charges are founded and whether Karma is ever allowed to re-open.