



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS

1000 Rochester Hills Dr.
Rochester Hills, MI 48309
248.656.4630
www.rochesterhills.org

Legislative File No: 2025-0450 V2

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Chris McLeod, Planning Manager, ext. 2572

DATE: October 30, 2025

SUBJECT: Request for conditional use approval for The Highland Room (Mike (Manish) Chaudhary) to allow for on premises alcoholic beverage consumption at 1760 E. Auburn, Unit #1, within the Gerald Building, on the south side of Auburn and west of Dequindre

REQUEST:

Approval of a conditional use to allow for on premises alcoholic beverage consumption at The Highland Room (Mike (Manish) Chaudhary), located at 1760 E. Auburn, Unit #1, within the Gerald Building, on the south side of Auburn and west of Dequindre, zoned BD Brooklands District.

BACKGROUND:

The applicant has filed for a Conditional Use Permit to serve and consume alcohol for a new restaurant establishment, The Highland Room. The menu and business plan provided shows that the Highland Room Café will be a modern, community driven café and cocktail lounge that is upscale, yet approachable, offering specialty coffee, craft cocktails, and fusion inspired cuisine. At the Planning Commission meeting, the applicant indicated that alcohol sales would generally commence starting at 4:00 p.m. until close. The morning and early afternoon hours would be for the sales consistent with a café.

Alcoholic beverage sales for on premises consumption, accessory to a permitted use, requires a conditional use permit in the BD Brooklands District. The applicant is seeking a quota license. The applicant has already appeared before the Liquor License Technical Review Committee. The Committee recommended denial of the granting of a quota license for this location and use. However, the applicant has requested to continue to move forward with the conditional use consideration which can be considered separately from the decision rendered on the quota license.

The tenant space is the westernmost unit within the building and is approximately 1,260 square feet in size. The floor plan provided includes seating for approximately 33 persons in a mix of tables, casual seating areas and bar seating. The remainder of the space will be a bar/barista area, kitchen area, locked storage area, and restroom facilities. The information provided as a part of the application indicates there is no proposed outdoor seating.

The applicant has indicated this location will be affiliated with the Highland Room Banquet and Café located in Highland Park. That location, based on internet reviews, appears to be a much larger facility offering a larger event space. The subject location is intended to be open from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. The applicant has noted the proposed café may differentiate itself by having evening drinks and social gatherings, specialty menu items and night events, and providing a unique ambience.

The issuance of the conditional use permit is a discretionary decision by the City Council based on five general criteria contained in Sec. 138-2.302 of the Zoning Ordinance as follows, which are included in the resolution:

- 1) *Will promote the intent and purpose of this chapter.*

- 2) *Will be designed, constructed, operated, maintained, and managed so as to be compatible, harmonious, and appropriate in appearance with the existing or planned character of the general vicinity, adjacent uses of land, the natural environment, the capacity of public services and facilities affected by the land use and the community as a whole.*
- 3) *Will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services, such as highways, streets, police and fire protection, drainage ways, refuse disposal, or that the persons or agencies responsible for the establishment of the land use or activity shall be able to provide adequately any such service.*
- 4) *Will not be detrimental, hazardous, or disturbing to existing or future neighboring land uses, persons, property, or the public welfare.*
- 5) *Will not create additional requirements at public cost for public facilities and services that will be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.*

The Planning Commission recommended by an 9-0 vote in favor of approval of the conditional use with several findings and conditions as reflected in the attached resolution, at its October 21, 2025 meeting. Please refer to the attached Planning Commission minutes for further details.

RECOMMENDATION:

Finding that the proposed request to allow sales for on premises alcoholic beverage consumption meets the criteria of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission recommends that City Council approves the conditional use for The Highland Room, to allow on premises alcoholic beverage consumption, located at 1760 E. Auburn, Unit #1, within the Gerald Building, on the south side of Auburn and west of Dequindre, zoned BD Brooklands District, subject to the findings and conditions noted in the attached resolution.

APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Mayor		
Deputy City Clerk		

Contract Reviewed by City Attorney ☐ Yes ☒ N/A