

Thursday, June 08, 2017

Ann Arbor City Planning Commission  
Larcom City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Ann Arbor City Planning Commission,

We are writing to express our support for the Ann Arbor Distilling Co. petition to be re-zoned as an event space which will be voted on at the planning commission hearing on June 20th. The Ann Arbor Distilling Co.(AADC) has been an important place to us personally and as residents of Ann Arbor committed to supporting local Ann Arbor businesses. We both live and work in the city of Ann Arbor, where we plan to build our lives together and eventually buy a home. Abby formerly lived around the corner from the distillery on Spring St, but we moved downtown and have enjoyed watching this space evolve and develop. During our courtship, we have enjoyed seeking out locally run businesses and events in Ann Arbor and Detroit. The AADC rapidly became our favorite place to bring friends to relax in the tasting room. We love the industrial style and careful renovations of the building. We appreciate the neighborhood atmosphere and diversity of people who we see there. We love that this business is owned and run by local people who care a great deal about keeping Ann Arbor a unique and vibrant place to live.

We were thrilled when we had the idea to start our lives together with a reception at the Distillery following our wedding. We have been committed to planning a local wedding that reflects our lifestyle and supports our Ann Arbor community. We plan to book vendors for our wedding and hotels all within Ann Arbor and hope to have a local event to show off our city to our family and friends. There are very few venues within the city that are affordable on our budget and can accommodate larger groups of people. Upon finding out that the Distillery is not able to host our type of event, we have looked diligently in the area and cannot find a local alternative that can fit our size and budget, while working with us to create local charm we want. As a result, we will likely be forced to take our business out of the area, and this will change the local vendors and hotels we book as well.

It is hard to overstate the loss to the community if this space is not approved as an event space. Locally run, affordably priced, unique venues for private events are a rarity in Ann Arbor, yet it is exactly these types of spaces that are needed to maintain the unique artists, diverse community, and personality of this city.

This plea is personal because we greatly hope that the permit and related issues will be resolved in a timely manner, so that our dream of an AADC wedding could be possible. However, the loss of the AADC extends far beyond our personal wishes and will be a significant loss for the community.

We appreciate your consideration to approve the AADC request to permit them to host events.

Sincerely,

Abby Johnson and Johnathon Beals