

From: [John David Corey](#)
Subject: The Chesterfield - February Town Council Summary
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Dear Fellow Residents and Neighbors:

I was asked by many to summarize this week's Town Council meeting regarding The Chesterfield and wanted to provide all of you with a quick analysis. Please stay engaged whether you live in the neighborhood or elsewhere in Palm Beach. Intensification efforts are brewing from the North End through Midtown to the South End. Please note that we already have 9,787 restaurant/bar/club approved seats and an average of 75,000 cars a day coming into Palm Beach! Do we really want **more**?

After a robust letter writing campaign, about 50 opposition letters were filed with the town clerk regarding the hotel and its proposed restaurant expansion. Adding to this tremendous achievement, at least 40 neighbors attended the hearing in person and many spoke in support of each other and against the restaurant expansion. Everyone expressed the desire to have the hotel renovated and were quite pleased with the operator's qualifications, but we were all in lockstep against any intensification of the restaurant, bar and nightclub. The good news is that any restaurant expansion is not "as of right", but requires a variance (a very high legal threshold).

We were steadfast that the restaurant stay at the current license of 113 seats (inside and out) and that any pool area seating be for the exclusive use of the hotel guests and not the general public. (Note that any pool seating granted would be vetted through the Site Plan Review process and controlled by an Operating Agreement to protect adjacent neighbors.) The restaurant expansion variance was deferred until next month, but the evidence clearly showed that there is no hardship and that the potential granting would violate our town Comprehensive Plan and be contrary to the public interest (especially due to the impacts in the surrounding neighborhood). Town staff established that the existing license of 113 was the approved capacity (inside and out) whether or not extra seats were added by the past operator which was very helpful.

The other variances for rooftop equipment were also deferred and staff was charged to assess their visibility and noise. The immediate neighbors hope to work with town staff to create mock-ups to scale of the equipment so that they can accurately assess the visual impacts. The variance for the elevator "override" on the roof was approved as that was more of a technical variance due to ADA compliance.

In addition to the variances, the project must be fully vetted and approved for site plan as well as operations (e.g.: how the valet would work, where cars would be parked, proposed hours of operation, trash locations, etc.). These items were all deferred as well since plans were not fully developed and no viable solution to the parking/traffic issues was presented. The applicant was ultimately charged with listening and addressing all of the neighbors concerns and coming back with effective solutions. Also note that their traffic study was particularly flawed and no one was having any of that!

I ask all of us to please stay vigilant and not let our guard down to protect the resident quality of life we all cherish. The next meeting is scheduled for March 15th, but I will keep everyone posted with more details when the agenda is confirmed.

Please remember that we are the ones that vote and the ones that ultimately call the shots. As I like to say “Residents First!”

Sincerely,
JDC