

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION
Library Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Penn Wynne Library Board request to allow alcohol to be served at their Appetite for Books fundraising event in the library.

Prepared By: David Belanger, Director of Libraries

Date: March 8, 2019

- I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:** Approval of the Penn Wynne Library request to serve alcohol at its fundraiser, Appetite for Books, to be held at the library. This includes a waiver of Township Code § 111-4.2 needed for this event.
- II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:** The Township Code restricts serving of alcohol on Township property, which is defined as a public place in the Code. § 111-4.2 states: No person shall drink an alcoholic beverage, nor shall any person, firm, corporation or other organization possess an open container containing an alcoholic beverage, whether inside or outside of a motor vehicle or any part thereof, on or in any public place within the Township of Lower Merion.
- III. Current Policy or Practice (If Applicable):** The Board of Commissioners has allowed alcohol at library events in the past, including the 2018 Penn Wynne event and for the donor reception for the Ludington Library in 2012. The Township has rules in place under the Special Event Permit involving the Sale and/or Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages.
- IV. Other Relevant Background Information:** The Appetite for Books fundraiser is a wine and beer tasting, paired with a complimentary food. In addition, the evening centers on raffles, silent auctions, and live music. In bringing the event to the library in 2018 instead of an off-site location, the library board hoped to accomplish three goals: increase attendance at the event, garner more community sponsorships, and raise more money than ever before. The library was able to accomplish those goals. There were over 110 people at the event, initial event expenses were covered by sponsorships from the community (from seven local businesses and families), and over \$7000 was raised for the library. After the event, board members heard one word over and over: community. Everyone who attended the event was so impressed and truly felt that the event brought our community together. The library board is requesting to hold Appetite for Books again this year at the library on November 16, 2019.

The board will continue to meet any requirements that the Township has established for events at which alcohol is served. At the 2018 event, the board worked with Conshohocken Brewing Company and Grace Winery – both sent professional bartenders

to serve the alcohol and had the appropriate insurance coverage. Both vendors have expressed interest in working with the library again in 2019. As in 2018, the board will make clear on the invitation and publicity for the event that it is for adults ages 21 and up.

- V. **Impact on Township Finances:** This is the major annual fundraising event for the Penn Wynne Library. The ability to hold it at the library will reduce overhead costs. The funds generated are used to provide books and other materials for the library, along with special event programs. It helps to supplement and extend the Township funds provided for the operation of the library.
- VI. **Staff Recommendation:** That the Board of Commissioners approve the Penn Wynne Library Board request to allow alcohol to be served at their Appetite for Books fundraising event in the library.