

Abrazo Dancehall Proposal

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Conditional Use Permit Application Narrative for Dancehall at 303C Mill St NE, Vienna

Introduction:

This narrative provides detailed information regarding the proposed use of the facility at 303C Mill St NE as a dancehall primarily for Argentine Tango social dancing, known as Milongas. The description adheres to the criteria set forth under Section 18-824 for a Conditional Use Permit under 'Indoor Private Recreation'.

I. Noise Management:

- **Anticipated Noise Levels:** The dancehall will operate with internal noise levels at 75 decibels—appropriate for dancing yet low enough to facilitate conversation. Prior to any soundproofing measures, external noise levels at all property lines are imperceptible, demonstrating minimal impact on the surrounding area.
- **Compliance with Town Code:** All described noise levels comply with the Town Code (Sec. 10-20.1), ensuring there is no disturbance to the peace, quietude, or normal enjoyment of the surrounding residential area.

- Noise Control Plans: To further minimize any potential noise impact and to be good neighbors, we are installing 20 acoustic panels (4ft x 2ft each) on the first floor, deploying 2 sound blankets (10x15ft each) at the front of the space, and add 15ft x 10ft soundproofing panels along the rear upstairs wall in the mezzanine. Additionally, the loading door has 3 inch industrial sound panels installed on the entirety of the door. These proactive measures exceed typical requirements and are intended to solidify our commitment to maintaining a respectful and low-impact presence in the neighborhood.

II. Odor Management:

- Odor Control: Not applicable as the proposed use does not involve any activities that generate odors.

III. Trash and Litter Management:

- Type and Volume of Trash: Minimal trash generation is expected, primarily consisting of paper products from restroom use.
- Frequency of Trash Collection: Trash will be collected and disposed of at the end of each milonga, ensuring no accumulation.
- Litter Prevention: Active monitoring of parking areas and surrounding streets will be conducted to maintain cleanliness. A strategically placed trash receptacle at the venue's entrance will encourage proper disposal of personal trash by patrons.

IV. Loading and Unloading Operations:

- Off-Street Loading Facilities: Not applicable as the dancehall requires no loading or unloading.
- Loading Frequency: Not applicable due to the absence of regular loading/unloading activities.

V. Parking and Traffic Management:

- Parking Availability: 303 Mill St. has 25 private parking spots available. All neighboring businesses at 303 Mill St. NE are closed during milonga hours, freeing parking capacity. Moreover, ample street parking is available in the evening on Church Street.
- Transportation Habits: Milonga attendees in the DC area frequently carpool and utilize public transportation, significantly reducing the demand for parking.

- Stacking Plans: Not required due to the nature of the event scheduling and existing ample parking facilities.

VI. Use Capacity:

- Estimated Attendance: Each milonga is expected to attract between 40-50 attendees.
- Staffing Details: Operations will be managed by the owner, two of the owners family members (reducing the need for parking) and assisted by three volunteers, with occasional visiting instructors for special classes. Traditionally attendees volunteer for free entry to the milonga, which reduces parking demand as well.

V. Economic Impact

The introduction of a dancehall at 303C Mill St NE, Vienna, specifically tailored for Argentine Tango, is poised to deliver significant economic benefits to the local community. This section outlines the positive impacts driven by attracting a clientele with disposable income.

- Attracting High-Spending Patrons: The dance community, particularly those involved in Argentine Tango, is known for its educated demographic with disposable income. Studies and economic reports, such as those from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, indicate that arts and cultural activities significantly contribute to local economies. Patrons of the arts are more likely to spend on ancillary services such as dining, shopping, and other entertainment, which complements their primary reason for visiting an area.
- Boost to Local Businesses: By hosting milongas, the dancehall will attract visitors not just from Vienna, but also from surrounding areas including Washington D.C. These visitors are likely to explore and spend time in local establishments before and after milongas, thereby boosting local business revenues. This aligns with findings from national arts and cultural production reports, which highlight the ripple effect of spending in cultural activities on adjacent sectors.
- Sustained Economic Engagement: The regular hosting of milongas ensures a consistent influx of visitors to the town, unlike one-off events. This sustained engagement provides a steady economic benefit to local businesses, helping to stabilize and potentially increase their revenues.
- Cultural Tourism: The unique appeal of Argentine Tango can also position Vienna as a destination for cultural tourism within the region. According to the Virginia Commission for the Arts, cultural tourists tend to stay longer and spend more than average tourists, enhancing the economic impact.
- Enhancing Community Profile: Beyond direct financial benefits, the presence of a vibrant cultural scene enhances the community's profile, making it more attractive to new residents

and businesses looking for a dynamic and culturally rich environment. This can lead to increased property values and greater investment in the area.

Zoning Compliance and Permitted Use:

The proposed dancehall at 303C Mill St NE, Vienna, is planned as a venue for Argentine Tango, categorizing it under "Indoor Recreation" as per the town's zoning regulations for the Mill District. This section outlines the compliance of the proposed use with local zoning provisions.

- **Definition and Compliance:** According to the Town of Vienna's zoning regulations, "Indoor recreation" is defined as a private indoor use (entirely within an enclosed structure) providing for sport and recreational activities, operated primarily for financial gain. This category explicitly includes uses such as fitness centers, bowling alleys, dancehalls, skating rinks, indoor commercial swimming pools, and racquet and tennis clubs. Our proposal for a dancehall squarely fits within these guidelines, as it is designed to offer recreational dance activities in a fully enclosed environment.
- **Operational Intent:** The primary purpose of the dancehall is to provide a space for social and recreational dance, specifically Argentine Tango, which aligns with the examples provided in the town code. The operation of the dancehall will be geared towards not only providing recreation but also enhancing the cultural fabric of the community, which is a key objective of indoor recreational uses as envisioned by the zoning code.

Conclusion:

The proposed dancehall aligns with the goals of providing a culturally enriching and community-oriented recreational space. It adheres strictly to the criteria specified for a Conditional Use Permit under Section 18-824 of the Town Code, demonstrating readiness to operate responsibly and harmoniously within the community fabric of Vienna. Our goal at Abrazo is to provide year-round cultural events that create vibrant arts programming in Fairfax County, attract customers to our neighborhood merchants, and generate economic activity to benefit the local economy.