

Good evening, members of the Board of Zoning Appeals,

Thank you for the opportunity to present the vision for Abrazo Dancehall and its potential impact on our community. Thank you to the Town Of Vienna for all of your help with our application.

We're seeking this conditional use for the love of tango and to grow our community, not for profit.

I'd like to start with a personal note. I've been a tango dancer for over 10 years, and tango has given me my closest friends and my husband. On many evenings each month, I head to milongas in Eastern Market, Bethesda, Arlington, and DC. A milonga is a dance social shaped by over 100 years of tradition from Buenos Aires. I've danced at milongas across the world; in ballrooms in Montreal, at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, in cafes in Athens, and public squares in Venice. Locally, we dance in public libraries, embassies, dance studios, and even in the community room at Sunrise Senior Living right here in Vienna. These evenings begin often with a shared meal, followed by dancing, and sometimes end with a late-night snack at a nearby bar. It's not just about the dance; it's about connecting, rejuvenating, and growing relationships.

Argentine Tango is often seen as a dramatic performance art, but social tango is so much more. When you picture tango, you may picture a couple marching across the room with a rose between their lips. That's stage tango. Social tango is a different art - it is a fully improvised dance that fosters mindfulness, skill, community, and lifelong relationships. Abrazo Dancehall will bring this enriching experience to Vienna, creating a cultural space where our community can come together.

Regarding logistics,

- Our events will not affect the health or safety of those residing or working in the neighborhood. Our space will comply with all fire safety and building codes, and the soundproofing measures we've installed will ensure that noise levels remain within acceptable limits. Our sound equipment is specifically designed for high-ceiling spaces, delivering sound only at ear level, and at a level that won't disturb our neighbors.

- Regarding parking, we have full use of the lot with at least 25 spaces, with our landlord's approval as all of our neighbors are closed during the hours we will operate.

## **2. Public Welfare and Property:**

- Abrazo Dancehall will not be detrimental to public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood. On the contrary, it will enhance the community by providing a new space for social and cultural engagement. The economic activity generated by our events will benefit local businesses without imposing any negative impacts.

Vienna's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes promoting local tourism and enhancing arts and culture. Abrazo Dancehall aligns perfectly with this vision. In addition to growing the local community around Vienna, we will attract dancers from neighboring areas, driving economic activity to our local businesses. As I mentioned, tango dancers often travel internationally just to dance. For example, at the beginning of this month, over 150 friends from around the globe flew in to dance for 5 days straight at Colvin Run Dance Hall in Tysons, just 6 miles away. These dancers needed places to eat, sleep, and shop. While our milongas will operate at a much smaller scale, this example demonstrates how our dancehall could enrich Vienna, making it a cultural and economic hub and be a boon to our local economy.

Our portrait studio has contributed to Vienna's arts and culture for five years. Expanding to include a dancehall as an accessory use will further this mission. That said, we expect very modest revenue from the dancehall. Most of the revenue generated at these milongas will cover expenses and support the Vienna Public Art Foundation. Third spaces, where people connect and build community, are shrinking. Loneliness is on the rise. Abrazo Dancehall will be a sanctuary for social interaction, personal growth, and cultural engagement.

I am happy to discuss these details further and answer any questions. We ask for your approval, not for financial gain, but for the love of tango and the betterment of our community. Thank you.