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Appleton Police Department

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**Date:** July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
**To:** Appleton Safety and Licensing Committee  
**CC:** Chief Todd Thomas, Asst. Chief Polly Olson, Capt. Mike Frisch  
**From:** Lt. Adam Nagel  
**Subject:** Significant incidents at Speakeasy Bar, 425 W College Ave.

In the past six months we have seen an increase in calls for service at the *Speakeasy Bar* at 425 W. College Ave. The data indicates that this increase is mainly due to fights in and around the establishment. The data, confirmed by the observations of our officers and supervisors, is that many of these incidents are large or multiple physical fights occurring at the same time, resulting in significant injuries. We have worked with the owner of Speakeasy, Ted Suess, but we are still seeing a higher number of more significant issues at the establishment.

There have been five (5) fights involving patrons reported to the APD in or outside of the front doors of Speakeasy that have resulted in several physical arrests or citations in the last six months. There is another bar on College Ave. that has had more calls for service during this time frame, but with less serious types of calls, that is currently being addressed. As a comparison to the five (5) calls at Speakeasy, the bar with the next closest number of calls had two (2) disturbances and needed little police intervention. An APD Lieutenant who arrived on scene to one of the fights at Speakeasy on 07/02/22 observed approximately five different fights occurring at the same time. The traffic camera footage from this incident shows a very dangerous and chaotic scene.

It is clear that the most dangerous incidents happen on nights they host a performer or special event. We do not have incidents on every one of these nights, however, they clearly increase the frequency and significance of the problem. As an example, there is an event being promoted called a "Trap House Party", scheduled for July 23, 2022. If you are not aware of it, dictionary.com defines "Trap House" as a place where illicit drugs are bought, sold, or used. This event features a musician who is seen in a recently released music video displaying multiple guns, and the last time this entertainer performed at Speakeasy we had significant disturbances.

We have worked with the establishment to try and assist them in resolving some of the issues..

- Capt. Frisch, ACA Nicholas VandeCastle and I met with Ted Suess and his bar manager after a large fight in front of Speakeasy on 04/10/22. We suggested increasing bar staff, closing the bar earlier and having bouncers assist with clearing patrons from the front of the bar after bar close.

Mr. Suess took those suggestions and it appeared to help with some of the issues. On some occasions officers complimented his staff for the extra work they put in.

- Another fight occurred in Speakeasy on 05/29/22. During this fight a patron was hit in the head with a glass. This fight was handled by officers and two different people were cited. I met with Mr. Suess after this incident and continued to provide suggestions for more staff when they are hosting events. Mr. Suess was responsive to these requests.
- We had another fight on 06/11/22 that resulted in criminal charges, another large disturbance on 06/25/22, and a large fight involving multiple groups of people on 07/02/22. Officers have also observed the back door of the business being open and multiple people coming in and out of it.
- On the weekend of 07/09/22 officers observed that Speakeasy had closed the blinds on the front of the business. I spoke to Mr. Suess on 07/19/22 and expressed my concerns. Mr. Suess was unaware that the back door was being used by patrons. He was aware of the manager and other performers using the door. When asked about the blinds being closed, he stated that they closed them due to hosting a Lingerie Party

The Appleton Police Department has made several attempts to address on-going safety concerns. The safety of anyone patronizing this establishment or visiting our downtown entertainment district is our priority. The number of issues we have seen around Speakeasy is not acceptable and we are concerned for the patrons, citizens, and our officers' safety if these incidents continue. The information provided to the Safety and Licensing committee is informational at this time. It is important for this committee to hear these concerns. All videos, still images and documents can be shared with any member of the committee. Please reach out to me with any other questions or concerns.

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