

**Maryland Department of Health**  
**Issuance of Alcoholic Beverages Licenses to Tobacconists Workgroup Meeting**  
**April 28, 2025**  
**11:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

Members:

Steven Arentz  
Finnie Pecunes Helmuth  
Nilesh Kalyanaraman  
Jeffrey Kelly  
Clarence Lam  
Ronald Watson

Public:

Bill Casanelli  
Jocelyn Collins  
Kathi Hoke  
Lance Kilpatrick  
Glynn Loope  
Abbey Rubeling  
Raj Singh  
Scott Tiffin

Staff:

Subha Chandar  
Illan Kokotek  
Sumana Kondle  
Victoria Marte-Tiburcio  
Christopher McGrath  
Clifford Mitchell  
Dana Moncrief  
Alexandra Nowalk  
Samuel Paul  
Jody Sheely  
Sara Wolfe

**Meeting Notes:**

**Welcome & General Business**

- Nilesh Kalyanaraman opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
- Jody Sheely conducted a roll call and provided an overview of the Open Meeting Act.
- The Workgroup adopted the March 24, 2025, meeting minutes.
- Nilesh Kalyanaraman provided an overview of the meeting.

**Discussion of Recommendations**

- Nilesh Kalyanaraman provided a summary of the statutory purpose and the broad consensus of the Workgroup to date.
- Cliff Mitchell, Director of the Maryland Department of Health's Environmental Health Bureau presented a review of studies on ventilation and identified none that specifically addressed the effectiveness of ventilation systems in controlling secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure in retail tobacco facilities. He concluded that there is no recommendation that ventilation can completely eliminate the risk from SHS.

- Nilesh Kalyanaraman presented the following recommendation for discussion: Tobacco retail locations that allow on-site smoking should be stand-alone buildings; current tobacconist locations would be grandfathered into this proposed requirement.
- The Workgroup members discussed public health and business interests with limiting tobacconist facilities to stand-alone buildings. Several members highlighted that local liquor boards currently notify the public of tobacco license hearings for retailers applying for a new license, providing opportunities for the public to share their concerns.
- Nilesh Kalyanaraman and Clarence Lam signaled their preference for stand-alone buildings.
- Several Workgroup members preferred to only limit facilities located near healthcare or child-related facilities.
- The Workgroup discussed additional considerations related to registration and signage requirements, enforcement authority, and penalties for violations.
- The Workgroup considered county-level limitations on the number of alcohol licenses issued, and its effect on the issuance of alcohol licenses to tobacconists.

#### **Public Comment**

- Nilesh Kalyanaraman opened the public comment period.
- Raj Singh expressed that tobacconists with on-premise licenses should count towards the county's license cap.
- Kathi Hoke clarified the statutory requirements of a tobacconist.
- Nilesh Kalyanaraman closed the public comment period.

#### **Closing Remarks**

- Nilesh Kalyanaraman discussed the next steps and thanked the Workgroup for their participation.