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ALLSTON BRIGHTON, WATERTOWN

Hub restaurateur buys Stockyard steakhouse in Brighton, plans to keep same name, concept

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 3, 2012 11:23 AM

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

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The owner of several Boston restaurants has agreed to purchase the Stockyard Food and Spirits restaurant in Brighton and plans to maintain the general concept of the 42-year-old steakhouse.

Michael G. Conlon Jr., a 45-year-old Brighton native who grew up on Arlington Street, said at a community meeting Thursday that he plans to introduce a new menu and make some cosmetic improvements before reopening at the location along Market Street. The property is visible from the Massachusetts Turnpike.

"It's good to come back," to the neighborhood, he said during the Brighton Allston Improvement Association's monthly gathering at the Elks Lodge. "We're looking to go in there and serve a better product and to have good management."

He and his brother-in-law and business partner Joseph Greene run several restaurants in Boston: the Blarney Stone in Dorchester, West on Centre in West Roxbury, the 21st Amendment on Beacon Hill and the original Paramount on Beacon Hill along with a newly-opened Paramount in South Boston.

Conlon is listed as the sole owner of the company that will take over the restaurant, Original Stockyard, LLC, which formed in March, state records show.

That entity is scheduled to go before the Boston Licensing Board at 10 a.m. on Wed., Aug. 8 to request approval to obtain the location's liquor license from its former ownership, CJ Manning Company, Inc.

Brothers Mark Manning and Neil Manning Jr. own that company and ran the restaurant until mid-July, when it abruptly closed and signs posted to the door announced only that it had closed until further notice due to "renovations."

The Mannings have not returned messages nor has the restaurant's former general manager. Their father, the late Corneilus "Neil" Manning and his wife, Lillian, bought the property and built the restaurant.

Conlon has yet to file a formal request, but hopes to also apply for an entertainment license from the city. He said that he hopes to seek the same



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conditions the former ownership had under its liquor and entertainment permits.

Some who spoke at the neighborhood meeting Thursday welcomed Conlon and his plans and vouched for his reputation as a local restaurateur for the past two decades. Others expressed concern, mainly about the potential for past noise issues to continue.

A few residents said that the former ownership, especially after the restaurant's founder relinquished operations to his sons, did not respond to complaints about loud patrons leaving at late hours and waking those asleep at neighboring homes.

Conlon said he has had no such issues at any of his other restaurants, each of which he said are next to residential areas.

"Obviously, we have to win back your trust," he said to the concerned residents. But, "If we have a problem, we deal with it right away. I'm not an absentee owner."

"It's a big investment," he added. "So the last thing I want are any people going there," who behave poorly at or outside of the restaurant.

He and his lawyer, Joseph P. Hanley, a partner at McDermott, Quilty, & Miller LLP, said they are willing to meet directly with any abutters of the property to listen to and try to alleviate concerns.

But, said Hanley that in terms of what the restaurant management will seek as permissible conditions of an entertainment license, "We're certainly not going to apply for less than what's already allowed there unless there's a good reason for it."

The timetable for opening will depend on how quickly he can obtain proper licensing and on exactly how much renovating needs to be done, according to Conlon.

The restaurant property, which includes a lot with more than 125 parking spaces, comprises just more than one acre of land valued at a combined \$2.35 million, according to the city's assessing department website.

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