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WEST ROXBURY

## Gov. Patrick signs law to renew liquor license for Irish Social Club of Boston

Posted by Matt Rocheleau September 17, 2012 03:11 PM

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

The Irish Social Club of Boston on Park Street in West Roxbury.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Governor Deval Patrick has signed a law allowing a special liquor license to be reissued to the Irish Social Club of Boston, after club supporters, including local legislators, pushed for the 66-year-old institution to be permitted to once again serve alcohol regularly.

The club needs to receive final approval from the Boston Licensing Board and the state's Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission before it can secure the license.

### Previous coverage

- [After 65 years, Irish Social Club of Boston closes abruptly](#)

In April 2011, the club's then-leaders made an abrupt decision to shut down its dance hall headquarters in West Roxbury and moved to dissolve the organization entirely, citing a lack

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of membership and funding. Those who were in charge of the club at the time returned the club's liquor license to the Boston Licensing Board.

But a grassroots campaign renewed interest in the club, generating new members and a significant sum of money. Seven months later, the Irish Social Club of Boston was able to declare that it had staved off extinction.

Under new leadership, the organization has hosted numerous dances and other functions since. However, in order to be able to legally serve alcohol during its events, the club has had to apply for temporary, one-day liquor licenses.

In Boston, licenses allowing alcohol to be served on a more permanent basis are limited and thus highly coveted. Once the club had forfeited its old license, there was no way of getting another one without going through the process of reapplying through the Boston Licensing Board, which is competitive and can involve a lengthy wait before a license becomes available. Licenses can be obtained in a quicker fashion through private exchanges, but those can cost as much as a few hundred thousand dollars and such deals are still subject to city approval.

In June, the Boston City Council voted unanimously to approve, and Mayor Thomas M. Menino signed, a home rule petition asking that the state legislature allow the Boston Licensing Board to reissue an annual seven-day club all alcoholic beverage license to the Irish Social Club, State Representative Ed Copping's office has said.

After the measure received city-level approval, Copping and State Senator Michael Rush filed a bill with the state legislature in late June. Copping, Rush and Boston City Councilor Matt O'Malley, all of whom represent West Roxbury and aided the efforts to save the club from closing, testified in support of the bill. City Councilors John R. Connolly and Stephen J. Murphy submitted written testimony.

It passed the House and Senate in early September and was signed by Patrick on Sept. 14.

The club is expected to soon apply for the license through the Boston Licensing

The club is expected to soon apply for the license through the Boston Licensing Board. That process takes at least 10 days of public notice before a hearing can be held, after which the board will approve or deny the request. If approved, the state's Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission will review the application for final approval.

"I am thrilled that a bill we filed just a month and a half ago was able to receive legislative approval so quickly," Coppinger said in a statement. "This liquor license ... is the last step in the process of making sure the Irish Social Club remains open permanently."

The license would be specific to the Irish Social Club and its building on Park Street in West Roxbury, Coppinger's office has said. It would be nontransferable. The club did not profit when it returned its previous liquor license and will not be able to profit from the new liquor license.

The original liquor license that club first received in 1981 went through this exact same process, according to Coppinger's office.

"The passage of this bill was a true collaboration between the community, state and local officials," said Senator Rush said in a statement. "This long standing club not only benefits its membership, but also acts as a place that supports many important charities and community events."

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