

From: [Wilson, Madison E. - PDR](#)
To: [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)
Subject: Fw: Papi's letter for reopening
Date: Tuesday, October 7, 2025 1:56:34 PM

Can we include this?

Madison Wilson (she/her)

Planner - Land Use Administration

Department of Planning and Development Review

City of Richmond

Madison.Wilson@RVA.gov

804-646-7436

From: Adrienne Londono <alondono2@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 7, 2025 1:35 PM
To: Wilson, Madison E. - PDR <Madison.Wilson@rva.gov>
Subject: Fw: Papi's letter for reopening

CAUTION: This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: William R <wpr20100@gmail.com>
To: "alondono2@aol.com" <alondono2@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 7, 2025 at 11:43:19 AM EDT
Subject: Papi's letter for reopening

Hi Adrienne!

Sorry this took me so long, life has been insane.
Below is my letter for the hearing tonight!

To whom it may concern,

As a Richmond resident who is very active and involved in the Richmond queer community and scene as well as an employee of Papi's, it deeply saddens me that Papi's was shut down and is still not being allowed to be reopened by the city. Papi's was greatly loved by so so many in the city. It's been nearly 10 months since we were shut down and I am still approached by strangers out in public every single week asking me if and when Papi's will reopen. They tell me that they loved the space and miss it dearly. They tell me that it was the one establishment in Richmond that made them feel fully welcomed, safe, appreciated, and able to authentically be themselves. Papi's impact on queer (and also straight) people was so vast that it extended past Richmond's bounds. I was even approached at a queer bar in Roanoke, VA, which is 200 miles away, just this past Saturday night (October 4th) by an individual whom I had never met. He said he recognized me from Papi's and asked why we were shut down and when we would

be allowed to reopen. He told me that he loved and missed Papi's and was hopeful that we'd be able to reopen. My lack of a solid answer as to why and when sadden him.

Please allow Papi's to reopen, there are already so few safe and welcoming spaces for the queer community in Richmond.

Sincerely,

William Reynolds, a hopeful Papi's employee.

From: [Wilson, Madison E. - PDR](#)
To: [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#)
Subject: Fw: Support for Papis Downtown
Date: Tuesday, October 7, 2025 5:00:13 PM

Madison Wilson (she/her)

Planner - Land Use Administration
Department of Planning and Development Review
City of Richmond
Madison.Wilson@RVA.gov
804-646-7436

From: Kia McVey <zekia.mcvey01@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 7, 2025 2:47 PM
To: Wilson, Madison E. - PDR <Madison.Wilson@rva.gov>
Subject: Support for Papis Downtown

You don't often get email from zekia.mcvey01@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Hi there,

I wanted to send this in support of Papis downtown. I'm born and raised in RVA and have seen many social atmospheres come and go. I'm not one that likes to go hang out too many places due to the feeling of being not accepted and unwelcome as a queer black woman. I started going to Papis about 3 years ago and from the first time I've gone I've felt nothing but accepted and welcome. Not only that, I've felt safe. I've taken other friends and family with me to Papis and everyone feels that the atmosphere in Papis is unlike any other.

It's joyous, beautiful, welcoming, without judgment and a space that the city needs for continued growth. It's an embodiment of our beloved motto "Virginia is for lovers." The more you shut down places that make people feel welcome and loved the less likely we are to stay in said area.

No violence has ever broken out at Papis. No fights, no shootings, not even arguments. I've met some of the most genuine sweetest people at Papis, people that I will forever call family. People that have made me happy to call Richmond my home. Closing Papis will be taking away a safe space for so many people. A safe space that we've been severely lacking in downtown Richmond.

I, as well as so many other friends and family that have gotten to experience the beautiful atmosphere that Papis provides, not only encourage you but beg you to please allow Papis to

reopen as a nightclub.

Signed,

-Zekia McVey, Virginia Native and resident

Lawrence One General Partnership
1417 E. Cary Street
Richmond, VA 23219

10/2/25

Madison Wilson
Planner – Land Use Administration
City of Richmond

Re: Objection to Papi's Conditional Use Permit Application

Dear Ms. Wilson,

I am the owner of 1417 E. Cary Street, a mixed-use building on the same block as Papi's, containing 30 apartments and a restaurant. As an adjacent property owner, I am submitting this objection to the pending CUP application for dance hall use by Papi's.

As you know, a nightclub or dance hall is not a by-right use in this zoning district. That is for good reason: these uses carry outsized impacts on their surroundings — late-night activity, noise, security, and crowd management. This is precisely why the City requires a Conditional Use Permit: to ensure that such operations are only authorized when the applicant has shown they can be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, minimize adverse impacts, and operate in a way that protects public health, safety, and welfare.

In my view, Papi's and its ownership group have not demonstrated that they can meet these responsibilities. The track record tells a different story:

1. **Unsafe Building Closure** – In January of this year, Papi's was closed by the City's property maintenance division and the Fire Marshal due to unsafe conditions. While the business may have reopened, the matter has not been explained publicly to the Planning Department.
2. **Other Properties Under Same Ownership** – The same operators also run *Queen's Comfort* at 1316 E. Cary Street. That property was cited with a Notice of Violation and Stop Work Order in December 2024 for signage installed without CAR approval. The issue remains unresolved.
3. **Repeated ABC Violations** – The operators also own *Margarita's Cantina* at 101–107 N. 18th Street, which has faced numerous Virginia ABC administrative charges. Its license was recently suspended for several weeks.

These repeated violations — across multiple establishments and regulatory bodies — are not isolated incidents. They demonstrate a pattern of operating outside the bounds of city and state requirements. That history should weigh heavily against trusting that Papi's will comply with the conditions of a CUP.

The City has an implicit duty, embedded in its zoning responsibilities, to ensure that conditional uses are compatible with surrounding properties, that adverse impacts are minimized, and that public safety and welfare are protected. Granting a CUP to an operator with this record would undercut that duty and expose nearby residents and businesses to risk.

The conditional use process exists to filter out proposals that cannot meet these standards. Based on Papi's history, I believe approval here would be inconsistent with the purposes of Richmond's zoning ordinance and contrary to the public interest.

Thank you for considering my concerns. Please feel free to contact me should you require additional information.

Sincerely,
Tom Dickey

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tom Dickey', with a stylized, flowing script.

Lawrence One General Partnership

1425 E. Cary Street, LLC
1425 E. Cary Street
Richmond, VA 23219

10/2/25

Madison Wilson
Planner – Land Use Administration
City of Richmond

Re: Objection to Papi's Conditional Use Permit Application

Dear Ms. Wilson,

I am the owner of 1425 E. Cary Street, a mixed-use building on the same block as Papi's, containing 37 apartments and a professional office. As an adjacent property owner, I am submitting this objection to the pending CUP application for dance hall use by Papi's.

As you know, a nightclub or dance hall is not a by-right use in this zoning district. That is for good reason: these uses carry outsized impacts on their surroundings — late-night activity, noise, security, and crowd management. This is precisely why the City requires a Conditional Use Permit: to ensure that such operations are only authorized when the applicant has shown they can be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, minimize adverse impacts, and operate in a way that protects public health, safety, and welfare.

In my view, Papi's and its ownership group have not demonstrated that they can meet these responsibilities. The track record tells a different story:

1. **Unsafe Building Closure** – In January of this year, Papi's was closed by the City's property maintenance division and the Fire Marshal due to unsafe conditions. While the business may have reopened, the matter has not been explained publicly to the Planning Department.
2. **Other Properties Under Same Ownership** – The same operators also run *Queen's Comfort* at 1316 E. Cary Street. That property was cited with a Notice of Violation and Stop Work Order in December 2024 for signage installed without CAR approval. The issue remains unresolved.
3. **Repeated ABC Violations** – The operators also own *Margarita's Cantina* at 101–107 N. 18th Street, which has faced numerous Virginia ABC administrative charges. Its license was recently suspended for several weeks.

These repeated violations — across multiple establishments and regulatory bodies — are not isolated incidents. They demonstrate a pattern of operating outside the bounds of city and state requirements. That history should weigh heavily against trusting that Papi's will comply with the conditions of a CUP.

The City has an implicit duty, embedded in its zoning responsibilities, to ensure that conditional uses are compatible with surrounding properties, that adverse impacts are minimized, and that public safety and welfare are protected. Granting a CUP to an operator with this record would undercut that duty and expose nearby residents and businesses to risk.

The conditional use process exists to filter out proposals that cannot meet these standards. Based on Papi's history, I believe approval here would be inconsistent with the purposes of Richmond's zoning ordinance and contrary to the public interest.

Thank you for considering my concerns. Please feel free to contact me should you require additional information.

Sincerely,
Chris Johnson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

1425 E. Cary Street, LLC

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Audrey <agosack9314@gmail.com>

To: Alondono2@aol.com <alondono2@aol.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 30, 2025 at 06:51:38 AM EDT

Subject: Papi's reopening

Dear reader:

Papi's is more than just a nightclub, but let's just start with that...

Being zoned for only 57 people in a two-story 6,000 square foot space is outrageous and needs to be reconsidered. (the elevator at my complex has a capacity of 21!)

Secondly, on the day that Papi's was raided (yes I was there) there was a drag show going on so it looked more crowded because everyone was on the first floor watching it. After it was raided my friend group decided to go to Siné which was shoulder to shoulder barely could move packed. No way was this club only a block over was not over compactly as well. So why is it that the police only targeted the LGBTQIA+ space?

Digressing from logic, Papi's is a safe space for those in the LGBTQIA+ community. Papi's is also a space of art where those who practice drag perform and earn a living. Papi's is the only space of it's kind downtown, it is devastating that it fell, please don't let it fall for good.

From the bottom of my heart,

Audrey

Patrick Northrup<patricknorth0852@gmail.com>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR

Hello,

I'm emailing to show support for Papi's re-opening in Shockoe Bottom. Papi's is one of the few spaces in Richmond that I have felt safe and comfortable going out to at night. From the security, to the bartenders, to the patrons, it was always an inviting and fun space. Papi's quickly established itself as a pillar of the Richmond community and deserves to have the proper licensing to operate as one of the few lively LGBTQ spaces in our community.

Thanks for your consideration!

Best,

Patrick Northrup

Asia C<asiacouch99@gmail.com>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR

Good evening,

I'm writing this message on behalf of Papis, located at 1407 E. Cary Street.

Papis was one of the first clubs I ever went to, and after visiting many others since, I can confidently say it remains the best club I've ever experienced. In most clubs, the energy often feels flat — people standing around, drinking, and staring. As someone who loves to dance, party, and truly enjoy the night, those places just don't feel right for me.

Papis felt like home from the very beginning.

It's a space filled with warmth, diversity, and genuine community. The staff are friendly, the environment is welcoming, and — most importantly — it's a place where people can be themselves without fear of judgment. At Papis, you can dance freely, express yourself openly, and feel completely safe — something that's rare in most nightlife venues. I've made lasting friendships there and built meaningful connections with people from all walks of life.

When Papis was shut down by the fire marshals, it was both disheartening and disappointing. The way it was handled felt abrupt and unfair to many of us who care deeply about the space and the people in it.

To me, and to so many others, Papis is more than just a club — it's a community, a safe haven, and one of the few LGBTQ+ spaces in Richmond. I sincerely hope that whoever is reading this — along with those reviewing all the other messages of support — understands how important Papis is to us and works toward reopening this amazing establishment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Asia

Elyse Duani<Elyse.Duani@vcuhealth.org>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR

Good morning,

I'm in support of this conditional use permit. I think Papi's is a necessity for our community and that they have a reasonable request. This is one of the few gay bars in the area and it is the best in the area due to the events they offer (drag shows, various DJs, etc.). I will be extremely upset if they are not supported by the city. It feels like it is targeted due to the political climate and biased based off of where it is. Papi's creates a SAFE, inclusive space for residents to visit that is actually fun. I have been waiting patiently for them to open back up and hope the city supports this.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Elyse Duani

Garrett West<garrett.west721@gmail.com>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR

Good Morning!

I am writing in support of brining Papi's back to our community!

If not for Papi's, I am not sure I would have ever moved to Richmond.

I was living in Charlottesville and was invited by a friend living in Richmond to come visit for a fun night out. We ate at an amazing restaurant, but Charlottesville has plenty of those. We stopped by a bar with fun drinks, also something I can find a million of in Charlottesville. But then, she took me to Papi's. We watched amazing drag queens perform, became contestants in a dance contest, and I met what felt like a hundred new friends that night.

Papi's was something that I couldn't find in Charlottesville. It was a fun space where I felt comfortable in my own skin, met so many wonderful people, had the most fun I'd had in months, and if the chamber of commerce is concerned...spent a lot of money!

Papi's was the embodiment of what I wanted in a city. Genuine people and fun times. Every time I have had a friend fly in to visit I find myself talking about the amazing bar we once had in this city and that we are all fighting to get back!

Richmond is a great city, but without Papi's, it feels incomplete. It feels like a piece of the experience I moved here for is gone.

PLEASE BRING BACK PAPI'S!!!

Garrett West

Logan Hall<logan.p.hall@gmail.com>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to you as a community member who cares deeply about the vibrancy, safety, and inclusivity of Richmond. I urge you to reconsider and reissue the liquor license for Papi's, a cornerstone of our LGBTQIA+ community.

Papi's is far more than a business. It is one of the few spaces in Richmond where LGBTQIA+ individuals—especially queer people of color, transgender residents, and young adults—can gather openly and authentically without fear of judgment or discrimination. It is a place where chosen family is built, where people can celebrate milestones, find support, and experience belonging in a world that too often denies them that safety.

The presence of Papi's strengthens not just the LGBTQIA+ community but the city as a whole. It drives economic activity, supports local artists and performers, and creates opportunities for connection that spill over into broader civic life. To remove its ability to serve alcohol is to put its sustainability at risk, threatening the cultural and social lifeline it provides to so many.

Safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ individuals remain essential, particularly in today's climate where hate crimes and discrimination persist. Losing Papi's would mean erasing one of Richmond's few dedicated places of refuge and joy for a marginalized population that already has so few. The community impact of denying this license goes far beyond the walls of the establishment—it signals that LGBTQIA+ people and their needs are not valued or protected.

I respectfully ask that you weigh not just the technicalities of this decision, but also its moral and human implications. Reissuing the liquor license to Papi's will reaffirm Richmond's commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and the safety of all its citizens.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and for your role in shaping a Richmond that welcomes and protects all who call it home.

With respect and urgency,

Logan Hall

Alissa Damato<amd1095@yahoo.com>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR

Hi Madison,

I am writing to you in regards to the case to bring Papi's back that is happening tonight. Papi's was one of the best night clubs around before it was shut down. We loved it so much, the vibes, the staff, everything. We felt so safe there, we brought grandma! It was a fun space that we felt we could share with our entire family (the fam parties together sometimes, its just a good time) and papi's was a space that we felt comfortable at.

With my birthday coming up, it would mean the world to me to be able to dance my little booty off again at Papi's, celebrating everything that is love.

Other bars and clubs in the area are just not the same.

Best,

Alissa Damato

Daniel Ratcliff<dratcliff04@gmail.com>

Good afternoon,

I reached out in April to the mayor upon discovering one of my favorite Richmond establishments had been shut down by the city. The reasoning I was told at the time was unclear but a few locals informed me they were closed down due to occupancy concerns and minor coding violations. It's also my understanding the business made improvements to resolve the minor violations.

This week, I was angered, worried, and sickened to see they will now have to report to a city hearing to attempt to reopen due to UNFOUNDED concerns other business' in the area have made and now the Richmond police department is making.

Unwelcoming and unsafe would be the LAST adjectives I would choose when describing Papis. I've visited this establishment at least 20-30 times over the years with family and friends from many MANY backgrounds. White, African American, Hispanic, Asian, heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual, transsexual, I can continue, but each time, every single one of us were treated with the best service, respect, and never once felt unsafe. It is my understanding this business has 0 reported incidents of violence! 0! If this is true then I ask why make these false claims?

In this day and age, the LGBTQ+ community is FALSELY accused and blamed for many things that is wrong with our society. Maybe the individuals who claimed this establishment to be unsafe and unwelcoming are not homophobic but when making false allegations have they have done, it can and will be interpreted by our community as homophobic.

This is not the Richmond I know and love and refuse to believe this is what it will become. I plan to do everything in my power to travel to Richmond Tuesday evening to provide my support to Papis but would like to reach out via email in case I'm unable to attend due to work conflicts.

Thank you for your time and I hope this all is resolved positively.

-Daniel Ratliff

Mattie H<mvalhedge@gmail.com>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR

Good Afternoon,

I am writing in support of the reopening of Papi's Downtown nightclub in Shockoe Bottom ahead of the city hall meeting tonight. First and foremost, I am deeply concerned by the barriers this establishment has faced from the city itself, especially following the mayor's [proclamation of Richmond as a LGBTQ+ Friendly Community](#).

Before it was shut down, Papi's was my go-to venue when I wanted to go out, not only because I was guaranteed a good time, but **a safe and friendly environment**. I can't say that I would feel the same about other establishments in the area so I am very surprised to see that a main concern about Papi's reopening is safety. Especially considering how surrounding establishments often have obscenely drunk, sometimes early unconscious, patrons outside.

I am particularly concerned by the fact that Papi's is being targeted as it is the only LGBTQ+ club in the area. The singling out of this particular establishment feels like an extension of recent attacks on the queer community. We are in an especially dangerous time with our trans siblings facing direct threats from the highest office in the country and even our right to marry being threatened. Safe spaces like Papi's where we can be ourselves are crucial to the well-being and survival of queer community. **As I mentioned earlier, targeted action like this feels antithetical to Richmond's designation as an [LGBTQ+ Friendly Community](#).**

I request that the council consider the impact of closing a pillar on Richmond's vibrant queer community. We support the city through our work, our taxes, and the beautiful things we've created in this city and we deserve more than lip service.

Thank you for your time,

Dr. Mattie V. Hedgebeth

CJ Graham<cjgraham826@gmail.com>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR

To whom it may concern,

I have been a Virginia and Richmond local resident for almost three years. In that time, I was a patron of Papi's. For as long as I've known, Papi's has been an unconditional source of acceptance, positivity and pride. The Shockoe Slip bar location has been a beacon of hope for the LGBTQIA+ community and those involved. My friends, acquaintances, and every stranger I've met there has shown nothing but queer and diverse excellence at Papi's and has Papi's establishment to thank for providing a haven where we feel free enough to express ourselves. To call Papi's unsafe or unwelcoming would be to slander the name that so many diverse community members work tirelessly to uphold. Papi's has no history of violence towards the community unlike surrounding bars in the Shockoe area. If we are to eliminate Papi's, it would be eliminating a vital space for so many Richmond locals and visitors while unfairly supporting their countless surrounding (not LGBTQIA+ outspoken) bars. Why remove one of the few openly queer bars in Richmond that has proven to be more beneficial to the community than it's more queer exclusive and disruptive counterpart bars?

I ask that you please think of everyone affected and the fairness of minority groups in your decision relating to Papi's.

Sincerely,

CJ Graham

Bryan Collins<bcollins418@gmail.com>

Hi there,

I am writing because I am aware that there is a campaign underway by the Shockoe Partnership to misinform your body about the nature of Papi's and its surrounding environment.

I learned yesterday that the Shockoe Partnership has submitted a document describing the Shockoe Slip area where Papi's is located as "predominantly residential" for which "late night activity is incompatible and at odds with healthy growth for the district." That document also asserts that the existence of Papi's--that is, its ability to simply operate as a business--creates an "atmosphere [that] is unwelcoming to visitors who may be patronizing other businesses." I find both of these points to be, at best, deeply disingenuous, and at worst, maliciously self-interested.

I was, I will say, quite surprised to see Shockoe Slip defined as "predominantly residential". Having worked in the neighborhood since 2013, I would have described it as "predominantly commercial". In fact, since my first visit to Richmond in 2010, Shockoe Slip has been not only home to, but defined by the string of restaurants along Cary St. that double as raucous nightclubs. The fundamental identity of the neighborhood and its economy is the very "late night activity" that the Shockoe Partnership claims is antithetical to the district's growth.

I was also deeply concerned by the subtext of the language being used to describe the atmosphere created by Papi's. Papi's is one of only four bars dedicated to Richmond's LGBTQ+ community, and the only such venue in the downtown/Shockoe area. It is inherently an inclusive space, and as such it attracts a diverse and queer clientele. As it is a popular venue, it is inherently loud. I am not aware that the Shockoe Partnership has intervened to try to interrupt the operation of the myriad other businesses in the district (for instance, Southern Railway Taphouse, Sine, etc.) which attract crowds that are larger, more disruptive, equally as dense, and less accepting of queer people. In light of these circumstances, it is very difficult to perceive the arguments that the Shockoe Partnership is advancing as anything other than an attempt to co-opt the mechanisms of local government in a discriminatory way.

I will say also--Papi's is not my favorite bar, and I did not frequently patronize it. If it is allowed to re-open, I probably will not spend much time there. But I could not stand by idly and watch it be so transparently mischaracterized by a group with such obvious ulterior motives. I hope you will flatly reject the request by the Shockoe Partnership, and do what is within your power to help Papi's re-open.

Best,

Bryan Collins

Leyna Young<leyna.youngg@gmail.com>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR

To whom it may concern,

I am aware of an opportunity to support Papi's in person on Oct 7th 2025, but due to a previously planned trip I am not able to attend.

Instead, I wanted to reach out with a letter to share my experience at Papi's and my support of the re-opening of their establishment!

I moved to Richmond for the first time about 3 years ago, and Papi's was one of the first places I went for a "night out". As a newcomer to town, looking for community and a safe and fun night, Papi's was able to deliver that.

Not only was the crowd friendly and welcoming, but the staff was loving and the performances they hosted quickly became one of my favorite activities to attend around Richmond. I was devastated when I heard they were shut down, possibly permanently.

I have celebrated birthdays, new jobs, and nothing in particular (just treating myself to a fun night!) at this establishment and always had an amazing time and left with unforgettable memories that I know I will hold close to my heart forever.

I hope that Papi's will be able to re-open again! I truly miss it!

Thank you for your time,

Leyna Young

---- Forwarded Message ----

From: lilshady tt <lilshady.tt@gmail.com>

To: Alondono2@aol.com <alondono2@aol.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 30, 2025 at 09:24:48 PM EDT

Subject: Fwd: Letter to support the reopening of Papis

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **lilshady tt** <lilshady.tt@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Sep 30, 2025 at 9:13 PM

Subject: Letter to support the reopening of Papis

To: <alondono2@gmail.com>

I am writing as a former resident of Richmond to express my strong support for the reopening of Papi Nightclub.

Papi was more than just a nightclub — it was a gathering place where young college students, professionals, and adults came together to enjoy music, laughter, and a true sense of community. It welcomed everyone, regardless of their background or identity, and created a *free, safe space* where people could celebrate Richmond's diversity.

There has been much discussion about the reasons for its closure. I strongly believe that its open support of the LGBTQ+ community played a role, whether directly or indirectly. If that is the case, it is deeply concerning. Countless other nightlife venues — such as Taphouse, Bellos, Sine, Stadium, and La Margaritas — remain open without similar issues. Singling out Papi feels unfair and discriminatory.

During my many visits, I never witnessed violence or unsafe behavior inside the establishment. I am not a member of the LGBTQ+ community myself, but I am a strong ally. Watching friends who *are* part of that community feel free, loved, and accepted in that space was indescribable. I often brought friends from out of town to Papi, and they consistently said it was the one Richmond nightclub where they had the best time of their lives.

Closing Papi under the belief that it would reduce crime is extremely misguided. Violence in the city will NOT disappear because one inclusive venue is shut down; it simply shifts elsewhere. Targeting Papi — a space that brought joy, unity, and acceptance — sends the message that enforcement is not being applied equally, and possibly in a discriminatory way.

Its closure also made me realize how much I took that atmosphere for granted. My friends and I have been hoping and praying for Papi to reopen, because it was one of the few places where minorities felt welcomed, safe, and free to enjoy themselves. Other nightlife spots, like Taphouse, tend to cater primarily to the white community. Papi was different — it was rare and valuable because it created belonging for *everyone*.

If you look on TikTok and other social media platforms, you will see thousands of people expressing how much they miss Papi, how unfair its closure feels, and how Richmond's nightlife has not been the same since. The outpouring of voices online shows just how deeply the community values this space and wants it back.

I also think of the workers who built a family there, both with each other and with the patrons they saw every weekend. That bond has been broken, leaving many people without the community they cherished. Richmond's nightlife has lost a unique heartbeat, and people no longer feel the same excitement to go out because that vibrant, inclusive space is gone.

I respectfully urge the City of Richmond to reconsider this closure and allow Papi Nightclub to reopen. Doing so would restore not only a beloved nightlife option but also demonstrate that Richmond stands for fairness, inclusivity, and a thriving, diverse community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kirwin Patmon<patmon.kirwin@gmail.com>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR

Hi there,

I wanted to write a brief email about Papis night club in Shockhoe Slip. It's such a beautiful space and an important spot for the lgbtqia+ community to gather and celebrate.

Please do not take this space of unity and connection away from a community constantly being attacked and targeted by bigots and fascists. We NEED this space in Richmond, VA.

Thank you for your time.

Best,
Kirwin

Nilee Kerr<kerrn2@vcu.edu>

Wilson, Madison E. - PDR;alondono26@aol.com

Greetings,

I am sending this email to advocate for the reopening of Papi's, as a queer individual, a social scientist, and a community member of Richmond. Papi's has been a convening space for both native Richmonders and transplants that are a part of the LGBTQ and greater Richmond community, facilitating a space that is not replicated in the other LGBTQ establishments in the Richmond area, a safe space for ALL individuals. Papi's is a space that has allowed our community to come together in celebration, support performers, and enjoy one of the best things about Richmond, which is its queer community. Cultural dance spaces facilitate a space for collective coping, pride, and self esteem, able to boost the overall health of individuals that are included. I implore you to consider the space you are taking away from multi-generational individuals in Richmond, individuals that work hard, and deserve a place to come together. Thank you for your consideration, and I pray that Papi's will live to see another day.

Best regards,

Nilee Kerr

Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student | Virginia Commonwealth University

From: Alyssa Munn <munnalyssa3@gmail.com>

To: "alondono2@aol.com" <alondono2@aol.com>

Sent: Thursday, September 11, 2025 at 09:31:16 AM EDT

Subject: Bring Back Papi's

Dear Planning Commission,

My name is Alyssa Munn, and I'm a proud supporter of Papi's Nightclub, a place that has meant so much to me and countless others in our community. I'm writing to wholeheartedly urge you to support the reopening of Papi's as the vibrant, welcoming space it has always been. For me, Papi's wasn't just a nightclub—it was a safe haven, a place where everyone, no matter who they are, could feel welcomed, celebrated, and truly at home.

I'll never forget the first drag brunch Papi's hosted. It was pure magic. The energy was electric—laughter, music, and joy filled the room as performers lit up the stage. What made it unforgettable, though, was how the crowd came together to celebrate a 60-year-old guest's birthday. None of us knew it was her special day when we arrived, but when word spread, the entire room erupted in love and celebration. Strangers sang to her, cheered her on, and made her feel like the star of the show. It felt like a genuine family gathering, the kind where everyone is connected by warmth and acceptance. That moment captured the essence of Papi's: a place where spontaneous, heartfelt connections happen, and everyone is embraced.

Papi's was a rare gem in our city—a space where inclusivity wasn't just a buzzword but a lived reality. As someone who's often felt out of place in other nightlife spots, where judgment or discomfort can creep in, Papi's was a breath of fresh air. It didn't matter your background, your identity, or who you came with; you were welcomed with open arms. I brought friends of all walks of life, and they all felt the same magic. They'd rave about how safe and free they felt, able to dance and laugh without worry. For so many of us, Papi's was where we could let our guards down and just be.

Losing Papi's left a void in our community, but reopening it would bring back that irreplaceable sense of belonging. It's more than a nightclub—it's a lifeline for those of us who need a space to feel seen, valued, and loved. I respectfully ask you to support Papi's reopening and help restore this vital space to our city. Thank you for listening to my story and for considering the profound impact Papi's has on so many lives.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Munn

---- Forwarded Message ----

From: Nicole Peters nicolepeters347@outlook.com
To: ALONDONO2@aol.com alondono2@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 06:29:19 PM EDT
Subject: Papi support letter

Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing in strong support of Papi's Downtown being allowed to reopen as a nightclub. Papi's has always been more than just a nightclub to me. It's a safe, welcoming, and joyful space where everyone can come together, regardless of who they are.

I've always felt completely accepted and embraced at Papi's. The atmosphere is unlike anywhere else in the city. The music, the drag shows, and the vibrant community create such an uplifting environment that celebrates diversity and inclusion. It quickly became my favorite club, and I was deeply saddened when it closed.

Allowing Papi's to reopen would not only bring back a place of entertainment but also restore an important cultural and social space for many people in the community. It has always been a venue where people can feel safe, express themselves, and enjoy Richmond's nightlife in a positive way.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I sincerely hope you will allow Papi's to reopen and continue to be a place of joy and acceptance for so many.

Sincerely,

Nicole Peters

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Andrus, Isabella isabella.andrus@richmond.edu
To: Alondono2@aol.com alondono2@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 08:14:35 PM ED
Subject: Papi's Night Club

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Isabella Andrus, and I'm a resident of the Richmond community. I'm sending this letter regarding Papi's Night Club. Papi's is a staple of the Richmond Queer community, providing us with a safe space to go out and form community. Since its closure, I have not felt the same sense of enjoyment and community when going out in Richmond. This club is a part of why I love the city so much; it honestly doesn't feel the same without it. I urge you to please give Papi's another chance. Shutting it down feels like an attack on the LGBT community, provided that there are limited spaces for us to occupy safely and comfortably, and none of them compare to the wonderful environment of Papi's.

Best,

Isabella Andrus

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Jessica Presley <tce.jessica@gmail.com>

To: "alondono2@aol.com" <alondono2@aol.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 08:41:10 PM EDT

Subject: Letter of Support for the Reopening of Papi's Nightclub

Dear Planning Commission,

My name is Jessica Presley, I've been a regular at Papi's nightclub. I'm writing this letter from the heart to urge you to support its reopening as the vibrant, inclusive LGBTQ+ space it has always been. As a queer Black woman and the only lesbian in my close-knit friend group, Papi's wasn't just a nightclub to me—it was a sanctuary where I could truly be myself without fear.

I remember my first visit vividly: the pulsing music, the colorful lights, and most importantly, the sense of belonging that washed over me the moment I stepped inside. In a city like Richmond, where so many other nightclubs feel unsafe or unwelcoming for queer Black folks like me—often filled with stares, micro-aggressions, or outright hostility—Papi's was different. It was a haven of inclusivity, where people from all walks of life came together to celebrate without judgment. I've danced there until closing, made lifelong friends, and felt empowered in ways I rarely experience elsewhere.

What made it even more special was sharing it with my heterosexual friends. They loved tagging along because Papi's offered a welcoming atmosphere free from the constant harassment they often face from men in other venues. No unwanted advances, no pressure—just pure fun and respect for everyone. We'd laugh, share stories over drinks, and leave feeling uplifted every time. Closing Papi's felt like losing a piece of our community, and reopening it would mean the world to so many of us who relied on it as a safe space to unwind and connect.

Please consider the profound positive impact Papi's has had on people like me and my friends. I wholeheartedly support its reopening and hope you'll do the same. Thank you for taking the time to read my story and for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Jessica Presley

[804-490-5517](tel:804-490-5517)

Tce.jessica@gmail.com

Petersburg, Va

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Jett Weaver jettpweaver@gmail.com

To: Alondono2@aol.com alondono2@aol.com

Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 11:42:59 PM EDT

Subject: Letter for Planning Commission

Hey there!

I wanted to include my vote of support for the reopening of Papi's! I gained so many good memories and friends from this place and I'd love to see it come back to downtown rva. I hope to see you back soon!

Jett Weaver

(He/Him)

From: Grae Lowe <lowegrae@gmail.com>
To: Alondono2@aol.com <alondono2@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 14, 2025 at 10:08:42 AM EDT
Subject: Papi's Reopening

My name is Grae and I am writing in an effort to hopefully aid in the support needed to reopen Papi's. Papi's has always had such an incredibly fun and accepting atmosphere. As a member of the queer community and speaking for many of my friends who love Papi's and who are also queer, there are not many spaces we are able to go and fully embrace ourselves in our truest colors. Papi's was a place that allowed us all to fully let go and have the time of our lives with our chosen family. When they closed down, it genuinely so much sadness to myself and so many people I know.

For many, it is the go-to spot out. For birthdays, for holidays, for any celebration, Papi's is hands down the best restaurant/bar/club to go to. Amidst all the events they host, and the regular weekend nights they bring all the energy to, Papi's needs to come back. The community is missing it so much.

Papi's on its own brought so many people together and gave new-comers such as myself, an accurate and beautiful representation of what Richmond is all about in just one visit.

If not for the queer community and all ally's who long for its return as well, do it for the money, the people and the interest that it brought to the area.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I sincerely hope it helps and can encourage the return of the most treasured gem downtown has to offer.

Kindly,
Grae

From: Itboyangel <jviolin15@gmail.com>
To: Alondono2@aol.com <alondono2@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, September 12, 2025 at 05:31:53 PM EDT
Subject: Support for Reopening Papi's Nightclub
Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my wholehearted and unwavering support for the reopening of Papis as an LGBTQIA+ nightclub. This establishment is so much more than a venue—it is a sanctuary, a cultural cornerstone, and one of the few spaces where people of diverse backgrounds, identities, and orientations can gather safely, authentically, and joyfully.

For many in the LGBTQIA+ community, Papis has represented what is often hard to find: a place where we can dance freely, celebrate who we are without fear, and build lasting connections that extend far beyond the walls of the club. In a world where safe spaces for marginalized communities are still limited, the reopening of Papis would restore a vital hub for self-expression, solidarity, and inclusion.

Nightclubs like Papis are not just nightlife venues; they are cultural institutions. They give local artists, DJs, and performers a platform to share their talents. They create jobs and stimulate the local economy. They draw visitors from surrounding areas, bringing business to nearby restaurants, shops, and services. But above all, they provide a safe and welcoming environment for people who have historically been denied such spaces.

The LGBTQIA+ community has always faced unique challenges in public life—whether it be discrimination, misunderstanding, or a lack of spaces to gather openly. Papis helps fill that gap by ensuring that everyone, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, can feel at home. Reopening

Papis would send a clear and powerful message: that our city values diversity, inclusion, and the well-being of all its residents.

I urge you to consider not just the business case, but the human case for reopening Papis. This is about more than entertainment—it is about safety, dignity, and community. It is about recognizing that spaces like Papis save lives, uplift voices, and contribute to the social fabric of our city in ways that cannot be measured in dollars alone.

Please grant approval for the reopening of Papis as an LGBTQIA+ nightclub. Your support would mean the world to countless individuals who see this space not only as a place to go out, but as a place to belong.

With deep gratitude,

Justin Hines

Richmond/Chesterfield Virginia



Kevin J. Vonck, Director
Department of Planning and Development Review
City of Richmond
900 E Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Request for a Conditional Use Permit at 1407 E. Cary Street

Kevin:

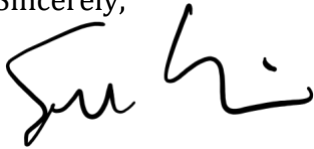
I am writing to confirm The Shockoe Partnership's opposition to the conditional use permit CU-166261-2025 for the establishment of a 'Nightclub' use at 1407 East Cary Street. The reasons for our opposition are:

- There was no attempt to get community input for this conditional use prior to Planning staff deciding to recommend approval. A modest effort to gather information about the predominant uses in this Shockoe district, we believe, would have led to a different outcome. The applicant did not contact The Shockoe Partnership until after your decision was made.
- The approval was given without adequate due diligence to verify basic elements of the petition for approval, as well as the operational history of the applicant in this location. For example, misleading and inaccurate statements were made by the applicant suggesting an existing ABC license for the space. In fact, the license to operate had lapsed and then been revoked by the ABC Board after their review of a long list of violations and illegal activity. And, the Papi's history of recent operations show numerous and negative interactions with RPD, the Richmond Fire Department, and sanctions brought about by inspectors from the Planning office in January of this year. Each of these should be disqualifying events for any applicant.

- The mixed-use entertainment district is meant to support vibrant and varied use groups. It is well documented that the nightclub use is creating an environment that makes it very difficult for other designated uses to thrive safely. This atmosphere is unwelcoming to visitors who may be patronizing other businesses and harmful to residents in the vicinity of these clubs. The area around this proposed use is predominantly residential, for which this late night activity is incompatible and at odds with healthy growth for the district. The safety and well-being of the 1,500 residents has to be the primary consideration in your decision making.

Our meeting last month provided an opportunity for The Shockoe Partnership to share our concerns about this proposed change. We are opposed to this establishment being granted a CUP for nightclub use and request that you rescind the staff approval for this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Spencer Grice', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Spencer Grice, President

The Shockoe Partnership

111 Virginia St., Suite 111, Richmond, Va. 23219

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Me <ahernand88@yahoo.com>

To: "alondono2@aol.com" <alondono2@aol.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 01:28:53 PM EDT

Subject: Please allow Papi's downtown to reopen!

Good afternoon, my name is Angel Hernandez and event planner and avid supporter of my community as well as consistent fundraiser with Virginia pride organization. We have a shortage of places in this city that we can go to truly be ourselves, and I'm not just saying places who show their support for us. I mean, places specifically designated for us that make us feel more comfortable. It may seem a little separatist, but we still live in a time where going to places that are not specifically LGBTQ still get us weird looks, hate crimed no matter the severity, and just general uncomfortable vibes. It would be so nice to have more than just three bars for us in the city. We constantly have to go back-and-forth between the same places, and Papis was always kind to us and at least offered us a little more variety. Many a drag performer, LGBTQ DJ, bartenders and servers were let go when Papis closed down, yet again leaving people in our community with less than others, losing their homes/apartments, and having to search for jobs of which they are very little we feel comfortable working in the city. Please consider reopening this place, it would mean the world to our community and you would be doing a very wonderful thing for so many... not just that company. Thank you for listening.

- Angel Hernandez

[9733069468](tel:9733069468)

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Daniel Ratcliff <dratcliff04@gmail.com>
To: Alondono2@aol.com <alondono2@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 01:22:42 PM EDT
Subject: Fwd: Concerns Regarding the Closure of Papi's RVA

Hi,

I saw your story on the Papis IG and wanted to forward you an email I sent to Richmond's Mayor in April upon discovering Papis had been shut down by the city. I'm from Hampton, VA and visit Richmond multiple times each year. The last few years my friends and I always looked forward to visiting Papis. We've always enjoyed the establishments vibe, patrons, and their incredible staff. We were all saddened to see Papis had been closed while visiting in April and sent the below to Richmond's mayor. We did not receive a response, nor were we expecting to but hoped that Papis would be reopen by now. Again, we were saddened to see it still isn't. Good luck and hope the city of Richmond realizes the mistake they made closing this wonderful establishment down.

Thank you for your time,
Daniel Ratcliff

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Daniel Ratcliff <dratcliff04@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 6, 2025 at 1:07 PM
Subject: Concerns Regarding the Closure of Papi's RVA
To: <RVAMayor@rva.gov>

Greetings,

I'm a lifelong resident of Hampton, VA and each year I visit Richmond and have always loved your city for its diverse business'. Specifically, the diverse restaurants and bars Richmond has to offer. This year I was extremely disappointed to hear that one of the establishments had recently been shut down by the city of Richmond due to the business failing to comply to capacity limits. While I understand and agree that every business should take the safety of its patrons seriously, I would still like to address the concerns I have along with other members of my community.

The establishment I am referring to is Papis located in downtown Richmond. This bar has been a safe space for so many and it is my understanding that the owners of this business has since worked to be in compliance to all of the concerns addressed to them when notified they would be shut down by the city. It is also my understanding that they've reached out to the city of Richmond to alert the parties required they're now in compliance and ready to reopen and have yet to receive any form of response.

I find this to be unacceptable. People need jobs right now and the employees of this establishment face challenges many of us may not recognize such as employment opportunities. I'm writing to simply implore the parties responsible to work with this business and provide advice and support in order for them to be able to safely reopen. I still enjoy your city but my most recent visit felt as if something was missing and that's because a staple for me was no longer there.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,
Daniel Ratcliff

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Jordan Melancon <jordan_melancon@aol.com>

To: "alondono2@aol.com" <alondono2@aol.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 02:21:45 PM EDT

Subject: In Support of Reopening Papi's

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to wholeheartedly support the reopening of *Papi's*. This venue has been so much more than just a bar or nightclub—it has been a safe haven and a vibrant community space for the LGBTQIA+ community and our allies.

Papi's was the very first and only nightclub I have ever been to where I felt truly safe, celebrated, and welcomed. The atmosphere was filled with joy, acceptance, and inclusivity. The energy was unlike anything else—fun, uplifting, and free of judgment. The performances in particular were extraordinary, showcasing incredible artistry and giving visibility to performers who inspire and empower so many of us.

Spaces like *Papi's* are rare and vital. They provide a sense of belonging, community, and expression that cannot be replaced. For many, it's not just a place to dance or have fun—it's a place to feel seen, to connect, and to heal.

I deeply believe that the return of *Papi's* would be an invaluable gift to our community. I hope you will consider the profound impact this space has had and will continue to have if given the chance to reopen.

With gratitude and support,
Jordan Melancon

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Stevie Creighton <stevie.c311@gmail.com>

To: Alondono2@aol.com <alondono2@aol.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 02:00:49 PM EDT

Subject: Forever Support of Papis RVA

To whom it may concern,

I write this letter to speak in support of the reopening of *Papis*, a cherished LGBTQ+ establishment here in Richmond, Virginia. Papis is more than just a club—it is a sanctuary, a gathering place, and a vital part of the cultural fabric of our city.

For many in the LGBTQ+ community, safe and welcoming spaces are not a luxury; they are a necessity. Papis has long provided such a space—a place where people can express themselves authentically, connect with others, and find belonging. It has been a cornerstone for friendship, love, and chosen family, offering not only entertainment but also empowerment.

The reopening of Papis would restore a vital hub of inclusivity and acceptance in Richmond. It would bring back a space where diverse voices can come together, where the rhythm of music meets the heartbeat of community, and where every person—regardless of who they are or whom they love—can feel celebrated. I met the love of my life outside of Papis after an amazing night of dancing and enjoying one of the many phenomenal drag performances showcased there. Papis will forever hold a place in my heart for bringing us together.

Beyond its cultural and emotional value, Papis also contributes to Richmond's economy, nightlife, and tourism. Local businesses benefit from its presence, and the city thrives when diversity and inclusion are visibly supported and encouraged.

Reopening Papis means reaffirming Richmond's commitment to being a city that values equity, celebrates diversity, and uplifts all of its citizens. It means giving the community back a place where memories are made, where milestones are celebrated, and where the spirit of pride lives not just in June, but year-round.

On behalf of all who have danced, laughed, loved, and lived fully within its walls—and all who are still searching for a place where they can do the same—I urge support for the reopening of Papis.

Thank you for your time, and thank you for standing with us in ensuring Richmond continues to shine as a city where everyone belongs.

With love,

Stevie Creighton

VIVA LA PAPIS

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Kami Gupta <kamigupta.gupta2@gmail.com>

To: "alondono2@aol.com" <alondono2@aol.com>

Sent: Sunday, September 28, 2025 at 11:32:15 AM EDT

Subject: Papi's Nightclub Support

Dear Planning Commission,

I wanted to take a moment to personally share my support for Papi's nightclub. Papis has always been such a special place to me and to so many others in the community. Whenever I went, I felt safe, welcomed, and surrounded by good energy. The staff always made sure people were taken care of, and the atmosphere was one where you could truly relax, dance, and enjoy yourself without worry. What made Papis stand out the most was how it brought people together. It wasn't just a nightclub—it was a place where friendships were formed, memories were made, and where people felt connected to each other. Every time I went, I saw a mix of familiar faces and new ones, and it always felt like a place where everyone belonged. Having Papi's open was a huge benefit to the community. It gave people a safe and positive space to gather, and it became a spot that so many of us genuinely looked forward to going to. Losing it has left a void, and I know countless people, myself included, would love to see it reopen and continue being part of our lives. Please know how much support there is behind this. People truly love Papis, and I believe allowing it to reopen would only bring more joy, connection, and vibrancy to the city. Thank you so much for considering my letter and for giving Papi's the chance to open its doors again!

With gratitude,

Kami Gupta

Richmond, Virginia

To the Richmond City Planning Commission,

My name is Marcus grOSS, and I am the Founder and Owner of SADBrunch International and The B1 Agency, two organizations dedicated to uplifting drag artists, LGBTQIA+ talent, and inclusive nightlife experiences across the East Coast.

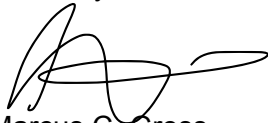
I am writing in strong support of Papi's Downtown as their case to reopen as a nightclub comes before you. Since its opening, Papi's has provided Richmond with more than just entertainment—it has offered a vibrant, safe, and affirming space where community members from all walks of life can gather, celebrate diversity, and feel a true sense of belonging.

As a nightlife producer who has collaborated with dozens of venues, I can confidently say that Papi's plays a unique and vital role in Richmond's cultural ecosystem. It is one of the few dedicated spaces that consistently centers LGBTQIA+ voices and fosters artistry, self-expression, and community connection.

Allowing Papi's to reopen as a nightclub is not only an investment in Richmond's nightlife economy, but also a commitment to preserving inclusive spaces that strengthen the social fabric of the city.

I urge the Commission to support Papi's and approve its reopening. Their continued presence is essential for ensuring that Richmond remains a welcoming, thriving, and culturally rich city for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcus C. Gross', with a stylized, flowing script.

Marcus C. Gross

Founder & Owner

SADBrunch International | The B1 Agency