

Dear Sirs and Madams-

We are concerned citizens of Richmond that are writing you to strongly oppose the requested special use permit asked for by the owners and agents of Bombolini restaurant (or the property owners thereof) that is located at 1606 W Main St., Richmond, VA. While we understand that there are multiple components of their special use permit (such as outside seating), the special use that we strongly oppose is the use of the facility as a distillery. We request that the property and restaurant not be allowed to make, distill, produce, or otherwise create alcohol.

Distilling alcohol, regardless of the scale, is a dangerous practice. There are many incidents where human error, mechanical malfunctions, and/or happenstance has caused distilleries to explode or catch fire, causing death, human injury and property damage. While there are too many incidents to list below, the following table presents some examples of the dangers of alcohol distillation.

Distillery	Incident	Impact	Date	Source
Silver Trail Distillery	Catastrophic explosion and fire	Serious injury and burns to two employees (one later died); Facility burned to the ground.	Apr-15	http://www.foodrepublic.com/2015/04/27/smart-all-kentucky-distillery-destroyed-in-explosion/ http://www.wave3.com/story/28891850/cousins-injured-in-explosion-at-ky-distillery-identified
Heaven Hill Distillery	Fire	Seven warehouses and seven other buildings were destroyed.	Nov-96	http://www.fireworld.com/Archives/tabid/93/articleType/ArticleView/articleid/86837/Whiskey-River-Scorches-Heaven-Hill.aspx
Clynelish Distillery	Two substances were accidentally mixed together producing chlorine gas	Hospitalization of distillery worker.	Jul-14	http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-28225810
Wild Turkey Warehouse	Fire	Buildings destroyed, minor injuries, contamination of water in surrounding area with large fish kill	May-00	http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2000-05-11/news/0005110356_1_bourbon-distillery-water-plant http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2000-05-16/news/0005160069_1_distillery-bacteria-fish-kill
Lincolnshire Distillery	Catastrophic explosion and fire	Five dead, 1 injured with property damage	Jul-11	http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/8636424/Boston-explosion-five-dead-in-huge-fireball-during-illegal-vodka-brewing-operation.html
Langley Distillery	Catastrophic explosion and fire	Facility was destroyed and severely damaged surrounding residential and private property. Human injury and possible fatalities	Nov-12	http://www.dalkita.com/gin-distillery-a-total-loss-after-explosion/ http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/local-news/oldbury-factory-fire-80-firefighters-336493

Please note that almost all of these examples were facilities in very rural areas and that if they occurred within a city (akin to where Bombolini is located in Richmond), the fatalities, injuries and property damages would have been far worse. While some craft distilleries exist in Richmond, it is our understanding that none of them are located in areas that are primarily residential in nature. For instance, there is a cluster of distilleries and breweries in the more industrial, Scott's Addition and "The

Diamond” areas of Richmond. These locations are much more suited to producing alcohol as the sites are large industrial warehouses and there are few if any residential neighbors.

In addition to the risk of explosion and fire, distilleries also present many other negative externalities to their surroundings. These include letting off strong fumes that can be smelled for blocks or miles, an increase in the probability that fungus grows on surrounding buildings/plants/trees, and potential groundwater contamination. Further, producing and then selling hard alcohol will attract customers to the area that are less “family friendly.” Lastly, for all of these reasons listed above, property values will be negatively affected if Bombolini is allowed its request for a distillery permit.


Unsurprisingly, it seems that Bombolini and its agents are aware of the dangers and other negative externalities of having a distillery in the neighborhood. This was evidenced by an agent/manager/owner of Bombolini going door-to-door, requesting residents to sign a petition to support the special use permit. When describing the special use permit to William Hays, the Bombolini agent specifically only mentioned that it would be to accommodate sidewalk seating. However, in reading the fine print of the petition, the overwhelming reason for the special use permit was to support a distillery onsite at Bombolini.

While we enjoy Bombolini’s pasta and support their request to accommodate outside seating, we believe that allowing the restaurant to distill alcohol is detrimental to the community, and we strongly urge this committee to deny Bombolini’s request to operate a distillery.

Sincerely,

Concerned Citizens of Richmond

William Scott Hays, Jr.
Owner of:
6 N. Lombardy St.
Richmond, VA 23220



Szu Wei Chang
Resident of:
6 N. Lombardy St.
Richmond, VA 23220