



Luciano's has tables set up outside that adhere to state and federal social distancing guidelines. **Photo by Deb Jacques**

Ordinance allows Clinton Township bars, restaurants to add outdoor seating

By: Nick Mordowanec | Fraser - Clinton Township Chronicle | Published June 23, 2020

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — Officials in Clinton Township are helping local bars and restaurants traverse the uncertainties associated with the ongoing pandemic.

The Michigan Liquor Control Commission announced May 19 that it was streamlining the licensing process for providing outdoor service to patrons.

On June 1, an ordinance was introduced to allow for the review and

approval of temporary outdoor restaurant seating during a crisis such as now, during COVID-19. On June 15, the Clinton Township Board of Trustees unanimously passed the ordinance. At press time, five establishments had taken advantage of the

ordinance: Sajo's, Travis, Luciano's, Freddy's Bar & Grill, and Red Robin. Clinton Township Planning Director Bruce Thompson said that any

establishment interested in outdoor seating must apply through the Clerk's Office and submit a \$25 fee. Plans for each location are then distributed to the township Building Department, as well as the police and fire departments, for approval.

Once Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's executive order is rescinded, the outdoor seating permits expire and establishments can open back to full capacity.

"The ordinance is really designed for emergency situations, like anything similar to this," Thompson said. "If there's anything similar to this in the future, we will still have this tool as necessary."

He anticipated that more establishments would apply once they got word of the permits.

Barry Miller, the superintendent of the Building Department, said his department and public safety staff look at aspects like egress, traffic issues, fire lanes — "typical safety things" normally part of township code.

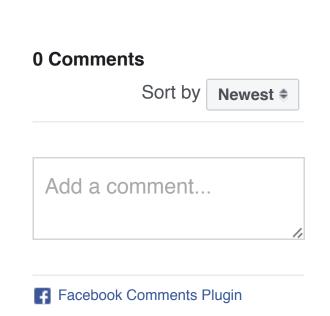
He said the week of June 8 that no inspections had been conducted in relation to outdoor seating and that his department is trying to work with local businesses. Four of the five businesses, with Travis being the lone one without, have liquor licenses.

Luciano's, for example, is taking advantage of the position of the plaza where it's located and setting up tables for accommodation. Travis is taking over a portion of its parking lot, as is Sajo's.

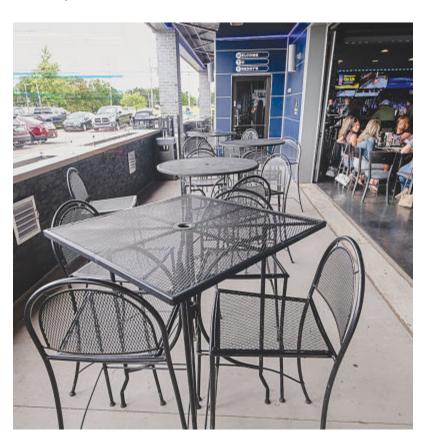
Outdoor seating plans have shown compliance with social distancing guidelines, he said. Violations could lead to punishment at the state level.

Township Supervisor Bob Cannon said that as more businesses learn of the option, he expects more to jump at the opportunity. Nobody is being denied the opportunity, and he said he hopes it provides a shot in the arm for those businesses economically impacted the past few months.

Applications, along with seating plans, can be submitted in writing to the Clerk's Office. Call (586) 286-9422 for more information.



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Tables are set up outside at Freddy's Bar & Grill, in Clinton Township, due to a new township ordinance approved to help local bars and restaurants make room for more clients. **Photo by Deb Jacques**



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