

June 18, 2003

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER GRETCHEN DYKSTRA ANNOUNCES PUBLIC HEARING ON CITY'S CABARET LAWS

Public Hearing will be held on June 24 from 2:30PM - 9:00PM at New York Law School

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra today announced a public hearing to discuss the City's cabaret laws. The public hearing will be held on Tuesday, June 24 from 2:30PM - 9:00PM at New York Law School, located at 57 Worth Street in Manhattan.

"The City's existing cabaret laws are antiquated and do not adequately address the problems affecting communities and nightlife establishments," said DCA Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra. "The public hearing will provide a forum to hear the concerns of communities, businesses, and others, and will serve as a first step in moving toward establishing clearer regulations. We are hopeful the input we receive will enable us to find a balance between ongoing community problems and a lively nightlife."

Over the past few months, City officials have met with scores of individuals and organizations to discuss issues related to the current laws. Some questions for discussion will include:

- Should DCA do something about the cabaret laws?
- What criteria should DCA use to determine who should get a license?
- Similar to other cities, should DCA consider licensing establishments open after a certain time? If so, what time, where, and for which types of places?
- Should DCA regulate not-for-profit venues that may rent their space for nightlife events? Should the City consider temporary permits for these venues?
- Should DCA consider requiring certification that establishments are in compliance with the Noise Code?
- What should DCA do when a nightlife establishment violates the regulations?
- How can DCA make the system easy and quick without sacrificing thoroughness?

Promulgated in 1926, the City's cabaret laws currently cover establishments that serve food or drink to the public and have three or more patrons dancing. It is illegal to operate a cabaret in New York City without a license. Currently, licensed cabarets pay anywhere from \$600 to \$1,000 for a two-year license based on capacity, as well as \$120 for each additional room and are restricted by zoning. DCA receives ongoing complaints regarding cabarets and City agencies respond to numerous problems ranging from noise to violence to public disturbance.

At the public hearing Commissioner Dykstra, joined by John Feinblatt, the City's Criminal Justice Coordinator, and Jonathan Greenspun, Commissioner of the City's Community Assistance Unit, will moderate a group of panels made up of technical experts, club owners, community members, elected officials and business leaders followed by an opportunity for public comment. There will be a two-minute limit per person for public testimony.

DCA enforces the City's Consumer Protection Law and other related laws at thousands of businesses throughout New York City. Fostering a marketplace where consumers are protected and businesses can thrive, DCA licenses more than 60,000 businesses in 55



different categories including approximately 300 cabarets citywide.

For more information or a full set of questions to be addressed at the public hearing, please visit DCA online at www.nyc.gov/consumers.