

# THE NEIGHBORHOOD REALLY ISN'T THAT INTO YOU

---

## **Joel Judd, Attorney At Law**

2222 S. Albion St., Suite 100

Denver, CO 80222

303-830-8881

[www.JoelJudd.com](http://www.JoelJudd.com)

A commercial block in a mature upper middle class neighborhood; what a perfect place for a high end wine store.

Dusty, an energetic applicant has a background in the business and a financial backer. He signs a lease, files his liquor license application and sets out knocking on doors and gathering signatures – over three hundred by the day of his hearing.

Sure, the neighborhood has a twenty-five year history successfully opposing liquor stores licenses on this block, but Dusty is undaunted.

The hearing starts six in the evening. At the last minute, Dusty engages a lawyer. Young, equally energetic, but he has no liquor hearing experience and no time to prepare.

This city has a hearing officer and a formal hearing process. The applicant presents his three testifying witnesses and petitions. The hearing officer counts the applicant's ancillary witnesses. The opponents present their witnesses and petitions. The numbers for and against are almost dead even.

Representing the neighbors opposing Dusty's application I ask the hearing officer for an opportunity to review Dusty's petition signatures.

Lo and behold, Dusty started collecting signatures two days before he or the opponents were allowed to do so. Many of his signatures come from folks who live across the street from the neighborhood defined by the city – ineligible. Half his petition signatures are disqualified. The opposition has twice as many qualified signatures. Dusty's application is denied. For the next two years no liquor store applications will be allowed on this block.

Lessons:

- All of us make mistakes the first time we do something difficult or intricate. If your liquor license application is important to you, hire a lawyer who's been there before and already made his mistakes. You get the benefit of his experience.
- Hire your lawyer early so he can supervise your application from start to finish.
- Even the most expensive lawyer is cheaper than watching your dreams turn to dust.

Hiring a good lawyer early wouldn't have guaranteed Dusty's success, but his odds would have been hugely improved.