


# MVP ARENA

Albany, New York

## MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Albany County Legislature Members  
Honorable Albany County Executive – Daniel McCoy  
Honorable Albany County Legislature Chairwoman – Joanne Cunningham

From: Bob Belber   
General Manager

Date: October 29, 2024

Re: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RETAIL SPACE / LEASE – WEST AVENUE CHICKEN  
TOMA HOSPITALITY GROUP – CURRENT OPERATORS OF THE ALBANY WAR ROOM TAVERN  
EAGLE STREET, ALBANY NY - Effective as of January 1, 2025

Please see the Request For Legislative Action for the approval to enter into a lease with Toma Hospitality Group for the business known as West Avenue Chicken. The space that this new tenant would occupy once approved by Albany County, is the current Beignet Bellies. There is 950 square feet of space in this location. Toma Hospitality Group will pay \$17 per square foot for rent plus \$2 per square foot for common area maintenance. The total amount of rent will be based on  $950 \times \$19 = \$18,049.92$ . The monthly rent will be \$1,504.16.

The current tenant in this space, Beignet Bellies operated by Josita Walker, can no longer remain in business. The beignet bellies concept never took off and business in the space is extremely low. Josita Walker does not have the financial capability to continue to operate the business on a long term basis. The West Avenue Chicken business is already a huge success with another location in Saratoga. BBQ chicken, pulled pork and brisket is sold in these locations. Todd Shapiro, owner of the Albany War Room Tavern will



be bringing the West Avenue Chicken concept into the current Beignet Bellies space as soon as the Albany County Legislature approves a new five-year lease based on the terms as noted above.

He will be partnering with the owners of the West Avenue Chicken business that is located in Saratoga. They have an excellent track record there and West Avenue Chicken has been voted the number one BBQ chicken restaurant in the Capital Region for years.

While the process of approval is taking place, Todd Shapiro is providing funding to Josita Walker so she can remain open until the approval of his new lease takes place. Josita will be changing her menu to include BBQ chicken and fried chicken along with other menu items that are offered at West Avenue Chicken. This will enable the market to get used to the new menu that will be offered when the new business starts up on January 1, 2025.

Thank you for your approval of this lease.

