



New York State
Department of Economic Development
Division of Minority and Women's
Business Development

In the Matter of the Appeal of

Safezone24, LLC

FINAL ORDER 23-10

From a denial of certification as a Women-owned Business Enterprise pursuant to Executive Law Article 15-A.

This order arises from an administrative appeal brought by Safezone24, LLC, (“Safezone24” or “Appellant”) pursuant to New York Executive Law Article 15-A and Title 5 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations. Appellant seeks reversal of the decision of the Division of Minority and Women’s Business Development (the “Division”), dated March 22, 2022, to deny Safezone24’s February 5, 2019, certification application as a Woman-owned Business Enterprise (“WBE”).

Appellant requested an administrative hearing by submission of the Appeal Form dated April 26, 2022, and upon notice to the parties via electronic mail and regular mail, dated July 25, 2023, a pre-hearing conference was scheduled for August 29, 2023, using the Zoom videoconferencing platform. The notice of the pre-hearing conference advised the Appellant that failure to appear and failure to request a new date on or before the date of the pre-hearing conference would be considered a default. The video conference invitation was sent by the Administrative Hearings Unit to the Appellant on July 26, 2023, and was not accepted by the Appellant. The August 29, 2023, pre-hearing conference was adjourned at the request of the Division and the concurrence of the Appellant. Appellant was contacted via electronic mail on August 28th and September 5th, 6th, and 7th to reschedule the pre-hearing conference. Appellant repeatedly failed to respond. The video conference was then scheduled for September 12, 2023. Notice was sent to Appellant via electronic mail on September 11, 2023. Appellant failed to appear at the pre-hearing conference and failed to contact Division counsel or the Administrative Hearings Unit to request a new date. The Division was represented by Kyle Satchell, and Administrative Law Judge (“ALJ”) David A. Murad presided over the proceeding. During the pre-hearing conference, the Division made a motion to dismiss the review of the application based on the Appellant’s failure to appear.

On September 22, 2023, the Division received a Recommended Order from David A. Murad affirming the Division's denial of certification, based upon the Appellant's failure to appear at the pre-hearing conference. ALJ David A. Murad found the Appellant in default and granted the Division's motion to dismiss the review of the Appellant's certification application.

After considering the appeal record, I accept the recommendation to affirm the denial determination. As noted in the Recommended Order, the Appellant in an administrative appeal bears the burden of proving the Division's denial of its WBE certification was not supported by substantial evidence. *See* 5 NYCRR § 145.2(b). Here, the Appellant failed to meet this burden of proof by failing to attend the pre-hearing conference. Further, "unless precluded by statute, disposition may be made of any adjudicatory proceeding by...default." New York State Administrative Procedure Act § 301(5). As such, the Division accepts the ALJ's recommendation to affirm the denial of certification based on Appellant's failure to appear.

It is hereby **ORDERED** that the decision to deny certification, dated March 22, 2022, is affirmed.

October 13, 2023



Jason M. Clark
Executive Vice President and Executive Director
Division of Minority and Women's Business Development