



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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To: City of Cambridge Planning Board
City of Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals
From: Central Square Advisory Committee
Date: 7/24/20
Re: 759 Mass Ave

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the "Committee") met on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 to review and comment on the following project.

- **759 Mass Ave:** GreenSoul Organics, LLC: Applying for Special Permit per Section 10.40 of the City of Cambridge zoning ordinance and per Section 11.800 the zoning of cannabis uses. GreenSoul Organics, LLC is applying for a Special Permit to operate an Adult - Use Marijuana Retail establishment.

This meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions of Section 20.300 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. The Committee is appointed by the City Manager to undertake all large project reviews of variances and special permits for activities within the Central Square Overlay District (the "District"), and to monitor the progress of the Central Square Non-Zoning Recommendations of the 2013 K2C2 Study (the "Study").

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The meeting minutes from the Committee meeting are summarized below. The applicants presented their project and took questions and comments from the committee members. Public comment was taken after each presentation and its subsequent committee discussion.

759 Mass Ave – GreenSoul Organics

Presentation

- Taba Moses, Founder CEO - GreenSoul Organics, LLC
- Richard Harding, Vice President/Chief Compliance Officer – GreenSoul Organics, LLC
- Rebecca Adams, compliance and regulatory consultant
- Evan Stelman, project architect

The proposed project at 759 Mass Ave for a retail adult-use cannabis store will repurpose the first floor and basement of the current space, totaling 1,365sf. There will be minor renovations to the exterior of the building, including the storefront, primarily windows, color and signage. No off-street parking is proposed for this location, but there will be product delivery, as there is for most retail along Mass Ave that needs to happen curbside. Product deliveries will happen 2-3 times per week. Additionally, the business will be working with Street Theory, local public artists, that have contributed to the art and mural projects in Central Square in recent years, emphasizing a strong community collaboration.

Members generally supported the project and its contribution to the Economic Empowerment Zone process. There were a few concerns about loitering across the street at the 7/11 and any impact that may have on operations, as well as the number of retail cannabis stores in Central Square. Some members also wanted to make sure that abutters and neighbors had been met with. Many have, but some of the neighbors mentioned have not been met with at this point, including the neighboring church on Inman Street; however notifications to abutters have been sent out. A community meeting had been held in November at the Tavern with positive reception.

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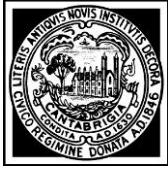
Committee Questions and Comments

- Q1: Will there be work done in the basement and can you tell us more about deliveries?
 - A1: The basement will contain a break room for employees and the vault to store the products. The delivery vehicles will be small transit vans that are unmarked. There are strict security regulations around deliveries, including 30 min notification that a delivery is en-route so that a security check can take place. The intention was to use the loading area off of Inman St, but because of the pandemic that is being used for takeout by Life Alive.
- Comment 1: It seems as if there are too many cannabis stores going into Central Square.
- Comment 2: Support the way in which art is integrated into the storefront even though there are requirements that often make it hard to engage with the storefronts from a street activation perspective.
- Q2: 7-11 is a busy space and a lot of late-night activity has been happening on that corner. How do you plan to monitor things? Is security located just inside the store? Bank of America has an on-street security person, but the hope is that the square can move away from on-street security presence.
 - A2: On-street security is something that they will take into consideration.
- Comment 3: We're about to have vacancies because of the pandemic. Revolutionary Clinics has been open and had no problems. Member supports this project and its incorporation of art into the project, as well as being part of the Economic Empowerment zone. Likes that it's locally owned.
- Q3: Have the applicants had discussions with the neighborhood church and have they spoken with the YWCA housing on Bishop Allen?
 - A3: Those discussion have not taken place yet, but the applicant did abide by the Cannabis Commission guidelines for notifying abutters, and they held a community meeting at the Tavern in November of 2019.
- Comment 4: Appreciation for what the applicant is doing with the storefront, which is currently relatively inactive. The member has no concerns about an additional cannabis store but does question how they will handle accessibility issues for employees that need to use the basement. The applicant said they will get back to the committee about the accessibility issue.

Public Questions/Comment

Public comments addressed primarily two separate issues.

- Streetscape: There have been a loss of tree canopy coverage and benches on the sidewalk near the store. They has taken away a resting and conversation spot for many people who use Central Square as a social venue. What can the applicant do to help restore public seating and a better street environment? The applicant mentioned that they will work with the Central Square BID to see what improvements can be made for that area.
- Support for business: Two members of the public voiced support for the business and made a point that it provides economic opportunity and jobs for people. One member felt that there should be no limit on the number of businesses that can take part in the Economic Empowerment zones.



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Committee Members Present

- Melissa Greene
- Esther Hanig
- Tahir Kapoor
- Robert Winters
- Joel Altstein
- Christopher Sol Gully
- Michael Monestime

Submitted on behalf of the Committee,
Drew Kane, Land Use Planner
Community Development Department