



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: March 22, 2016

Subject: Sage Cannabis, Inc., Zoning Petition (MMD-3)

Recommendation: The Planning Board recommends ADOPTION.

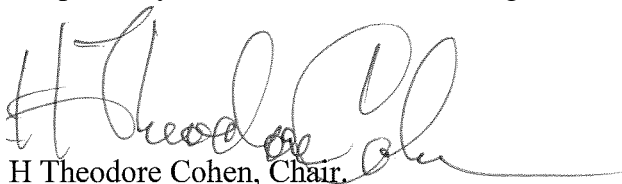
To the Honorable, the City Council,

On March 15, 2016, the Planning Board held a public hearing on a citizens' zoning petition to establish an additional Medical Marijuana Overlay District, MMD-3, coterminous with the Business B-2 (BB-2) zoning district. BB-2 encompasses the north side of the Massachusetts Avenue corridor between Ellery and Dana Streets. The petition would also establish criteria specific to MMD-3, including a requirement that only medical marijuana dispensing (not cultivating) operations would be allowed and that the dispensing area would not be allowed on the ground floor of a building. The Board heard a presentation from representatives of Sage Cannabis, Inc., a Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD) in Massachusetts and the organizer of the petition, as well as members of the public.

Despite broad community support for medical marijuana availability in Cambridge, there has yet to be a viable RMD location identified within the overlay districts established in 2013. The Board believes that the BB-2 district is a rational area to accommodate an RMD. It is a centrally located commercial area with MBTA bus service (connecting to subway) and parking availability. It is also one of the few areas with sites at least 500 feet away from a school or other facility with programming for children. There was some concern about whether the security requirements for an RMD would interrupt the retail character at the street level, but that concern is mitigated by the requirement to locate the dispensing space either above or below the ground floor. Because a proposed RMD would still require a special permit from the Planning Board, site-specific considerations such as transportation, loading and design would still be reviewed.

Board members acknowledged that the BB-2 district is very small, and that it may be worthwhile for the City, through the work of the Planning Board and/or staff, to consider expanding the medical marijuana overlay zoning to additional areas. Nevertheless, the Board is in favor of advancing this particular zoning proposal at this time.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,


H Theodore Cohen, Chair.