

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date:	October 11, 2016
Subject:	William Noyes Webster Foundation, Inc., Zoning Petition (expansion of Medical Marijuana Overlay District 1 in Alewife)
Recommendation:	The Planning Board recommends ADOPTION.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

The Planning Board held a public hearing on this zoning petition on September 6, 2016. The Board heard testimony from representatives of the William Noyes Webster Foundation, Inc., Community Development Department (CDD) staff, and interested members of the public.

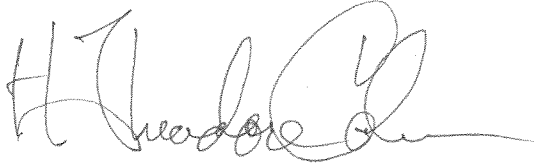
The proposal would expand the current Medical Marijuana Overlay District 1 (MMD-1) within the Alewife area to include the district zoned Industry B-2 (IB-2) and Alewife Overlay District 1 (AOD-1). Registered Marijuana Dispensaries (RMDs) would be allowed within that overlay district subject to special permit approval by the Planning Board. No changes to the regulations or special permit review criteria in that district are proposed. The special permit process would consider factors such as transportation, urban design and potential impacts of a RMD on surrounding uses, and would also consider whether the proposed RMD would be providing needed service to the area. The William Noyes Webster Foundation, Inc., is a state-approved RMD operator seeking to establish a dispensary at 29 Smith Place.

The Board believes that the proposed expanded district in Alewife would be suitable for RMDs. It is an area with a unique character, containing a broad mix of commercial and industrial use types. While there are some residential and institutional uses (including a private school), the fragmented street pattern allows the operation of nearby uses to remain separated. The Board notes that many signers of the petition are residents of the nearby Highlands neighborhood, and that the required distance of 500 feet from schools and other facilities where children commonly congregate would be maintained unless specifically modified by the Planning Board. Many sites in the district, such as the identified site at 29 Smith Place, have available parking that would be a benefit to some clients of RMDs. On the other hand, the area is not as well served by public transportation, which is an issue that could be considered during the Planning Board's review of a special permit application for a particular RMD proposal.

Regarding medical marijuana zoning in general, the Board continues to support the City's broader consideration of whether RMDs should be allowed in other areas of Cambridge (but still subject to special permit review and approval by the Planning Board), as remarked in the Board's prior recommendation in favor of establishing a Medical Marijuana Overlay District in Harvard

Square. A particular issue worthy of consideration by the Council is how many RMDs are needed to serve Cambridge, given that there are currently five or possibly six RMD operators in the approval process (at the state and/or local level) seeking to locate a dispensary within Cambridge.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H Theodore Cohen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and a long, sweeping underline.

H Theodore Cohen, Chair.