



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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To: City of Cambridge Planning Board
From: Central Square Advisory Committee
Date: 5/8/2019
Re: Home Grown 617 – 580 Mass Ave

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) met on May 8, 2018 to review and comment on the Home Grown 617 (the “Applicant”) proposal for a recreational dispensary at 580 Mass Ave. This meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions outlined in 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”).

* * *

The Applicant proposed a cannabis retail dispensary that would offer pre-packaged goods consistent with guidelines set by the State’s Cannabis Control Commission (CCC). The facility will accommodate customers seeking medical consultation but will not provide medical cannabis during the initial opening phase. There will be no cultivation and assembling of goods on site. The owners and founders of Home Grown 617 are all residents from Cambridge, Boston, and Somerville, and have experience in cannabis retail and manufacturing industry for both medical and adult-use. Home Grown 617 will be a minority-owned business, as certified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and qualifies as an Economic Empowerment Applicant

Committee members who were present spoke in favor of the Applicant’s proposal and raised questions regarding safety/security, logistics, and street activation. The Applicant discussed having a “buzzer system” that would alert customers when their goods are ready for purchase and pickup. This system, according to the Applicant, could encourage customers to also patronize other retail stores in Central Square during that time.

The establishment is located at a very busy section of Mass Ave. As a result, their goal is to get potential customers off the street and into the space. Some establishments take ID right at the door but, given the amount of activity already happening on the sidewalk, customers will be brought into the waiting room/lobby. Staff and security will be on hand to facilitate this. The plans for the establishment include an office space towards the back. While not fully programmed yet, some uses could include training classes for staff and members of the public and incubator or pop-up spaces for other small businesses.

Committee Members Present

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

Committee Members Absent

- Tahir Kapoor

Home Grown 617

- Sean D. Hope, Esq.
- Leah Samura
- Sieh Samura

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Public Comment

- ***I have a question regarding educating members of the public. What are your plans for that?***
 - CCC has some regulations around that, especially when it concerns minors. We are looking to educate high-school aged kids in a way that isn't fear-mongering but is educational and informative. For any product on display in our store, we will provide reading material on them through our webpage and mobile app.
- ***You've talked about overstaffing your establishment, particularly during the early stages of operation. What are your plans to further develop and train staff?***
 - There's an office space located at the rear of this establishment, along Pearl Street, which could be used for staff training purposes. We anticipate eventually having an entrance to this space from Pearl Street. We would not need the same level of security as we do on Mass Ave because no products would be sold out of this space.

submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Wendell Joseph, Neighborhood Planner
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