

Harvard Square Advisory Committee

c/o Cambridge Community Development Department

344 Broadway

Cambridge, MA 02139

617/349-4647

Case: 84 Winthrop Street/57 JFK Street – BZA-017013-2018

Applicant: Jeff Russell, Director of Development, Veggie Grill

Proposal and Zoning Issues: The Board of Zoning Appeal Special Permit application is for a Fast Order Food Establishment (Sections 4.35.o and 11.30) to operate a fast order food establishment.

Harvard Square Advisory Committee: 10/9/18

Summary: Andrew Upton of DiNocola, Deligason & Upton, LLP, along with Jeff Russell who was on speaker phone, presented the application for the special permit. The proposal is to convert two-thirds of the Wagamama Restaurant space into a vegan concept restaurant. This will be approximately 2,300 square feet, offering both sit down dining and take out. The use will be similar to the previous restaurant use. The typical hours of operation are Sunday to Thursday from 11 am to 9:30 pm, Friday and Saturday from 11am to 10 pm, with the option to be open later in Harvard Square. Deliveries will be made by night drops through the existing basement, with recycling and composting done through the building management.

The applicant will apply for a beer and wine license, but this is not a significant part of the sales.

All food will be prepared on site, ordered at a counter with eat in meals will be served on plates with cutlery delivered to customers at the tables. The takeout meals will be in compostable containers.

This will be the first East Coast location. The only exterior changes will be face replacement signage.

HSAC comments: A motion was made and seconded to support the application for the Fast Order Food Establishment, that the proposal meets the guidelines of the Harvard Square Overlay District. This use is replacing a previous restaurant use at this location. The committee sees this as a well thought out concept that fits the space, and that concept of healthy food choices is encouraged.

The Committee has the following comments and suggestions:

- The windows should remain as open as possible. It is important to see as much activity and light as possible from the outside and to have lights on after hours to enliven the space.
- The Committee also suggests that the evening hours be expanded at least on the weekends.
- The applicant is encouraged to join the Winthrop Park Association/Trust and actively engage in the care of the abutting open space.
- Recycling and composting should be facilitated with clear and precise directions using photographs of the actual materials.
- The applicant is encouraged to continue to develop a breakfast menu to increase the offerings and the hours of operation.

All members in attendance supported the Fast Order Food Special Permit and find it in conformance with the Harvard Square Overlay District guidelines.

Committee Members in Attendance: Matt Simitis, Lauren Curry, Alexandra Offiong, Pebble Gifford, and Frank Kramer.

Respectfully submitted for the Committee,



Liza Paden
Community Development Department

One member who could not attend the meeting sent the following email:

I support the encouragement of longer, later hours, visibility of the interior from the street, engagement with the Winthrop Park Trust, and recycling and composting program. I agree that the use conforms to the district guidelines and replaces a similar operation.

I would only add that the applicant should be aware of the vehicle restrictions on Winthrop Street and agree to inform contractors' employees and vendors that the street is closed and has no parking after 11 am.

Kari Kuelzer
Grendel's Den Restaurant & Bar