



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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To: City of Cambridge Planning Board
From: Central Square Advisory Committee
Date: October 1, 2018
Re: Revolutionary Clinics – 541 Mass Ave

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) met on Wednesday, August 29, 2018 to review and comment on the Revolutionary Clinics (the “Applicant”) proposal to operate a retail-only medical marijuana dispensary at 541 Massachusetts Avenue. 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, and to monitor the progress of the Central Square Non-Zoning Recommendations of the 2013 K2C2 Study (the “Study”).

The Applicant’s proposed Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD) facility is located within the Business BB Zoning District and within the Medical Marijuana Overlay District (*Section 20.700 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance*), whose provisions have been satisfied. The Applicant will repurpose a 6,500 sq.ft. building that previously served as an art gallery and function space.

Consistent with the Study, the Committee’s questions and comments generally focused on enriching Central Square’s public realm – by prioritizing people, then spaces, then buildings – how the building, and its new use, would contribute or take away from this goal. Comments and questions were raised regarding the facility’s frontage on Mass Ave and Norfolk Street, opportunities for wrap-around retail, public and visual art (in line with the building’s former use), and how the public could interact with this facility and its heavily regulated and restricted uses.

Due to State regulations, there are limits to how the building interacts with people and with space, particularly mandates that dispensary operations be shielded from public view. As a result, while the Applicant has devoted a small portion of the facility’s sq.ft. to be a community engagement space on an ad hoc basis, visibility into the space from the street would be limited. According to the Applicant, community-based events would be open to the public without the need for special ID issued by the State’s Dept. of Public Health.

The following questions were raised by members of the public, with responses by the Applicant in **bold**:

- Is there a sense of what the owner’s future plans are for the building? There were once more ambitious plans discussed for a new, larger building at this corner. How might that effect this proposal?
 - **The current lease for this facility is a medium-term lease, so it potentially would not preclude any future plans for the site.**
- The issue of "illuminated signs" is an important dimension of any design as it effects the appearance. Can we get a more explicit detailing of this aspect of these plans?
 - **The proposed plans for the facility include non-offensive lighting – fixtures shine onto and down from the façade of the building, and they do not project out onto the street or towards the sky.**

Considering the restrictions imposed on this facility due to State regulations, Committee members who were present spoke in favor of the proposal and of the Applicant's commitment to engaging and working with the local community through various programs and events. There were no additional comments by Committee members not in attendance.

Committee Members Present

- Melissa Greene
- Esther Hanig
- Tahir Kapoor
- Robert Winters

Committee Members Absent

- Joel Altstein
- Michael Monestime
- Christopher Sol Gully

Guest Presenters

- Keith Cooper, *Revolutionary Clinics*
- Timothy Flaherty, *Revolutionary Clinics*
- Bert Vining, *Revolutionary Clinics*

submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Wendell Joseph, *Neighborhood Planner*
Community Development Department