



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: Western Front LLC – 567 Mass Ave

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) met on May 8, 2018 to review and comment on the Western Front LLC (the “Applicant”) proposal for a recreational dispensary at 567 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”).

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The Applicant proposed a cannabis retail dispensary that would employ Cambridge residents. On the first day of business, 75% of all employees/subcontractors will reside in Cambridge or another area of disproportionate impact, but no less than 50% of all employees will be Cambridge residents. The Applicant also has plans to create the first cannabis Work Force Training Program that would prioritize the acceptance of Cambridge residents, and provide job training, education and strategic assistance to enter the legal marijuana industry. The Applicant will also financially contribute to Cambridge non-profits who have substance abuse and drug abuse prevention programs serving Cambridge youth.

Western Front LLC is 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. There are always concerns about the “blank storefront” in Central Square. More and more, streets are dominated by things that, while useful, are not active. If there was something like a newsstand, it would still serve as a screen, but it would be an interactive one. Although this is difficult due to State regulations on dispensaries, having active retail operation would be consistent with what Central Square already is, to whatever degree that is possible.

Committee Members Present

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

Committee Members Absent

- Tahir Kapoor

Western Front LLC

- Dennis Benzan, Esq.
- Marvin E. Gilmore, Jr.

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Public Comment

- **Regarding the customer pledge, if a customer chooses not to sign it, can you legally choose not to sell to them?**
 - The customer pledge is a standard that we have created for ourselves. If potential customers do not agree to and sign the pledge, we will not sell to them.
- **What are you prepared to offer in your host agreement with the City?**
 - Western Front LLC will make annual payments to the City in an amount equal to three (3%) percent of gross revenue from the retail sales of marijuana and marijuana-related products. We also plan to hire at least 75% of all employees/subcontractors from the Cambridge area or areas that have had historically high rates of arrest, conviction, and incarceration related to marijuana crimes.
- **What do the next few weeks, months, years look like for you?**
 - The next step in our process is to file our Special Permit application, hopefully within the next month or so. Construction shouldn't take long since it is a small space. Most of the work to be done will happen in the rear of the establishment since that is where the kitchen is currently located.

submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Wendell Joseph, Neighborhood Planner
Community Development Department