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HOST COMMUNITY AGREEMENT ADVISORY GROUP RECOMMENDATION

DATE: November 10, 2020

TO: Mayor Ruthanne Fuller

FROM: Host Community Agreement Advisory Group

**SUBJECT: Host Community Agreement Recommendation
The Green Lady Dispensary II, Inc., 740 Beacon Street**

Executive Summary

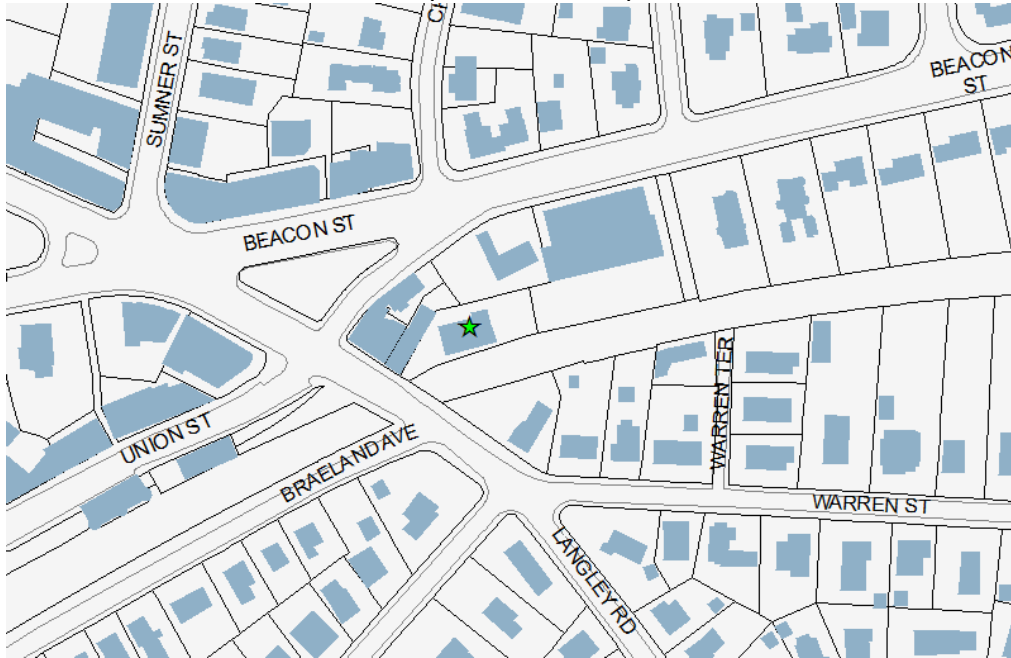
The Green Lady Dispensary II, Inc., (the "Applicant") is seeking a Host Community Agreement to establish a Marijuana Retailer at 740 Beacon Street (the "Site"). The Site is located within the Business Use 2 (the "BU-2") zoning district in Newton Centre and is improved with a one-story commercial building constructed circa 1954. The Applicant will require a special permit from the City Council to establish the Marijuana Retailer on site. The Host Community Agreement Advisory Group (the "Advisory Group") met with the Applicant on September 18, 2020.

The Applicant is a certified Massachusetts Minority Business Enterprise and a Women Business Enterprise with experience in the cannabis industry. The Applicant is also a family-owned and operated business with a commitment to diversity. The Site is located in an area with a mix of uses, and the Applicant will provide parking for the use. Detailed below are the specific criteria reviewed as part of the Advisory Group's due diligence function.



740 Beacon Street

Graphic I: Area Map



CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION:

- I. Security – *Whether there is a sufficient commitment to public safety and a sufficient plan for controlling access to areas with marijuana and preventing sales to underage populations, and other similar factors.*

The Applicant currently operates a retail marijuana establishment on Nantucket. All customers will be required to sign a “Community Norms Agreement”, attesting that inappropriate behavior, such as loitering, diversion, or public consumption will eliminate the opportunity to visit the store and will be referred to law enforcement. The Applicant will require a background check as a requirement of employment, and all employees will participate in initial and annual security training. The Applicant will contract with professionals with experience in cannabis security, and the Applicant intends to implement a system of cameras that will be positioned around the Site as well as within the building’s interior; a live feed will be provided to the City of Newton Police Department, if desired. The building’s interior will also feature limited access areas where access is only available to certain security badges.

The Advisory Group believes the security plan is sufficient and notes that the Applicant has experience in the Massachusetts cannabis industry and is familiar with the rules and regulations of the Cannabis Control Commission. The Applicant will work with the City of Newton Police Department on all security measures during permitting, renovation, and ongoing operations, particularly how the rear of the Site that abuts the MBTA Green Line tracks will be secured.

- II. Public Health – *Whether there is a commitment to help monitor and mitigate health impacts to the neighborhood and to Newton’s youth and adult populations, assistance with local substance abuse prevention programming, and other similar factors.*

The Applicant states that their foremost priorities are preventing underage access and educating adults on how to restrict access to minors. As such, the Applicant will implement a multi-pronged effort to customer education beginning with an intake process during a customer’s first visit, provide takeaway materials on how to consume, transport, and store cannabis, and use child-resistant packaging. The Applicant has supported public health initiatives on Nantucket and will continue to do so within Newton, particularly those efforts that focus on substance abuse prevention. Such support may come in the form of financial support and/or community service. The Advisory Group requests that the Applicant provide information in their store created by the City regarding substance abuse prevention and treatment and provide links to such information on their website.

- III. Community Relations – *What are the plans for community outreach and addressing community concerns, experience with the Newton community, and other similar factors.*

Nicole Campbell, Owner and Chief Operating Officer, will serve as the primary point of contact for the Applicant during permitting and the renovation. The Applicant will solicit public feedback during outreach meetings, door to door canvassing, as well as virtual meetings. Ms. Campbell will also meet with local civic, business, and philanthropic organizations to understand the Newton community. Once operational, the Applicant will look to hire a qualified Newton resident to serve as general manager and primary point of contact.

The Applicant has direct experience working with public stakeholders in the cannabis industry in Massachusetts. The Advisory Group recommends that the applicant engage with the Newton Centre community, particularly residential and commercial neighbors.

IV. Experience – *What are the professional experiences and qualifications of the management team and other similar factors.*

Mr. Rupert Campbell is the President and Chief Security Officer, responsible for day-to-day operations of the Applicant's location on Nantucket. Mr. Campbell has experience in agricultural manufacturing and has served as Captain of the Katonah, New York Fire Department.

Ms. Corbet Campbell serves as Owner and Chief Retail Officer who has led the retail department since 2018. Ms. Campbell is responsible for overseeing all staff, inventory, and merchandise. Ms. Campbell holds a degree In Artistry, Development, and Entrepreneurship from the University of Miami.

Ms. Cleantha Campbell serves as Owner and Director of Communications where she oversees public relations, strategic planning, community outreach, and brand development. Ms. Campbell graduated from the University of Denver with a degree in Strategic Communication, Marketing, and Wellness.

V. Sustainability – *What are the proposed sustainable and renewable energy practices, and other similar factors.*

The Applicant is committed to utilizing and implementing sustainable practices from design to operations. During design and renovation, the Applicant will purchase energy efficient equipment such as lighting and mechanical systems. During operations, the Applicant will prioritize contracting with vendors who utilize sustainable, recyclable, or compostable packaging solutions. The Applicant will encourage customers to return packaging and provide employees will with a transit subsidy to utilize nonvehicular transportation to and from the Site.

The Advisory Group recommends the Applicant evaluate opportunities to upgrade the building's envelope, with an eye toward Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ("LEED") certifiability. The Applicant should also consider installing plantings on site.

VI. Equity – *What are the qualifications of the Applicant under state Economic Empowerment and/or Social Equity programs.*

The Applicant is certified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts's Supplier Diversity Office as both a Massachusetts Minority Business Enterprise and a Women Business

Enterprise; both certifications require the business to be 51 percent owned and dominantly controlled by minorities and women. The Applicant employs a diverse workforce at their Nantucket location, where more than half of employees are minorities.

- VII. Economic Value – *What is the amount of additional economic value the business would bring to Newton, e.g., new jobs, additional local tax revenue, increased property value, commitment to diverse and local hiring, commitment to use of local businesses for construction, supplies, product, and other business needs, openness to long-term community impact fees, and other similar factors.*

The Applicant intends to create up to 30 full- and part-time jobs and will strive to hire Newton residents to the extent practicable while retaining their commitment to diversity. All employees will be eligible for a three-day mentorship training and will receive competitive wages with access to full or prorated benefits. The City will receive the local option tax of 3 percent of the total annual sales of marijuana or marijuana products sold on site, as well as any community impact fee the City may impose.

- VIII. Context – *Whether the proposed facility is not clearly inappropriate in terms of location, operations as well as transportation, traffic and parking, with those final decisions reserved for the City Council during the Special Permit process.*

The Site is located on Beacon Street in the BU-2 zoning district in Newton Centre. While the address is on Beacon Street, the building itself is 90 feet from Beacon street, up a driveway. The immediate area consists of a mix of uses from commercial uses to the north, west and east, and residential uses to the south, creating the Newton Centre village center. The Site contains approximately 10,971 square feet and is improved with a one-story commercial structure constructed circa 1954. The Site is not located with any buffer of an existing marijuana retailer per the City of Newton Zoning Ordinance.

The Site is is accessed by a curb cut from Beacon Street, providing access to a a two-way drive aisle. The Applicant is proposing to remove a portion of the building and to stripe the Site to allow for 15 parking stalls. The Applicant is also interested in making infrastructure improvements to the intersection of Beacon and Union Streets in the interest of public safety and is willing to work with the Department of Public Works towards that end. If the Applicant progresses to a special permit petition, the access to and the circulation within the Site will be examined in greater detail.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Applicant is a certified Massachusetts Minority Business Enterprise and a Women Business Enterprise with experience in the cannabis industry, evidenced by their retail store on Nantucket, and a commitment to diversity. Although this Site is located in the general vicinity of the village center, the specific location is somewhat separate and apart from the main village retail district, which aligns with what had been a guiding principle in the City Council decision not to allow this use in village centers. The Site itself appears to have adequate parking and circulation to accommodate the proposed use. Based on this preliminary analysis, the Advisory Group recommends moving forward with a provisional host community agreement with the Applicant.