

Nadia Khan

From: David A. Olson
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2020 8:46 AM
To: Nadia Khan
Subject: FW: Special Permit for Ascend Mass

From: Patricia Loewy <p_loewy@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 2, 2020 9:17 PM
To: City Council <citycouncil@newtonma.gov>
Subject: Special Permit for Ascend Mass

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Dear City Councilors:

I am writing to you today to voice my support for Ascend Mass, run by Ms. Andrea Cabral, to be granted a special permit to open their retail Cannabis business at 1089 Washington Street in West Newton. It is my understanding that the permit is currently pending with the Land Use Committee which is objecting on several grounds.

One of them is the proposed traffic flow (entering through Washington and exiting through Cross Street) even though the City Planning Department supported Ms. Cabral's original plan of doing so, which seems much safer than exiting onto Washington Street. Either way, traffic flow is not something that should make or break the permit. As you may be aware, the site was used for an athletic club, with people coming and going all the time, and that didn't seem to have been an issue.

Another objection by the Commissions centered around whether Ascend should have bathrooms for customers. I am not aware of any liquor store, or many other store where people remain for a short period of time to purchase a legal product for consumption, that offer restrooms.

Newton citizens have successfully voted twice to legalize Cannabis and be allowed to purchase it in their town, and of all applicants so far Ascend Mass is the first to make sure that people from communities that have been disproportionately harmed by marijuana law enforcement be included in this industry, by promising to hire a diverse, local staff. The company also intends to create an independently-run nonprofit foundation that is focused on giving to communities identified by the Cannabis Control Commission to have been disproportionately affected by the war on drugs. As Newtonites who pride ourselves for being progressive, we ought to make every effort to support Cannabis businesses like Ascend Mass, who are equitable, diverse, and inclusive.

One of the reasons that Mayor Fuller approved a provisional Host Community Agreements for Ascend was because the company "presented thorough plans for operations, security, equity and transportation management," according to a press release from the mayor.

Ascend is further more run by a former Suffolk County sheriff and state secretary of public safety and security, which in itself should alleviate any safety/security issues that abutters might have.

All these are very good reasons, in my opinion, to grand Ascend Mass a permit to open its business.

Patricia Loewy

Ward 2 resident