



RNRA
RIVER NORTH
RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION

February 29, 2020

Re: Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary located at 414 N. Orleans Street

Farzin Parang
Chairman, Zoning Board of Appeals
121 N. LaSalle St. 10th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602

Chairman Parang...

River North Residents Association (RNRA) is a 501 (c)4 non-profit, volunteer neighborhood advocacy organization founded in 1997. We are champions for quality of life issues in River North.

RNRA **supports** the Greenhouse Group, LLC, application for special use to establish an Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary located at 414 N. Orleans Street. We believe that the location will work well for such a retail business.

In accordance with the application process protocol, RNRA worked with the applicant, Greenhouse Group, LLC, to schedule and host a community meeting to provide information about the special use request and to invite local public feedback. A community meeting hosted by RNRA was subsequently held on Wednesday, February 12, 2020.

Representing Greenhouse Group, LLC at the meeting Mitch Kahn, CEO. He addressed the physical site plan, client management and queuing, security, pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and his desire to move product purchases to a debit card system. He also discussed Greenhouse's commitment to social equity initiatives and philanthropy.

Audience questions centered on client management, security, traffic, hours of operation and social equity. Greenhouse already operates four dispensaries in suburban areas. They are a Chicago-based company with about 75 team members nearby in the West Loop.

RNRA board members referenced the ZBA General Criteria requirements in distilling our recommendation to support the application for special use at this location. We considered

- pedestrian safety and vehicular traffic
- the physical site plan (both layout and capacity)
- building scale and design
- management of clients both inside and outside the facility
- security plans and staffing
- hours of operation
- outdoor lighting and advertising
- compatibility with the surrounding character of the community

Traffic was a major concern in the community meeting. The 414 N. Orleans St. site is located on a busy one-way arterial that feeds the Ohio/Ontario off/on ramps. Construction on Wolf Point immediately to the south will not be completed for several years when the last of the three buildings comes online. New southbound traffic lanes on Orleans are planned for access to the Wolf Point development. There is no parking on Orleans, but there is a parking garage across the street. Greenhouse contracted with KLOA to perform a traffic study that suggested that most clients would be walking, ride sharing or using public transportation.

Losing a late-night liquor license to a clean and modern retail business at this location is viewed as a plus. Residents were accustomed to a very noisy and disrespectful crowd at the former Reverie bar late into the night and early morning. Residents were pleased with the restricted hours of operation and a closing time of no later than 10 PM.

Greenhouse plans to queue overflow to the second floor space and use a pre-order system to facilitate client management. The property owner will relocate the entrance to the dispensary so as not to comingle them with tenants in the existing lobby area.

Concerns about security are high. Mitch discussed new lighting, mandated camera systems, and the installation of a back-up generator. Residents asked for armed security guards both for inside client management and for regular sweeps outside of the facility. We believe that an armed security presence will be a deterrent to bad actors. We encourage Greenhouse to provide extra vigilant security support in the surrounding area to mitigate implementation and operation concerns.

RNRA kindly requests joint, regularly scheduled business reviews with Greenhouse, LLC and the property owner until we can gain a measure of confidence based on performance that they are the quality business operators that we believe they are.

Representatives of the Executive Board met with Alderman Reilly and his liaison, Joanna Angarone, who attended all of our community meetings, to share with them our community meeting experiences and final observations. We enjoy a strong partnership with Alderman Reilly and the Ward 42 team as we jointly advocate for River North residents. We shared with them our concerns about security and our commitment to keeping River North the dynamic, welcoming and safe neighborhood that it is for our residents and guests.

Please feel free to reach out to me at mriordan@rnrachicago.org if you have any additional questions. I have also attached a list of Best Practices for the cannabis business operators that our board recommends. We value your support and thank the Zoning Board of Appeals for allowing us to participate in this important review process.

Sincerely submitted on behalf of River North Residents Association...

Mike Riordan
President
River North Residents Association
www.rnrachicago.org