



RNRA
RIVER NORTH
RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION

February 29, 2020

Re: Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary located at 436 N. Clark 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 Cresco Labs dba MedMar Lakeview, LLC, application for special use to establish an Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary located at 436 N. Clark Street. We believe that the location is well-suited for such a retail business. We also believe that Cresco Labs and their real estate partner, Friedman Properties, are prepared to implement and maintain a high quality dispensary operation.

In accordance with the application process protocol, RNRA worked with the applicant, Cresco Labs dba MedMar Lakeview, LLC, to schedule and host a community meeting to provide information about the special use request and to invite local public feedback. An introductory meeting was held with Cresco Labs MedMar Lakeview LLC leadership and members of the RNRA Executive Board on January 3, 2020 to learn about their company, their implementation plans and to discuss scheduling the community meeting. A community meeting hosted by RNRA was subsequently held on Tuesday, January 28, 2020.

Representing Cresco Labs at the meeting were Joe Caltabiano, President and Co-Founder; Jason Erkes, Chief Communications Officer, John Sullivan, EVP of Public Affairs; and Barrington Rutherford, SVP of Real Estate and Community Integration. The team gave a well-prepared and

professional presentation. They addressed the physical site plan, client management and queuing, security, pedestrian and vehicular traffic, product sales, and their advertising and thematic messaging. They presented examples of their strong commitment to social equity and mentoring programs.

Audience questions centered on client management, security, traffic and social equity. As both a cultivator and dispensary operator in markets across the country, Cresco leaders appeared to have a good grasp of the challenges to successfully open and manage a dispensary business.

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

The 436 N. Clark location is located in a prime tourist, hospitality, business and residential center in our River North neighborhood. Losing a late night liquor license to a clean, modern and welcoming retail business at this location is viewed as a plus. Residents are accustomed to a very busy streetscape. Plans to queue overflow MedMar retail clients especially until the novelty subsides and additional businesses come online were shared and are welcomed. Concerns about security remain high and we do not want to jeopardize the safety of our residents or neighborhood guests. We believe that an armed security presence will be a deterrent to bad actors. The property owner, Friedman Properties, a well-established and respected River North business, already supplements security with a roving patrol for their River North tenants. We encourage them 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 MedMar Lakeview LLC and Friedman Properties until we can gain a measure of confidence based on owner 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