

Town of Waterford
Planning Board
65 Broad Street
Waterford, NY 12188

Minutes of January 8, 2024

At 7:30 PM, attendance was taken. Chairman Woodin and members Peter Fletcher, Harriett Fusco, Paul Henry and Alternate Member Jeremy Krug were present. Member Robert Lefebvre was absent as well as consultant Nan Stolzenburg.

Two public hearings were held. The first public hearing was held at 7:30 PM for Leafy Peaks, a cannabis dispensary to be located at 27B Saratoga Avenue. Jason Wellington and Matson Sansom were the primary spokespersons for the project. M&J Genesis proposes a retail cannabis dispensary that will be open seven days per week (daily 12 to 13 hours) and on limited to about seven hours on Sunday. The store will be primarily for recreational cannabis, but will have medical dispensing as well. Local people will be hired and security will be ever present with cameras and secured product.

The first resident to speak was Aimee Rosecranes of 25 Saratoga Avenue. She was opposed to the siting of the dispensary next to her home as it would lead to undesirable clientele lining up outside the store and against her property. She doesn't trust that anybody can ensure that the operation will run smoothly. Jason Wellington explained that there will be no lines as people need to come inside and lines will form there. Also, there will be security cameras everywhere (front, back, inside and outside). Overall, security will be tighter than at your local bank as IDs will need to be shown to allow to enter and buy.

Mary Stalker of 14 3rd Street asked about on-line orders which will make up a significant amount of the business. A two step ID system will be implemented to ensure only those people that are eligible to make purchases do so.

Amy Gauthier of 25 1st Street asked about the security systems and was told that everybody who enters the store will be on video cameras watching every move

Patricia Plummer of 15 Weaver Avenue said that her daughter told her that legal cannabis shops controls the quality of the cannabis that is distributed. There is no concern about the product being tainted. So, consumption becomes safer.

Shaun McMillian of 122 Fonda Road was for the opening of a cannabis shop as buyers won't have to leave the county to buy. She related a story about her mother who developed an opioid addiction which could have been avoided if medical marijuana had been available. The legal shops will also help to decrease the illegal dealers on the street with an alternate.

Wynn McMillian of 122 Fonda Road said that users don't like to go to dealers and the legal shops will offer a safe solution. He asked how long the security tapes would be retained. Jason Wellington said he thought it would be for 30 days and the tapes will have high definition resolution.

Paige Fronzek of 9B Sunset Boulevard asked who is the target audience? The response was people of all legal ages (21+ and up). As an advocate for the industry, she said that the labs produce 100% good stuff and it adds to the local sales tax base.

Crystal O'Shea of 28 Mohawk Avenue explained how her husband's best friend recently died of an overdose. She wished that there were more legal shops to help addicts safely use the drugs. Her friend had fallen into a bad crowd and this led to his downfall and into the dark world of illicit drug use.

Georgia Wohnsen of 19 Front Street was there with a young daughter and spoke in favor of the cannabis shop.

Chris Leger of 3 Leger Avenue is also the owner of Corcoran Tavern and expressed his support of the proposed dispensary. It will generate sales tax dollars and there will be no low-lives hanging around the parking lot because of the dispensary.

Mary Stalker spoke again and mentioned that on-site consumption of cannabis products is not allowed; only purchasing.

Amy Gauthier of 25 1st Street said that marijuana has been legal for 3 to 5 years. Medical dispensaries can now sell to everybody and she is not aware of anybody ever OD'ing on cannabis.

Shaun McMillian spoke again and said that she owns Golden Leaf Books across the street from the proposed cannabis store. She said that her customer base will support it.

Chris O'Connell of 33 Belanger Avenue wanted the audience to know that the library has Naxalone kits available.

At 8:05 PM, the second public hearing began with Matthew Rimkunas, Theresa Mantica and Alayna Bazicki representing Waterford Wine & Spirits LLC who proposes to open a liquor store next to the proposed Leafy Peaks at 27C Saratoga Avenue. The store will be located in the former NAPA store and occupy about 2000 sf. The hours of operation would be 9 AM to 9 PM, open 7 days per week with shorter weekend hours. The store will have a tasting room and they hope to open in the Spring.

Tricia Plummer of 15 Weaver Avenue asked about the location and was told it was next door to Leafy Peaks. This would be a neighborhood store and not a big box store.

Shaun McMillian of 122 Fonda Road was glad to have more business in the town

Wynn McMillian of the same address said he was glad that he would not have to drive to Clifton Park for his liquor.

Amy Gauthier of 25 1st Street said that she will no longer have to go to Cohoes to buy liquor.

Chris Corcoran of 3 Legar Avenue endorsed the proposal and said it was a great location.

Jason Wellington who owns the daycare in the plaza said that he supports the liquor store and wants more local business. He said that he likes vodka and will be looking forward to buying it there.

Paige Fronzek of 9B Sunset Boulevard said that she goes to Exit 9 liquors and is happy to see a local option.

Georgia Wohnsen of 19 Front Street asked about security cameras and was told they would be outside the store.

Any Gauthier of 25 1st Street said that the police keeps the area near the plaza safe and expect it to continue

Paige Fronzek also noted the police presence at night.

Aimee Rosecranes said the police won't be able to park in the lot at night once the stores open.

At 8:20 PM, the second hearing closed and regular meeting began with a site review of Leafy Peaks. The Board had a few questions. Pete Fletcher wanted to assure that it is safe for the children at the day care who walk through the parking lot. Signs will be restored that had been put up several years ago to direct and control traffic. Harriett Fusco said that she does not use cannabis products, but could understand the viewpoints of the numerous speakers who spoke in favor of the store. Paul Henry said that Leafy Peaks made a good presentation and answered all the questions he had.

Chairman Woodin explained that SEQR was not necessary as the store can be classified as a Type II project. Therefore, a SEQR resolution wasn't necessary.

The Board approved a resolution determining that the application was complete (motioned by Fletcher and seconded by Fusco; passed 5 – 0).

Chairman Woodin said that he would like to add a condition of approval; that being the restoration of four traffic control signs that were previously approved in recent years when the Day Care expanded. The applicants agreed with the request. The Board passed a resolution conditionally approving the project (motioned by Fusco and seconded by Fletcher; passed 5 – 0).

At 8:45 PM, Waterford Wine & Spirits appeared before the Board. Chairman Woodin said that he had not received comments back from Saratoga County as part of the 239-m referral. Therefore, approval could not be granted until the February meeting. The applicants had an issue with returning the return-receipt proof of mailing regarding the public hearing notices. They will bring them to the next meeting.

The liquor store will be putting a sign panel on the existing large billboard that lists names of the other plaza tenants. They are looking for a spring opening.

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The Board waiving the reading of minutes for the December 11th meeting. Motion by Woodin and 2nd by Fletcher and approved 5 – 0.

Chairman Woodin gave a quick update on Riberdy Grove Solar, Bells Lane Storage Units and upcoming proposals (more storage units on Hudson River Road). At 8:55 PM,

Woodin motioned to adjourn, 2nd by Fusco.