



City of Somerville

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

TO: Mayor Ballantyne
FROM: Charlotte Leis, MAC Liaison
DATE: November 19, 2022
RE: Update on eighth round of HCA applications

The Marijuana Advisory Committee (MAC) reviewed one new application that was received as part of the eighth round of applications. The MAC is recommending one application for a Host Community Agreements (HCAs) at this time. The MAC's thoughts on their review of the application are below.

These entities scored 16.75 points or more and are recommended for HCAs at this time:

Simplicity Dispensary, 368 Mystic Ave, total score: 16.75

Simplicity Dispensary is co-owned by Gina Damasceno (51% ownership/control), a Somerville resident, and Colonel Boothe (49% ownership/control). Ms. Damasceno has over a decade of experience working at restaurants with liquor licenses, and Mr. Boothe has seven years of experience working on cannabis cultivation in Massachusetts.

Location: 3.75

- The property is in the Mid Rise 5 zoning district in the Winter Hill neighborhood.
- The area is not particularly walkable given its location on Mystic Avenue, but there is on-street and on-site parking available that could serve the dispensary. However, that parking is already well-utilized by customers of other businesses, so it's unclear how much parking would be available for customers of this specific store.

Physical Space: 4

- The MAC likes the team's plan to fence off the rear parking area to allow for secure loading separate from customer parking.
- The layout of the store appears is conducive to running a secure operation.

Operations/Industry Knowledge: 5

- Mr. Boothe has worked in the cannabis industry since 2016 and is familiar with the CCC's regulations. Ms. Damasceno has also worked in a highly regulated industry for over a decade while managing the liquor license for various restaurants.
- The team has made a commitment to hiring locally, and to hiring at least 75% of the staff from groups that are disadvantaged in the industry.

Community Involvement: 4

- Ms. Damasceno is planning to create a Portuguese Business Owners Alliance in Somerville and has already begun reaching out to local business owners to generate support for this organization.
- Ms. Damasceno and Mr. Boothe appear to already be connecting with various Somerville community organizations that will be able to help them achieve their local hiring goals.