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DEVELOPMENT NARRATIVE – SIRA NATURALS, INC.

240 ELM STREET, SOMERVILLE, MA

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND APPROVALS:

SIRA NATURALS, INC. has been awarded a Host Community Agreement (HCA) by the City of Somerville for Adult Cannabis Retail Sales. This new use will co-locate with Sira's ongoing Registered Medical Dispensary (RMD) at 240 Elm Street, Somerville, MA. Sira Naturals has been operating as an RMD at 240 Elm Street since 2017 (please see ZBA #2016-143-R1-0517). The building landlord is AP 240 Elm Street LP. Sira's facility operates in the subterranean level directly below the "bfresh/Stop N Shop" ground level grocery market at 240 Elm Street. Sira's entire leasehold is approximately 4,785 sq. feet. Additionally, the building contains several other commercial tenants. The project architect is Peter Quinn Architects, LLC, 259 Elm Street, Somerville, MA. (Please see Floor Plan and Façade Elevations uploaded to CitizenServe)

ZONING COMPLIANCE:

The new zoning district for 240 Elm Street is the Mid-Rise District (MR4). This location sits within the former Marijuana Overlay of the old Zoning Ordinance under which Sira's RMD was originally approved (please see ZBA #2016-143-R1-0517). The site is within the "quarter-mile walkshed" of the MBTA Red Line. The Transportation Impact Study (TIS) and the Transportation Access Plan (TAP) for 240 Elm Street have been performed by Design Consultants, Inc. (DCI) of Somerville which illustrate that adult-use point of sale transactions will have minimal impact on pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic and circulation

patterns in the neighborhood and the local thoroughfare network. (Please see the TIS and the TAP which are uploaded to CitizenServe) The Planning Board will have the benefit of digesting the DCI findings which evidence low impact at the intersection of Chester and Elm Streets as well as no significant impact on pedestrian and bicycle traffic at this location. Additionally, the location and visibility of the principal entrance to Sira Naturals has not changed since its Special Permit approval in 2017 (ZBA #2016-143-R1-0517).

Sira Naturals' DRA for the added use of Adult Cannabis Retail Sales is a permitted use under the Table of Uses in the MR4 District and requires a Special Permit from the Somerville Planning Board. Sira Naturals' application is fully compliant with SZO 9.2.4.d. Sira Naturals is not located within five hundred (500) feet from any pre-primary, primary, secondary Educational Services uses or any Educational Services protected by M.G.L. 40A. Sec. 3, and in accordance with SZO 9.2.4.d. Sira Natural's floor area at 240 Elm Street is less than ten thousand (10,000) sq. feet as require by the SZO. Sira Natural's current signage for their RMD was approved by the City of Somerville in 2017 and remains unchanged. Sira Naturals is compliant with SZO 10.2, as well as 935 CMR 500 and M.G.L c. 94c. sec. 34 for its Cannabis Retail Sales signage.

Sira Naturals is the largest contributor to the Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS) and is committed to sponsoring CAAS in its mission to curb homelessness and hunger as well as creating additional affordable housing for Somervillians. Approval of Sira Naturals' Adult Cannabis Retail Sales license will ensure that it will continue to create positive impacts within the City of Somerville as embodied in Somervision 2030.

Prepared by Sean T. O'Donovan, Esq.



Neighborhood Meeting Report

240 Elm Street Somerville, MA 02144

Date: January 7, 2021

To: Ward 6 City Councilor, Lance Davis

CC: Charlotte Leis, City of Somerville Planner, Marijuana Advisory Committee and Zoning Board Liaison

Where: GoToMeeting

Recorded By: Councilor Lance Davis (Host)

Distribution: <http://siracommunity.com/somerville>

Attendees: 59

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City of Somerville with a comprehensive report of the neighborhood outreach meeting conducted by Sira Naturals, Inc. on Thursday, January 7, 2021 for the proposed Adult Use Marijuana Retail Establishment to be Located at 240 Elm Street, Somerville, MA 02144. Below are detailed responses to concerns raised by members of the community.

Name	Question/Comment	Response/Action
Jess Liborio	General question regarding process for applicants	Charlotte Leis provided a thorough explanation, step-by-step of the recreational marijuana license application process. She explained that applicants have received their Host Community Agreements, so the next step is to receive a local license from the Licensing Commission and a special permit from the Planning Board. This community meeting is an official required step in the planning board approval process. The applicants also need state approval from the Cannabis Control Commission, but Charlotte admitted she had limited knowledge about the inner workings of that process.
R.P. Thompson	Could both (Sira and Harvest Club) locations be approved?	Charlotte stated that both locations could be approved, it could be one or the other, or it could be neither. However, that is completely up to the licensing commission and the planning board.
Derrick Rice	Asked if both applicants would have to conduct another community meeting like Revolutionary Clinics.	Charlotte mentioned that Revolutionary Clinics is also proposing exterior changes which requires site plan approval and a second neighborhood meeting. Sira Naturals is only required to do one community meeting for the Use Special Permit. However, the applicant could choose to host another meeting if there are a lot of comments, questions and concerns that could not be addressed.
Jess Liborio	“Will there be lines after COVID? Do you plan to keep appointments after the pandemic?”	Michelle Foley, Regional Dispensary Manager for Sira Naturals, responded that Sira does plan to continue to be appointment only after the pandemic and does not feel the need to change that with the addition of adult use.
RP Thompson	“How will an overflow of customers be handled? What will specifically be done if lines do form? What will be done to prevent customers from parking in our parking lot, which is the closest lot to the store? Our business tenants are very worried about the disruption that an influx of retail customers will inevitably bring to our property with customers both parking in our business lot and hanging around outside our building. Our offices and will	David Rosenberg, Founder and President of Sira, understands everyone’s concerns about lines because lines were a problem when adult use dispensaries started to come on line. However, that problem has been mitigated by the approval of more dispensary licenses. Dispensaries become more of a local shop, rather than a destination for people from out of state. Michelle added that their primary goal is to be a good neighbor to the surrounding businesses. They pride themselves on having great relationships with all their Davis Square neighbors. Sira has implemented new

	not benefit from the coupon program you mentioned.”	software and procedures to minimize lines and wait times. On top of that, when the pandemic hit, they minimized the amount of people they were allowing in the building so they had to get customers through quicker. With these processes and their long interior corridors in conjunction with security on site, they do not anticipate any lines forming. Regarding the parking issue, Michelle offered to connect with RP and make herself and the management team available should that ever become an issue.
Linda Champion	Comment on David Rosenberg’s generosity, inclusion and eagerness to help those who may feel underrepresented in the business community	n/a
Lincoln Taggart	Comment on Sira’s charitable contributions to the Community Action Agency of Somerville, “This is all to say that Sira has been consistent and a strong community partner with a proven and sincere commitment to Somerville...They’re a fantastic neighbor.”	n/a
Vivian Shu	Has never been to a dispensary before and wanted to know more about what it’s like. “Do people browse inside and spend time? What is the price range for products and business hours?”	Michelle added that Sira Naturals gets the comment: “You look like an Apple Store” all the time. They have a very professional interior setting. No product is out on the shelf. All product is taken from a separate room behind the counter that only certain people have access to. However, 50% of their transactions are actually placed online. Price ranges are anywhere from \$15-\$150 on average. Business hours are from 10 A.M. to 8 P.M. 7 days a week.
Eric Schwartz	Asked if Michael Dundas was still CEO of Sira Naturals. Asked about the ownership structure of Sira Naturals and as to whether they are an international/multinational company.	David Rosenberg responded that Michael Dundas is not a part of the organization any longer. However, he did not want to get into discussion about former employees. He added that Sira runs a first class organization and they’re good community partners in all the communities that they work in. “We’ve unionized to give people fair wages. We do it right. We’re legitimate and we’ve done a lot of good for all our communities...David Rosenberg corrected Mr. Schwartz that they are not owned by Canada, rather they are owned by

		investors. The founders of Sira merged with Ayr, which is a company that was made public in Canada. “We are one of three original license holders that still have same board, that didn’t cash out any of the profits. We are shareholders and we control Sira through our board of directors.”
Jess Liborio	Added that she was an abutter to the rear of the property, wanted to ask another question of the applicant regarding the access for workers into the building and making sure workers are not loitering or smoking behind the building.	Michelle Foley assured Ms. Liborio that Sira Naturals has a third party on site security that sweeps the building regularly throughout the day for that type of activity. Although, they haven’t had that issue in the three years that they have been in Davis Square. However, if they did, that person would be ejected from the area and put on a “banned list.” Furthermore, there are about 30-40 cameras inside and outside of the building, so management staff can monitor the entire perimeter of the building. Those cameras are monitored 24/7.
M	Asked how long the process would take. M also mentioned that the meeting was not being closed captioned.	Charlotte was unsure of what exact process the individual was referring to and added that the City was unable to get closed captioning for the meeting last minute. As a result the applicant would have to conduct another Community Outreach Meeting to satisfy that CCC requirement. <u>In fact, Sira Naturals did conduct a second Community Outreach Meeting on January 27, 2021 in accordance with those CCC requirements.</u> David Rosenberg, in response to the process question, noted that Sira Naturals still has to go before the City of Somerville’s Licensing Commission and Planning Board. Then they will go before the State Cannabis Control Commission for their final approval. During COVID, it is uncertain as to how long that process may take.
Fabricio DeSilva	Commented on Sira’s commitment to and respect for the Union. Local 1445 has strong ties in Somerville.	n/a
R.P Thompson	“In service of being a good neighbor, if issues do arise, who would be available from the company to handle those issues?”	Michelle Foley responded that RP could contact her any time with issues. Due to his connection earlier, Michelle answered his question again regarding the issue with employees and customers parking in the lot. She added that a lot

		<p>of their patients and employees do take public transportation, but if the parking becomes an issue, she is on site all the time and Dwan Packnett, Vice President of Government Relations and Community Investment, is also available. Michelle, Dwan and David provided their contact information for RP to reach out if that issue ever arises. During the course of subsequent meetings, R.P.'s questions and comments were answered to his satisfaction and he agreed to reach out to Michelle, Dwan or David should any issues arise in the future.</p>
Derrick Rice	<p>Wanted to ask if the Union members, Fabricio and Shaun were Somerville residents.</p>	<p>Fabricio and Shaun responded that they are not Somerville residents, but that they represents a lot union members in the Somerville area.</p>
J Jasper	<p>“Revolutionary Clinics took 2 actions in opposition to reserving retail licenses in Cambridge for Social Equity applicants, what is Sira’s position on this issue?”</p>	<p>David responded that no company in Massachusetts has a longer track record on equity. They are the first company in Massachusetts to have an accelerator program for equity applicants. They elected not to participate in the same lawsuit as Rev Clinics and he asked that Sira not be associated with Rev Clinics, as they are a totally different and separate company. Dwan Packnett wanted to reiterate the strong component that Sira has for diversity and inclusion with their accelerator program. They would never get in the way of equity applicants. They welcome the challenge and the vibrancy that all applicants will bring to the cannabis industry. They also understand that there have been barriers that have kept people of color out of the cannabis industry, so not only would they not get in the way of any programs that would promote diversity and inclusion in the industry, but they are also coming up with ways to make it more accessible and more inclusive.</p>
Councilor Davis	<p>Had a follow up question to Mr. Schwartz’s comment on Sira’s management structure. He believes that the City’s application and selection process is still far too opaque. He provided a link for residents to all applications and materials. He pulled up Sira’s application and found that Michael</p>	<p>Charlotte responded that what they have on the website is the Host Community Agreement Application and signed Host Community Agreements for all applicants. Due to some membership changes in the Mayor’s Advisory Committee, there was a significant delay from when some applicants including Sira applied for</p>

	<p>Dundas is listed throughout the materials as being President and CEO in different locations, which means the materials he is pointing constituents to appears to be inaccurate. He asked if that material will be updated. Councilor Davis asked if Sira could work with Charlotte to update and label all information for easier access, to which Dwan agreed.</p>	<p>their Host Community Agreement and today. Charlotte is working with the City to redact, update relabel that information that has changed. Charlotte added that the information would be updated prior to the Licensing Commission hearing on January 25th. To add further clarification, Dwan Packnett explained that on February 5, 2020 Sira updated their initial application with supplemental organization charts including everything about Ayr Strategies. Dwan also agreed to. Work with Charlotte to update and label all information for easier access.</p>
<p>Amy Luyt</p>	<p>*Via email prior to our January 7 meeting,* Ms. Luyt had concerns about homeless individuals smoking in the entrances of her building and wanted to ensure that additional retail would not enable more of that activity. She also wanted to hear Sira's strategy on how to eliminate that.</p>	<p>Michelle Foley and Dwan Packnett followed up with Ms. Luyt and her husband shortly after the January 7 meeting. Michelle ensured Ms. Luyt that they will have on site security at their location and they will perform regular security sweeps of the area. They also educate all of their customers on public consumption and loitering. Customers must sign a waiver on their first visit stating they are aware that public consumption is illegal and the repercussions if caught consuming in public. Anyone caught consuming in public will be prosecuted and placed on a permanent banned list from all Sira Naturals locations. There will also be signage posted on the building stating that public consumption and loitering are illegal and we will take action against anyone caught doing so. She added that Sira has been operating in Davis Square for three years successfully and she has not personally seen this issue, nor received any complaints from their neighbors or area businesses. However, she included that her office is located at the Somerville location and she is available, as is Dwan, to discuss any issues should they arise and that they would respond immediately. Amy and John appreciated Michelle's correspondence, which answered all of their questions.</p>