

Bernabe Rodriguez

From: Lori J. Batzek
Sent: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 11:12 AM
To: Kimberly Wells; Bernabe Rodriguez
Subject: Fw: Restaurant Committee: Proposed Outdoor Dining Policy Feedback

Kindly Note the following Correspondence. I am Blind CC'ing all commissioners to avoid an issue with the Open Meeting Law Rules.

Lori Jean Batzek

Lori Jean Batzek

Secretary to the Somerville Licensing Commission
93 Highland Ave., Somerville, MA 02143
ljbatzek@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext.4108

From: Joe Carreiro [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 10:45 AM
To: Lori J. Batzek <ljbatzek@somervillema.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Restaurant Committee: Proposed Outdoor Dining Policy Feedback

Lori...

can you forward this on to the License Commission

thanks

Joe Carreiro
Business Manager
Mariachi Foods Inc.
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: Re: Restaurant Committee: Proposed Outdoor Dining Policy Feedback

Date: Tue, 1 Feb 2022 10:44:43 -0500

From: Joe Carreiro [REDACTED]

To: economicdevelopment@somervillema.gov

CC: Thomas Galligani <tgalligani@somervillema.gov>, Adriana Fernandes <afernandes@somervillema.gov>, Ted Fields <tfields@somervillema.gov>, William Blackmer <wblackmer@somervillema.gov>, Rachel Nadkarni <rnadkarni@somervillema.gov>, Jennifer Mancina <jdutra@somervillema.gov>, Nick Schonberger <nschonberger@somervillema.gov>, Jessica Eshleman [REDACTED] Zachary Baum [REDACTED] Stephen Mackey [REDACTED]

I am writing with respect to submission of my comments on the proposed outdoor dining regulations

I want to begin by explaining and conveying my sincere appreciation for the efforts that your office undertook during the period of March 2020 - December 2021 to work with our industry to help us undertake changes that allowed many of my restaurant friends and neighbors across the City to survive. Mindful that measures did not work for us all, as an industry representative I am appreciative that you are but one division in the City's infrastructure, and as such one vital partner.

In review of the proposed ordinance, mindful of the breath and scope of what is defined as "outdoor dining", I wanted to offer up my comments.

(i) As written, I feel the ordinance has a few fatal flaws. It is my hope that these were not made in malice, but were simply oversights. It would appear on its face the City is stating that all prior outdoor dining permits are revoked, including those that existed prior to the emergency regulations enacted post March 2020 in response to the Commonwealth's Emergency COVID orders. In that scenario, previously licensed installations like mine @ 61 Union Square would not be allowed, and in lieu of applying for "renewal" as I have since its approval in 2010, I would have to file for a new permit. This would on its face be a breach ex post facto elimination of a previously permitted installation.

While a distinction can be allowed for installations which were permitted as a result of the emergency orders, and the Commonwealth's State of Emergency, which have both been lifted, I feel it egregious to apply this burden to permits which existed per-emergency. A careful reading of the CitizenServe application during the emergency orders it is clear that those permits only existed until such time as the executive branch at the state and municipal level lifted the state of emergency. Instance like mine, where it is was previously permitted installation, with no amendment, should not be subject to revocation, or in instance where someone "amended" their installation (permit), {which is not my instance since the City rejected my proposal}, the original permitted use should remain and only the "amended" use should be subject to a new application.

As such I think the City MUST look at the process and create an option, where those of us in instances like my own, can simply apply for renewal, versus be subject to a new application.

(ii) The fee structure. While I am appreciative of the thorough logic and explanation behind the \$100 per seat fee, I think the logic is flawed if the fee is to be universally applied to installations on the sidewalk versus park-lets. If the logic is loss of revenue to the City over the loss of the parking spaces, and therefore the fees from meters and permitted parking, and the associated costs of relocating that parking, then why would this fee apply to a sidewalk installation, when there is no associated loss to the City or municipal revenues. My sixteen seats on the public sidewalk have no associated loss of revenue, as the City could still utilize the parking spaces (if there were any) in front of my location, at no loss when my patio was installed.

Again, I am not trying to engage in a divide and conquer amongst my industry, as that never would be my intention. I believe all the public spaces should be activated, and I do understand that revenue does not grow on trees, and there needs to be a give and take, but I think it is flawed logic to charge an offset for seats which would not result in any direct loss of revenues to the City. The argument gets even more specious too when you consider that in an area like mine, Union Square, the City took away dozens of parking spots to install a bike lane, with an associated "dead" zone, where no additional or alternative parking is created. Here the City compromised its own revenue, without the thought of recovery. When you further dissect this, the point can even be made that this appropriation of the public way, while creating positives for commuter and "green" transportation, {all of which I am favor of}, but in its design, not only was revenue from the meters eliminated for the City, vital parking, even temporary, was eliminated for businesses like mine, which rely on those temporary spaces for deliveries and pick ups. Now we have this great bike lane, but an area that still exists between the sidewalk and the bike lane, which can not be used for parking, or utilized for an installation of any kind (non-ADA compliant), and now serves to be only a non-ADA compliant pedestrian space for walking.

Beyond the associated cost for a business like mine, where my fee for permitted dining is increased by 1200% (\$150 - \$1800), the result is that the City benefits with no associated loss financially that that 1200% increase offsets, unless you consider that my fee is offsetting costs that are not directly associated to my use of the public way(s). That seems inherently unfair.

Respectful of the burden on the City, I do think there is a better measured way to approach this. I think more time needs to be taken to revise the procedures to allow for renewals for non emergency uses, and measures which can be employed to new applications and or renewals of emergency amendments. I also think we need to look at the new fee structure to see what alternatives can exist to offset the need for such a inflationary increase.

Although it is not my battle to wage, I think there are ways that the City can use ARPA funds to help businesses who need the services of architects and contractors, where we can bring our business community together to employ these industries to help the dining industry, and use the relief funds to pay for those services. I think there are better ways to look at the fees to have either a bifurcated fee structure for installations in the public sidewalk vs the public way (parklets), giving businesses the option to employ what works best for them installation wise. I also think we need to look at some of the concerns which are raised as look to what other communities in the Commonwealth have done, as their interpretation of the state & federal regulations differs from what it appears yours would be respect to ADA, and compliance, such that it may not be as cost prohibitive for some to have these installations, such that it would offset the cost of license for the city & the business. Although the time may have passed, I believe it would be prudent for the City to seat a council, that incorporates dining and nightlife businesses to construct common sense and financially responsible regulations which make sense for all parties. Town Halls are great, but working groups are better, so we can have a hand in drafting regulations which directly effect our industry.

I look forward to presentation and working with you.

Joe Carreiro

Joe Carreiro
Business Manager
Mariachi Foods Inc.


On 1/24/2022 2:11 PM, Nick Schonberger wrote:

Dear Restaurant Owners

The city has been working internally to draft the 2022 outdoor dining program to align with our accessibility and safety standards.

City of Somerville Public Records Notice

Please be advised that the Massachusetts Attorney General has determined that email is a public record unless the content of the email falls within one of the stated exemptions under the Massachusetts Public Records Laws.

Licensing Commission Meeting 2.14

Joe Carreiro [REDACTED]

Mon 2/14/2022 5:02 PM

[REDACTED]

Lori...

I would ask that if at all possible this be brought to the attention of the licensing commission this evening.

"It has come to my attention at 4:30 p.m. that the City has taken the outdoor seating license process away from input of the Economic Development Office, and has placed it in the authority of the Engineering Department, who is planning to make a proposal this evening. We were assured by Economic Development @ a meeting on 2.01.2022, that a revised proposal would be available before any meeting to vote on the same. A look at the agenda, of the Commission, posted 02.10.2022 on your website, has no mention of a vote or the proposal, just simple 'correspondence of Engineering Department'. It is a difficult night for restaurants, being Valentine's Day, and despite my desire I did not know if I could be at the meeting to make public comment before the vote, but assumed there would not be one, since it was NOT on the agenda.

To say the least I am disappointed that the City once again has not acted in good faith, and has acted in the absence of transparency to work with the dining and nightlife group in the City. I would respectfully ask that there be no vote until a proposal can be submitted for comment, and a special meeting called to discuss, review and then vote on the proposal."

Respectfully

Joe Carreiro
Business Manager
El Potro Mexican Grill

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Joe Carreiro
Business Manager

Mariachi Foods Inc.



www.elpotromexicangrill.com



Victoria Campbell [REDACTED]

Letter of Support

Brian Cafferty [REDACTED]

Sun, Feb 6, 2022 at 12:25 PM

To: Victoria Campbell [REDACTED]

Kevin Walsh [REDACTED]

Dear Review Board,

I am a Somerville resident living in Union Square, close to the prospective location of La Bottega Pizzeria. Victoria and Kevin have been my friends for over five years, and I can honestly say that they are two of the most dedicated, passionate, and community-minded people I know. I first met Kevin when he ran an acclaimed pizzeria in Fenway named Tapestry, returning often for the amazing woodfired pizzas. So I was floored with excitement when I heard they intend to open a new restaurant in my neighborhood! I am happy to call Union Square home because of its consistent support of small businesses owned by local residents. Allowing La Bottega to create a home in our neighborhood will continue this tradition and provide me, my neighbors, and visiting foodies access to the best pies in New England.

Sincerely,
Brian Cafferty



2/8/2022

To whom it may concern,

We are writing in enthusiastic support of Kevin Walsh and Victoria Campbell's application for licensing in the city of Somerville. Kevin and Victoria are at present looking to open their business, an exciting pizzeria and gelateria, La Bottega, in Union Square.

Joanne and I have known Kevin for over 15 years. We have followed him and his food from coast to coast, Maine to California, always hoping that he'd decide to stay in this area. Kevin worked for me at Radius, no longer open, but long considered one of Boston's best. He immediately showed great cooking talents as well as leadership capabilities; he was promoted again and again and went on to help create and manage one of the best kitchens in the country. Kevin was in charge of overall costs in that kitchen and that ability was challenged from 08-09 as the Great Recession brought many restaurants to extinction. We couldn't keep him long, but we were so glad we had him when we did. Kevin was level-headed, crafty, mature, and most important, possessed a positivity that never changed, despite the circumstances: a priceless skill in this industry.

Kevin went on to work and hone his craft at one of the best pasta and pizzerias in San Francisco. We followed him. Then to Maine where he was co-chef and pastry chef at the number one rated restaurant in Maine. We followed him. Back to Boston, he opened Tapestry, undeniably the best pizza in Boston, we followed . . . we ate . . . we were bummed when he left. However, at present, he has an ice cream that we'll go out in a nor'easter for if we run out. We follow him.

I have met with Victoria, Kevin's wife and partner, many times to discuss financial issues related to the restaurant industry. Between Joanne and myself, we have a combined 70 years doing business in Boston restaurants, that we owned or ran, and we are often astonished at how thoroughly Victoria and Kevin command all the knowledge necessary to operate a successful business. We're asked often to consult and advise, and from time to time, to write a letter of this sort. We don't often do this with great confidence. At this time, we give a hearty endorsement to this team, a confident referral to the city of Somerville, and a sad sigh that we don't live in Union Square.

This team is bound for success and we believe that this restaurant will be a great addition to the Somerville culinary scene.

Sincerely,

Christopher Myers and Joanne Chang
Flour Bakery + Cafe
Myers + Chang Restaurant



La Bottega [REDACTED]

Letter of Support

Sun, Feb 6, 2022 at 9:24 PM

[REDACTED]
Reply-to: [REDACTED]

To: Kevin Walsh [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing on behalf of Victoria Campbell and Kevin Walsh in support of their pizzeria and ice cream restaurant, La Bottega, slated to open in Union Square this spring. I couldn't be happier that La Bottega is coming to our community and I am thrilled to have an opportunity to endorse both Kevin and Victoria in this endeavor.

I moved to [Ward 2](#) [REDACTED] after purchasing a condo in June, 2015 and have lived here continuously since that time. It didn't take long for me to fall in love with the area. I know we are a densely populated city but, to me, it truly does feel like a neighborhood with so many wonderful small businesses in and around Union Square. I am so grateful to have local options, both restaurants and shops, within walking distance. Some recent closures like The Biscuit on Washington Street, Kirkland Tap & Trotter on Kirkland Street, Bull McCabes on Somerville Ave, and the upcoming redevelopment of Union Square in conjunction with the Green Line expansion have me worried that the neighborhood could lose its local charm. I can't tell you how please I am to see local, small businesses moving into the area at this time. This kind of activity makes me optimistic that Union Square will continue to be a place that is uniquely Somerville.

Outside of the benefits to the neighborhood, I want to give my full support to Victoria and Kevin on a personal level. I couldn't ask for better neighbors nor friends. They are kind, responsible, conscientious and will bring great energy and a wonderful, welcoming presence to Union Square. (As well as great food!) Bronwyn, Backbar, and Cantina La Mexicana will be lucky to have such caring neighbors.

I hope my endorsement and support will help you determine that La Bottega deserves a place in Union Square. If I can be of any further help please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Jason Pappas

[REDACTED]

Sent with [ProtonMail](#) Secure Email.



To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to support Kevin and Victoria's application to the city of Somerville for licenses for their restaurant in Union Square.

Kevin worked for me in various capacities for about 8 years. I first hired Kevin to be the Executive Chef of Earth at Kennebunkport in Maine. There he set up a seasonal farm to table restaurant employing local products. He established relationships with local purveyors and really made the local products shine through his cuisine. After Earth, Kevin worked at Clio for 4 years as chef. He left Clio for Tapestry and then we hired him back as pastry chef for Little Donkey in Cambridge.

The pizza at Tapestry was one of the best kept secrets of Boston. I am looking forward to the opening of his new pizzeria La Bottega. This will be a great restaurant for the Somerville and Cambridge community.

Sincerely,

Ken Oringer

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of Kevin and Victoria for the liquor license application to their Union Sq. restaurant at 251 Washington Street in Somerville.

I have known Kevin since 2007 and over the years had the good fortune to see firsthand his incredible growth into nothing less than a talented and creative professional chef. Most recently, I was privileged to be the Managing Partner (i.e. CEO/CFO) of Tapestry Restaurant where I worked collaboratively with Kevin in his role as Executive Chef. I always knew his food was second to none, but observing him in the Executive Chef role I gained the appreciation of the depth of his talents. He was able handle all aspects of the kitchen, including but not limited to, developing creative innovative menus, managing staff and full awareness of the financial aspects of the business relative to staffing and food costs. A successful Executive Chef/Owner is not just about the food, it is about running the business that gives you the opportunity to provide a superior product to you patrons.

As a resident of the South End in Boston, I have the option of choosing from an abundance of neighborhood restaurants to patron. However, I find myself drawn to Somerville to experience the great independent owned restaurants offering such a diverse selection of cuisines. When I heard that Kevin was opening a restaurant in Somerville, I was excited that he would be part of the great local food scene. However, the truth be told, I am just excited to be able to indulge myself once again in his great food. I fell in love with Kevin's cooking/pizza at Flour+Water in San Francisco and cannot wait to get it again.

As a Senior Vice President Strategy & CFO of an organization, I can say with full confident, that Kevin will execute the running of La Bottega at the highest level and bring another highly acclaimed, independently owned business to Somerville.

It is an honor to be on record supporting this initiative.

Respectfully



Kevin A. Ward



Victoria Campbell [REDACTED]

So excited to be your neighbors!!!

sara markey [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]

Wed, Feb 9, 2022 at 10:12 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing, with great excitement, in support of La Bottega's proposed business here in Union Square. I have known Kevin & Victoria for several years, been quite a fan of their food and been eagerly awaiting their next move. When I heard that Kevin & Victoria were planning on joining our Union Square community I was elated. Their addition to the neighborhood will only enhance the public's desire to come to our square to dine. They are wonderful people, artistic and good hearted, and I cannot wait to have them as neighbors. Please grant them the opportunity to see this business to fruition- I know it will be nothing less than a total success.

Sincerely,

Sara Markey (she/her)
Field & Vine
<https://www.fieldandvinesomerville.com>
www.instagram.com/field_and_vine/

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to show my support for Kevin Walsh and Victoria Campbell and their business, La Bottega, a pizzeria and ice cream shop, to open in Union Square. My partner and I are homeowners in Ward 2 at [REDACTED]

Kevin and Victoria's dedication to their neighbors, ambition as business owners, and incredible culinary talent will make them an ideal part of Union Square. At a time that has been so hard for the restaurant industry and small businesses, I am relieved and excited to see a new, locally-owned, small business restaurant seeking to open in Union Square.

When I first moved to the area I worried about feeling a part of the community. With their friendly and generous nature, Kevin and Victoria helped transform Ward 2 into my neighborhood. We first met walking our dogs through Lincoln Park and easily became neighborhood friends.

In September 2021, they joined us at a block party to repaint the traffic calming mural outside of our home. They were happy to roll up their sleeves and contribute to the safety and beautification of our street.

When I went to vote at the November 2021 local election, I saw Kevin and Victoria standing outside of Argenziano School. They had already voted, but were waiting outside to help another neighbor by watching her dog while she went inside to vote. This one moment exemplifies their daily character. I have every confidence that their kindness will translate into their business and extend to many more members of our community.

I am so excited that such great neighbors have the opportunity to open La Bottega just across Lincoln Park from our homes!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Sholes
[REDACTED]



Victoria Campbell [REDACTED]

Letter of Support for La Bottega

Upasana Unni [REDACTED]

Thu, Feb 10, 2022 at 3:27 PM

To: Victoria Campbell [REDACTED]

La Bottega [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

My name is Upasana Unni. I'm a resident of Cambridge at [REDACTED]. Although I live in Cambridge, my family and I frequently eat and shop in Union Square in Somerville. We lived at [9 Harding St](#) -- about a 12 minute walk from Union Sq -- for 4 years and we are still only a 20 min walk away in our new home. We come to Union often for coffees at Juliet, groceries at Market Basket, beers at Remnant, purchasing plants at Ricky's, and sushi at Ebi Sushi.

We are very excited about the possibility of a pizza and gelato restaurant owned by Kevin Walsh and Victoria Campbell opening in Union Square. We have long been fans of Kevin's gelato (we frequently purchase pints from Formaggio) and I am a pizza enthusiast, having grown up in Long Island. Our current best pizza option in Cambridge is unfortunately not as veggie friendly as I understand Kevin's will be, so we are particularly excited about the upcoming opening of La Bottega. Furthermore, a great pizza restaurant is a 'must have' for Union Sq, and with the closing of T&B, there is a void in the neighborhood.

We believe LaBottega would be a fantastic addition to Union Square and wholeheartedly support the opening of this restaurant.

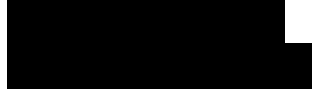
Regards,
Upasana

--

Upasana Unni
[REDACTED]

FSF

Kevin Walsh
Victoria Campbell
El K Group, LLC
dba La Bottega



Re: 251-251a Washington Street, Somerville MA 02143

Dear Kevin and Victoria,

This is to confirm that Foodservice Financials, Inc. ("FSF") and your company El K Group, LLC, dba La Bottega ("La Bottega") have entered into a lease of 251-251a Washington Street, Union Square, Somerville MA 02143 ("251-251a") and that FSF fully supports your application for an on-premise liquor license for 251-251a.

I regret that because I will be travelling out of the country at the time of your license hearing, it will not be possible for me to attend. This is to confirm that you have my support and I look forward to our working together to add yet another amenity that will be welcomed and valued by the Union Square community.

I suggest you confer with your counsel and if anything else is required from me, please let me know by email.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Patterson".

Henry Patterson

President

Foodservice Financials, Inc.



Name	Business or Relationship	Date we spoke with them	Notes
Sandra Dong	Ward 2 resident	1/20/22	Sandra became a friend a few summers ago when she would come to everyone of our popups. She is excited that Kevin will be making soft serve gelato close to where her and her family live. She is also looking forward to the restaurant, pizza and drinks and to have a space to meet up with friends.
Alissa Fiest	Formaggio Kendall	1/25/22	Alissa is excited about the possibility of us moving to Union Square
Martin Tobias	Ward 2 condo owner	1/30/22	Looking forward to having a neighborhood place to go to when in town
Ann Wong	Ward 2 condo owner	1/30/22	Very excited that a small local business might move into Union Square
Tyler Akabane	The mushroom shop	2/6/22	Kevin and Tyler have collaborated in the past on joint projects. He is excited that there will continue to be a woodfired pizzeria in Union Square. We are planning on sourcing product from Tyler to use for our dishes
Oscar Hernandez	Olmstead Wine	2/6/22	We spoke with Oscar at Dear Annie and she is excited about La Bottega moving into Union Square.
Lauren Friel	Rebel rebel	2/6/22	We spoke with Lauren at Dear Annie and she is excited about La Bottega moving into Union Square.
Eric and Abby Smallwood	Myrth Ceramic Studio	2/2/22	We idroduced our selves and told them we are in the process of taking over the old TB space in Union Square. We started discussing with them about the possibility of using their vases and plate ware at La Bottega
Brittany Lajoie	Remnant Brewing	2/2/22	We introduced ourselves to. Brittany and started exploring the possibility of carrying remnant beer at La Bottega
Front desk	Somerville Police department	2/2/22	We wanted to introduce ourselves to Sergeant Warren Chaille, but we were told he was out of the office. We chatted for a few minutes with the officers at the front desk about moving into the neighborhood and crime in Union Square to better understand what we can do to ensure that Union Square remains a safe place where the community has a space to gather.
Steve Mosher	Wine and Cheese Cask	2/2/22	Since we live in the neighborhood, we have known Steve for years due to being customers at the Wine and Cheese Cask. From the begging of our project he has been hoping for us to find a space in the neighborhood and is looking forward to having pizza and gelato once we are open and has supported us at our popups in the past.
Kim Park	Wine and Cheese Cask	2/2/22	We have also known Kim for years form going to purchase wine and beer. She has supported us at our popup events in the past. She is looking forward to Kevin's pizza and gelato and is happy we found a space in the neighborhood.
Jennie and Brian Hennesey	Ward 2 resident	2/7/22	Happy that a new restaurant might be opening in the neighborhood. They are big fans of Kevin's desserts already
Megan Fitzgerald	Ward 2 resident	2/8/22	We reached out to mention that we are hoping to open a space in Union Square. She was excited and said it will Definity be on her list of places to frequent.
Meaghann Ward	Private chef	2/8/22	She is completely exatic and want to book a private event as soon as possible



2 Alpine Street, P.O. Box 440343, Somerville MA 02144

February 7, 2022

Joseph Lynch, Chair
Somerville Licensing Commission
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143
Via email only

RE: LIBERTY CANNABIS ADULT USE MARIJUANA LICENSE APPLICATION

Dear Chair Lynch:

I am writing in support of Holistic Industries, Inc., D/B/A Liberty Cannabis which was been awarded a Host Community agreement (HCA) by the City of Somerville for Recreational Adult Use Marijuana Retail Sales. This new Recreational Adult Use will co-locate with Liberty's ongoing Registered Medical Marijuana Dispensary ("RMD") located at 304 Somerville Avenue, Somerville, Massachusetts (the "Location").

Since Liberty Cannabis commenced operations in 2018 it has worked cooperatively with other Union Square business owners and has thrived as part of the community that makes Union Square so unique. Additionally, Liberty Cannabis has been very involved in variety of philanthropic and business activities in Somerville. I attended the required community meeting in September of 2021 and since that hearing it is my understanding that Liberty Cannabis has signed an agreement with UFCW Local 1445 to allow for union representation for employees and Liberty Cannabis has continued to be supportive of many local charities.

In short, on behalf of the Somerville of Chamber of Commerce I fully support Liberty Cannabis and its application to expand into Recreational Adult Use Marijuana Retail Sales.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen V. Mackey", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stephen V. Mackey
President/CEO

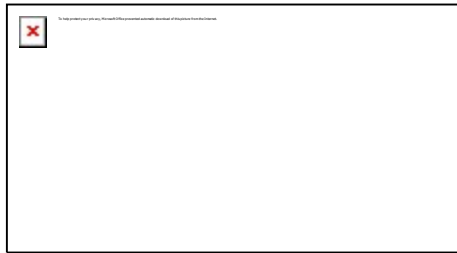
cc:

licensing@somervillema.gov

ljbatzek@somervillema.gov

Bernabe Rodriguez

From: Jessica Eshleman [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, February 2, 2022 10:27 AM
To: LICENSING
Cc: Zachary Baum; Philip Parsons; Jen Palacio; Mike Katz; Jim McGinnis; JT Scott; Ben Ewen-Campen
Subject: Liberty Cannabis Adult Use Recreational Marijuana License Application



Honorable Members of the Licensing Commission
Somerville Licensing Commission
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Chair Lynch and Licensing Commissioners Allen and Thomas:

Since 2005, Union Square Main Streets, Inc. (USMS) has worked to strengthen the dynamic neighborhood of businesses and people in Union Square. We promote and celebrate the character of Union Square, advocate for and assist local businesses, work to create welcoming public spaces, and foster connection and collaboration among diverse stakeholders and partners. Through this work, USMS supports nearly 200 businesses throughout Union Square.

On behalf of the USMS Board of Directors, I write in support of Liberty Cannabis' adult use marijuana license application for their Union Square establishment at 304 Somerville Avenue.

The Liberty Cannabis team first engaged with me in my role at USMS in 2018 to provide a tour of their soon-to-open medical marijuana dispensary. During this meeting, then General Manager Sarah Stretchberry discussed Liberty's locally-focused business philosophies and inquired about ways their team members could become involved with the neighborhood and USMS' economic empowerment work.

Since that time, Liberty Cannabis has prioritized Somerville-based hiring, building its staff with people from Union Square and other neighborhoods in our city. Liberty Cannabis staff has attended Union Square Business Meetings to stay engaged with fellow business leaders and activities in the Square. Liberty Cannabis has also invested philanthropically making possible "Santa Helper's grants" for dozens of other Union Square businesses to help offset the cost of holiday storefront decor and generous cash prizes to incentivize consumer participation in USMS' "Keep Small Strong Challenge." Contributions also include helping to underwrite professional security staff for the Union Square Farmers Market and being a lead sponsor for USMS' "Good Food For All" campaign that raises funds and awareness for the Union Square SNAP Match among others.

Importantly, this expansion of Liberty's offerings will add vitality to the overall business environment and help speed the recovery process for the many businesses that have been devastated by the pandemic by drawing new customers into Union Square's central business district. It will also enable Liberty to continue to "cultivate better health, prosperity, and communities," as "a responsible and progressive leader in cannabis" as proclaimed on their website.

Please approve this license swiftly at your February 14, 2022 meeting so that this community-centric business can bring to fruition economic activity and other outcomes an overwhelming majority of Somerville’s electorate prioritized in the 2016 vote to legalize adult use marijuana – six years later.

Sincerely,



Jessica L. Eshleman
Executive Director

PS [Union Square Main Streets is hiring its next Administrative Assistant](#) to join our small team with a big agenda. Could it be you? Someone you know?

You, Me, Them, Us
We are in this together, Union Square.
Keep it local, keep it kind, keep Union vibin’, keep Union thrivin’
[#LoveUnionSquare](#)

Union Square Main Streets
PO Box One
Somerville, MA 02143
www.unionsquaremain.org
[Facebook](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Instagram](#)





Fernando Lemus
President
Fabricio DaSilva
Secretary-Treasurer

January 12, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1445 is the largest private sector union in the City of Somerville. You may know our members as the faces of Stop & Shop workers, Angelica's and Royal Hospitality industrial laundries, and more recently in medical and adult recreational cannabis dispensaries.

Recently UFCW 1445 announced that cannabis workers at the Liberty Medical Dispensary in Union Square ratified their first Union contract. The three-year contract includes great yearly general wage increases, affordable health and welfare benefits, 401k plan, grievance / arbitration procedures, union representation on the shop floor, safety committee, non-Discrimination clauses, paid vacations and sick time, upward mobility that respects seniority, severance pay, and successorship language.

UFCW Local 1445 supports Holistic Industries efforts to expand its Liberty Medical dispensary on Somerville Av to expand into adult recreational dispensary as well. The new employees at the proposed Liberty adult recreational dispensary will be covered by the same collective bargaining agreement as the current medical bargaining unit.

In line with Somerville being a Union-Strong City, UFCW Local 1445 strongly encourages the Somerville Licensing Commission, the Marijuana Advisory Committee, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and all other relevant bodies to approve Holistic Industries project for an adult use recreational dispensary at the current Liberty medical dispensary.

Should you have any question please contact me at Gabriel Camacho

[Redacted contact information]

Sincerely,

Gabriel Camacho
Political Director, UFCW 1445

January 11, 2022

Joseph P. Lynch
Chairman
Somerville Licensing Commission
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Chairman Lynch,

On behalf of Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc. ("CAAS"), I write to support the application of Liberty Cannabis located at 304 Somerville Avenue in Union Square.

CAAS is the federally-designated nonprofit anti-poverty agency for the City of Somerville. Its mission is to help local families and individuals achieve financial security while working to eliminate the root causes of economic injustice. Through our work, we have developed strong and trusting relationships with Somerville's diverse low-income populations and a deep concern for their wellbeing and security.

There are few systemic practices that have had a more detrimental effect on low-income communities than the so-called "War on Drugs". The imprisonment of millions of primarily low-income people of color over the last 50 years has wreaked havoc on their communities. CAAS supports all efforts to reverse these terrible policies. The legalization of recreational marijuana in Massachusetts represents a significant step in the right direction.

Liberty Cannabis has shown its commitment to supporting Somerville's low-income community from the first. They have been a significant donor to CAAS' 40th Anniversary fundraiser this past winter, which raised funds to provide emergency financial support to those most affected by the pandemic. They have continued to support our work by sharing the profits from designated days of business with us, and we are in active discussions regarding other forms of mutually beneficial collaboration. As a union shop ourselves (SEIU Local 888) we were very pleased to see that Liberty Cannabis has reached an agreement with UFCW Local 1445 on a contract that ensures employees at Liberty have union representation in their workplace, ensuring important employee benefits to their workers.

I have no doubt that Liberty Cannabis will continue to be a generous and committed community partner to CAAS and to those most in need in our City. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



David Gibbs
Executive Director