



June 13, 2022

100 Columbus Blvd.
Hartford, CT 06103
tel: 860.249.6000
fax: 860.249.6161
ctconventions.com

Aimee Chambers
Director of Planning
Hartford City Hall
550 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Aimee:

We here at the Connecticut Convention Center would like to go on record as being opposed to the opening of a dispensary at 89 Arch Street, Hartford CT. We host a lot of family-oriented events such as New England Regional Volleyball Competition, New England Irish Step Dance, several different cheerleading competitions, Connecticut Music Educators Association, as well as several other large events that bring a great deal of people to Hartford. These are all very family-oriented shows with many underage attendees. Having a cannabis dispensary directly across the street would negatively impact these events. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Michael Costelli

Michael Costelli
General Manager

Proudly operated by
 Waterford
Venue Services

Paul Ashworth

From: Hartford Planning Division
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2022 3:47 PM
To: Paul Ashworth
Subject: FW: Dispensary Concerns on Arch Street

From: Jerry Collins <jcollins0810@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2022 3:46 PM
To: Chambers, Aimee <Aimee.Chambers@hartford.gov>
Cc: Hartford Planning Division <oneplan@hartford.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Dispensary Concerns on Arch Street

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My primary concern about the request for a special permit application at 89 Arch Street is that the narrow sidewalk and retaining wall creates a significant bottle neck blockage that hampers any kind of free egress along the sidewalk when lines of people are queueing up. This will lead to Americans with Disability Act issues and pedestrian hazards. This is very much an issue for this type of establishment since experience demonstrates that cannabis retail operations often have long lines of customers waiting outside to enter the building. In this case, where the interior of the building is small there will certainly be lines out the door without enough sidewalk space to accommodate them. The special permit application has no pedestrian management plan at all.

My concern should not be taken as an opposition to the legalization of cannabis, it is a concern regarding the opening of a recreational shop in an area that is not physically suitable for the amount of foot and car traffic that will come to our narrow street and sidewalk.

Also the exit for the Whitehead Highway empties out at the top of Arch Street and much of the car traffic comes straight down Arch Street. It is a narrow street with a loading dock in front of my building at 85 Arch Street. There is also a loading dock directly across the street for the Front Street district which frequently causes traffic backups. I would have expected the special application to include a traffic management plan, but it did not.

Lastly, as an abutter of 89 Arch Street for the past 45 years, I would expect to have received some notice concerning this special application from the applicant, but instead I heard about this through the grapevine.

Given the extraordinary nature of this planned use, I believe there should be much more robust planning, public hearing and vetting before a special application should be considered. Instead the application contains no pedestrian or traffic management plan, indeed no drawings or plans whatsoever are included.

I would respectfully request that this email expressing my concerns be part of the minutes of the meeting tomorrow night.

Thank you
Jerry Collins, Owner
The Arch Street Tavern
85 Arch Street
Hartford, CT
860-416-8893

Paul Ashworth

From: Chambers, Aimee
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2022 1:28 PM
To: Hartford Planning Division; Paul Ashworth
Subject: FW: Dispensary on Arch St.

Aimee Chambers, AICP

Desk: 860-757-9073
Cell: 860-372-1389

From: Jennifer Yanke <jenniferyanke@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2022 1:16 PM
To: Chambers, Aimee <Aimee.Chambers@hartford.gov>
Subject: Dispensary on Arch St.

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Ms. Chambers,

I am writing to express my concern for a proposed dispensary at the corner of Arch St. and Columbus Blvd. While this seems like a good location, I don't think that it is the city's best interest to allow a dispensary at this location. The traffic on and off the highway would be overwhelming to the area. There is limited parking in the area and would make it difficult for local restaurants to provide parking for customers. In addition, the Science Center is a place for children and it seems that while marijuana is legal now in CT, it is too close to a child friendly attraction.

Please consider a different location for the dispensary. Perhaps in an area near Parkville Market. That might be a better location.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully, Jennifer Yanke

Paul Ashworth

From: Chambers, Aimee
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2022 2:29 PM
To: Paul Ashworth; Hartford Planning Division
Subject: FW: Marijuana Shops on Front Street

[Use this version per mike mcgarry](#)

Aimee Chambers, AICP

Desk: 860-757-9073
Cell: 860-372-1389

From: Mike McGarry <mikem1944@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2022 1:15 PM
To: Chambers, Aimee <Aimee.Chambers@hartford.gov>
Cc: oneplan.gov@aol.com
Subject: Marijuana Shops on Front Street

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And so it begins. . . The upcoming debate over locations for Marijuana shops starts with the worst possible location -- Front Street in Downtown Hartford.

A. Most mental health professionals believe that any mind altering product could negatively affect many children and young adults from ages 16 - 24. The location is next to two music clubs which attract this demographic group. Also, two colleges are within steps away. **Obviously**, this location is being sought because it is near the youth market!

B . The location is near the Science Center and a family movie theater. Any sign that a marijuana facility is nearby indicates a public acceptance of these mind altering drugs.

C. Many families, youth groups, meetings and conventions will stay away from the Convention Center as well as local businesses if a marijuana facility is nearby.

Hartford has many areas where marijuana can be sold that would not affect our youth and local businesses.

Please turn now this Special Permit request.

From: Monique George <mmgeo35@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, June 14, 2022 4:27 PM
To: aimme.chambers@hartford.gov
Cc: Hartford Planning Division
Subject: Front Street

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You've got to be kidding!! "Plans for Hartford cannabis shop near Front Street convention center...". Does Gibbs really believe that this will attract more visitors and they are going to benefit restaurants? My family visits to the Science Center and the Convention Center will end. I don't want my grandchildren to see what's really going to happen to that area. Monique George, West Hartford

To whom it may concern:

I write this letter of support on behalf of 89 Arch St HTFD LLC C/O Derrick C. Gibbs Jr. in my capacity as owner of a neighboring Arch Street business. Derrick Gibbs has contacted me in efforts related to the proposal to locate a recreational retail cannabis dispensary at 89 Arch Street, Hartford, CT.

As an emerging industry in Connecticut, initial participants in the cannabis industry have the unprecedented opportunity to set the standard for corporate responsibility, customer care, and safe and compliant operations.

I am confident that this business maintains the experience and subject matter expertise necessary to operate their establishment in a manner that best suits customers, employees, and the surrounding community. We are confident that this new business will be an addition to the Front Street area and will operate in harmony with existing uses.


Throughout their endeavors to site a recreational retail cannabis dispensary within Hartford, they have taken a proactive approach to identify a site that is appropriate for their proposed use and to undertake a robust community outreach process to ensure that residents and stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input.

I am pleased to support their proposal.

Name:

Roy M Riedel

Sincerely:



Date:

6/9/22

Business:

El Pollo Guapo

Address:

26 Front Street



100 Columbus Boulevard
Suite 500
Hartford, CT 06103-2819
Tel (860) 527-0100
Fax (860) 527-0133
www.crdact.net

June 14, 2022

City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission
c/o Aimee Chambers, AICP
Planning Director
City of Hartford
260 Constitution Plaza – 1st Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
Aimee.Chambers@Hartford.gov

Re: Special Permit Application for 89 Arch Street

Dear Commissioners:

CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Testimony – Special Application for Proposed Adult Use Cannabis Retailer

My name is Anthony L. Lazzaro Jr., I am the Deputy Director and General Counsel for state of Connecticut quasi-public state agency known as the Capital Region Development Authority (“CRDA”). CRDA was formed with the express purpose to stimulate investment in Hartford, including the creation of family-oriented entertainment, amongst other things.

As you are likely aware, CRDA is responsible for the development of the Adriaen’s Landing project, including the so-called Front Street District. Over the past 20 years, CRDA has been responsible for the construction and operation of the Connecticut Convention Center, six downtown parking facilities, the construction of the Connecticut Science Center, the creation of over 3,000 residential units in the City of Hartford and we currently operate the XL Center, the Connecticut Regional Market, and Pratt & Whitney Stadium at Rentschler Field.

I am here tonight because CRDA opposes the application now before you for the Special Permit Application for a Proposed Adult Use Cannabis Retailer at 89 Arch Street.

On May 2, 2000, the General Assembly enacted and the Governor signed *An Act Implementing the Master Plan for the Adriaen's Landing Project*. The Master Plan includes the thirty-three (33) acre mixed use housing, retail, entertainment district known as Adriaen's Landing site. CRDA and State of Connecticut were charged with the development of the Site in accordance with the Master Plan and Chapters 558x and 558z of the Connecticut General States. Pursuant to the aforementioned authority, the State parties are responsible for the design and development of the overall project, including the property in question located at 89 Arch Street which is situated within the Site. Within the limits of the Adriaen's Landing site, the State parties are responsible for determining the proper mix of family-oriented entertainment, retail, and housing as well as the related zoning requirements. Accordingly, the proper jurisdiction for Adriaen's Landing use and zoning rests with the state parties.

I would also like to discuss the Application before you based on its merits as well.

In order to fulfill its mission to create family-oriented entertainment and incentivize private investment within the District, CRDA invested \$700 Million and developed partnerships with HB Nitkin (the Master Developer of the District), the Travelers, the Hartford Marriott Downtown, the University of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Science Center as well as the many tenants at Adriaen's Landing. As a result, CRDA was able to leverage hundreds of millions of dollars of private investment into the state development. CRDA and its partners have all executed a series of agreements and reciprocal covenant agreements that expressly prohibit "head shops" and the sale of cannabis, as well as pawnshops, check-cashing operations, businesses that sell firearms and/or pornographic material or any activity that violates State or federal law.

The District -

Pursuant to Hartford Zoning Regulations § 1.3.4, when reviewing Special Permit Applications the commission must consider the following elements (c) does the use comport with the purposes of the district in which it is located; (g) is it compatible with adjacent properties; (m) does it provide pedestrian amenities; and (n) does it comply fully with the code. Based upon the existing State restricted uses, the answer to the above question is "no". It is implausible for the Applicant to claim a cannabis retail shop is compatible and consistent with the Adriaen's Landing district when every business within the district, including the State of Connecticut, has taken affirmative steps to prohibit a cannabis retail shop from locating to the district.

In discussing my testimony here tonight with our district neighbors, the president of Connecticut Science Center, Matt Fleury, stated that "a cannabis retailer is not consistent with a children's Science Center and its related restaurants on Front Street". Adriaen's Landing was designed as a welcoming destination for families visiting the Science Center.

The Convention Center does a large amount of business with children's groups such as the New England Regional High School Volleyball Tournament, children's Irish Step Dancing conventions, regional high school cheerleader competitions, proms, graduations, as well as numerous religious organizations. Again, Adriaen's Landing was designed as a destination for these young families. CRDA and Waterford Venue Services jointly manage the Convention Center and provide tourism services for the City of Hartford. We do not agree the cannabis retail shop will increase tourism, but rather make it more difficult to attract business to the Convention Center. We have already experienced negative feedback from a prospective convention planner.

The University of Connecticut is located 395 feet from the proposed dispensary. Many of their students are 18, 19, and 20 years old. Moreover, the University regularly operates Youth Programs in the summer for middle and high school students. Again, this represents an inconsistent use for a cannabis retail shop.

Historically, Spotlight movie theater provides free movie matinees (Shrek, the Incredibles, etc.) for children during the summer months. They can also purchase a popcorn and a bottle of water for \$1 each. This is one more example of the existing character of Adriaen's Landing.

Lastly, I would also like to address the Applicant's submission.

Parking – The Applicant represents that the majority of his visitor parking will be in the Front Street South Garage (the "Garage"); CRDA disagrees with this representation. The Garage was built with Federal funds and Revenue Bonds, CRDA is prohibited from using the Garage to support illegal activity, whether it be Federal, State, or municipal. Additionally, the use of the Garage is contractually restricted via the Adriaen's Landing Development Agreement with HB Nitkin and prohibits the sale of monthly parking passes, including to the dispensaries staff. Since CRDA believes the use of the garage is prohibited by federal law, CRDA will not be issuing value cards for patrons of the Applicant as reported in his application. Lastly, the Applicant's hours of operation do not correspond to the hours of operation of the Garage. The Garage will be closed to the public for large block of time during the Applicant's proposed hours of operation. I would submit that the Applicant has failed to file a proper parking plan for evaluation.

Garbage – Another item that the Applicant fails to address is a trash storage and a removal plan. Due to the limited size of the parcel, the Applicant does not have the means to store trash on the exterior of the premises. Section 3.3.10 of the Hartford Zoning Regulations specifically lists "waste disposal plans" as a possible item for consideration.

Sidewalks – The Applicant has provided that it will queue overflow visitors on the sidewalk on Columbus Boulevard. The area identified in the Application is under the custody and control of CRDA; we are responsible for snow removal, maintenance and repair, as well as the insuring of the identified sidewalks. The sidewalk's use is restricted from the queueing and loitering of visitors. Therefore, the Applicants has not identified an acceptable queueing location.

Egress – As Mr. Ashworth addressed in his report, this is a non-conforming lot. One of the items that the Applicant has not addressed is the existence of only one means of egress to the front of his building. The Applicant does not have an easement across the CRDA property required to use the remaining side door to the building to access the sidewalk. Furthermore, CRDA will be returning the patio and pathway to its original use, that is, a grassed embankment to support its various underground infrastructure.

CRDA has signed various agreements that require us to oppose the placement of a headshop/cannabis retail shop at Adriaen’s Landing and we will take all steps necessary to comply with these agreements. CRDA does not oppose cannabis legalization or the placement of dispensaries in Hartford; however, we cannot support its approval at Adriaen’s Landing.

Connecticut General Statutes § 32-606(e) requires all state and municipal agencies, departments, boards, and commissions to cooperate with CRDA in carrying out its purposes and powers. Accordingly, I am respectfully asking this municipal commission to deny the application presented before you tonight.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Anthony L. Lazzaro Jr. in blue ink.

Anthony L. Lazzaro Jr
Deputy Director & Legal Counsel



The HB Nitkin Group

Real Estate Investment, Development and Management

Via Electronic Mail

June 14, 2022

City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Commission
c/o Aimee Chambers, AICP
Planning Director
City of Hartford
260 Constitution Plaza – 1st Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
Aimee.Chambers@Hartford.gov

Re: Special Permit Application for 89 Arch Street

Dear Commissioners:

I represent the developer and owner of the Front Street District, The HB Nitkin Group, and am writing you to voice my company's opposition to the proposed use at 89 Arch Street. The Front Street District is located across from and adjacent to 89 Arch Street. HB Nitkin has worked with the Capitol Region Development Authority over the past 17 years to build and operate multiple buildings that include restaurant, retail, entertainment, residential and university uses in five buildings.

In all of our agreements with CRDA to develop the project, we are prohibited from leasing to certain types of tenant uses that would be considered inconsistent with the goals of the master plan for Adriaen's Landing, of which Front Street and 89 Arch Street are a part. Included in those uses are head shops and dispensaries. Such uses, along with gun shops, pawn shops, strip clubs were considered inconsistent with the goal of the district in creating a family-friendly area for visitors to the CT Convention Center, CT Science Center, UConn Hartford as well as its residents.

To now allow a use that CRDA has expressly prohibited would contradict what has occurred to date in the district and negatively impact visitors and potential renters perception of the district as safe and family-friendly. Please do not approve this special permit application.

Thank you.

Peter J. Christian, Esq., AICP

Managing Director
The HB Nitkin Group

Paul Ashworth

From: Hartford Planning Division
Sent: Thursday, June 16, 2022 9:04 AM
To: Paul Ashworth; Chambers, Aimee
Subject: FW: Dispensary Support

From: BLM860 <blacklivesmatter860@protonmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 15, 2022 7:23 PM
To: Hartford Planning Division <oneplan@hartford.gov>
Subject: Dispensary Support

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We are writing in support of the black owned dispensary on Arch Street.

As nightlife continues to dwindle in Hartford, one of our few saving graces is the strong art community in our downtown area. It goes without saying that music, art and cannabis go hand in hand and a dispensary would compliment the existing establishments already in the area. Not to sound as if we are stereotyping but many musicians and painters already smoke cannabis.

We would hope that the CDRA focuses more on the XL center rather than killing opportunities for Hartford to become the "one stop shop" in the area.

We would hope that input from constituents would weigh in more then input from outside agencies. It's time to revitalize Hartford and we are excited to see the possibilities that will come from this.

Respectfully,
BLM860
Ivelisse Correa- 45 Crown Street Hartford
Richard "King" Oretade- 445 Garden Street Hartford
Asaad Jackson- 45 East Street Hartford
Jamil Jackson- 45 East Street Hartford
Tre Brown- New Britain CT

Sent from Proton Mail for iOS

Paul Ashworth

From: Hartford Planning Division
Sent: Thursday, June 16, 2022 9:21 AM
To: Paul Ashworth; Chambers, Aimee
Subject: FW: Marijuana dispensary on Arch Street - Letter in Support

From: Anthony Cherolis <acherolis@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 16, 2022 9:09 AM
To: Hartford Planning Division <oneplan@hartford.gov>
Subject: Marijuana dispensary on Arch Street - Letter in Support

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City of Hartford Planning & Zoning Friends,

I couldn't think of a much better fit than a dispensary located right next door to the Arch Street Tavern jam band music venue. That location is also surrounded by plentiful paid parking opportunities in the adjacent garages.

CRDA shouldn't be standing in the way of this thoughtful development and storefront filling opportunity. They seem disconnected from the subject matter and truthfully don't have a strong development and population growth resume. City of Hartford was the only city/large town in CT to lose population between 2010 and 2020. Seriously, even Waterbury, CT gained population. Somehow, City of Hartford bucked the national trend of urban population growth. It almost seems intentional.

With so many long empty and struggling storefronts in their Front Street zone, why not welcome something like this that brings more people to the district, paying taxes, paying for parking, and getting a bite to eat - or going to see a movie or show? The dispensary is also walking distance from Hartford's Main Street bus hub, an important consideration as ~30% of our city's households don't own a car.

Another consideration is that convenient, legal and regulated dispensaries are critical to increasing local employment in this new industry (now tax paying) and reducing the need for city residents to buy and sell marijuana illegally, from uncontrolled and sometimes dangerous sources. This is only a sliver of the illegal drug trade with related turf struggles and violence, but it is a step in the right direction to legalize, regulate, tax, and treat as a much more effective approach to controlled substances, public health, and public safety.

Please help CRDA understand that a dispensary is a good fit for that empty storefront and for the City of Hartford. Good luck!

--

Godspeed and keep being awesome,

Tony Cherolis
37 Alden Street, Unit H
Hartford, CT 06114
Cell: 860-204-2704

Paul Ashworth

From: Hartford Planning Division
Sent: Tuesday, June 21, 2022 11:43 AM
To: Paul Ashworth
Subject: FW: Arch st. Dispensary location

From: tricia g <2triciag@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 17, 2022 9:23 PM
To: Hartford Planning Division <oneplan@hartford.gov>
Subject: Arch st. Dispensary location

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Hi!

I hope you're doing well. I'm a Hartford resident and homeowner, and I'm writing to express my support for the cannabis dispensary on arch street. Hartford will benefit from a diverse small business community, and from new tax revenue. While the suburbs scream NIMBY, Hartford can continue its progressive and inclusive policies and take advantage of a new and fast-growing industry.

What other opportunities are there to speak in support of this opportunity?

Thank you,

Tricia

Paul Ashworth

From: Hartford Planning Division
Sent: Tuesday, June 28, 2022 1:06 PM
To: Paul Ashworth
Subject: FW: 89 Arch St. - Public Comment

From: Jane Tkach <jane.tkach@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 28, 2022 11:30 AM
To: Hartford Planning Division <oneplan@hartford.gov>
Subject: 89 Arch St. - Public Comment

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Good Morning,

I am in support of a cannabis dispensary at 89 Arch St. Having a cannabis dispensary in Hartford will provide and encourage safe and responsible cannabis use. There is no existing evidence presently that indicates existing cannabis facilities are in any way associated with increased criminality across the country. The surrounding businesses on Arch St and Front St are focused on adult recreational consumption (bars, restaurants serving alcohol), so a cannabis dispensary is not a far stretch from the businesses already operating there.

The presentation from the business owner in the last public meeting held showed their existing branding / business signs, which do not explicitly say WEED, DRUGS, or anything nefarious to cause concern for children. If there are questions asked by children who might be in the area, it would be a great teaching opportunity for adults to have a discussion with the children as to what cannabis is and responsible cannabis use, as they probably have had or will have with them about alcohol.

This cannabis dispensary will bring more people into Hartford, and those people will patron Hartford businesses in return. It is time we cease this negative perception of cannabis use, and a dispensary in Hartford is a great place to start.

Thank you,
Jane Tkach

Court of Common Council

CITY OF HARTFORD
550 MAIN STREET
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06103



The Office of
Councilman James B. Sanchez

Maly D. Rosado, Council President
Thomas J. Clarke II, Majority Leader
Marilyn E. Rossetti, Assistant Majority Leader
John Q. Gale, Councilman
Shirley Surgeon, Councilwoman

Tiana Hercules, Councilwoman
Nick Lebrón, Councilman
Joshua Michtom, Councilman
James Sánchez, Councilman

June 28th, 2022

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my opposition for a proposed dispensary at the corner of Arch St. and Columbus Blvd. My concern should not be taken as an opposition to the legalization of cannabis, my concern is geared more towards the area that the Recreational Cannabis would be located. While this seems like a good location, I don't think that it is in the best interest of the city to allow a cannabis recreational dispensary in the proposed area. The goal of the Front Street District is creating a family-oriented area for visitors to the Science Center and CT Convention Center as well as the UConn Hartford Campus. The Convention center host many family-oriented events, as well as several other large various entertainments that brings a great deal of families with their children to Hartford with many underage attendees. Having a cannabis recreational dispensary directly across the street would greatly impact these events and give a negative perception that may undermine tourism and deter visitors to other events outside of Hartford.

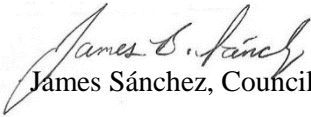
As a Councilman for the city of Hartford, I am a voice for the needs of the community and the feedback they provide.

As Chair of Planning Economic Development and Housing Committee and co-chair of the Quality of Life Public Safety Committee, safety for the visitors, residents and business owners in the area is my priority to address the proper location for such an establishment.

Please consider a different location for the dispensary. Perhaps in the North Meadows area near The Xfinity Center, where there is already an existing Medical Cannabis Dispensary which would most likely prove to be a better location.

For more information, feel free to inquire anytime by email at James.Sanchez@hartford.gov or contact my office at (860) 757-9676.

Sincerely,


James Sánchez, Councilman

Court of Common Council



CITY OF
HARTFORD
550 MAIN STREET
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06103

Maly D. Rosado, Council President
Thomas J. Clarke II, Majority Leader
Marilyn E. Rossetti, Assistant Majority Leader
John Q. Gale, Councilman

Tiana Hercules, Councilwoman
Nick Lebron, Councilman
Joshua Michtom, Councilman
James Sánchez, Councilman
Shirley Surgeon, Councilwoman

Noel F. McGregor, Jr, Town and City Clerk

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to you in support of the two applications requesting permits to operate recreational marijuana dispensaries in Hartford on 89 Arch Street and 1396 Park Street. Thanks to your diligent work, the city now has a set of rules and regulations which have determined the best locations where these new businesses will be able to operate. The plan has outlined not only areas best suited for recreational marijuana dispensaries in Hartford, but takes into consideration the overarching plan to help revitalize the city through creating new businesses; particularly in areas of growing commerce and sections of the city where development will help stimulate the local economy.

There is an unfortunate history of disproportionately criminalizing Black and Latinx people for the usage of cannabis. According to research analyzing data from 2018, the ACLU stated, ... "In every state and in over 95% of counties with more than 30,000 people in which at least 1% of the residents are Black, Black people are arrested at higher rates than white people for marijuana possession." Furthermore, research from the ACLU states that in 2018, Connecticut ranked number #19 out of 50 in terms of racial disparities between individuals who are Black and white when it came to marijuana arrests." The Black arrest rate was 152.57 per 100,000 for individuals who are Black versus 37.91 per 100,000 for individuals who are white.

As recently as 2018, Connecticut ranked in the top half of states which disproportionately punished individuals of color for the non-violent offense of marijuana possession. Harsh punishments for minor infractions have fed into the prison industrial complex and caused many residents to not have

access to a variety of opportunities, which has stifled the economic development of the city. As elected officials, in the city of Hartford, we have an opportunity to support correcting a systemic injustice; a long history of disproportionately criminalizing people of color.


Currently, we have the opportunity to create more equitable opportunities for future generations. Hartford has the chance to be a leader in changing they way help contribute the economic development of the city, which we cherish. According to 2018 research from the ACLU stated that, ... “On average, states that legalized marijuana through taxation and regulation had lower rates of racial disparities in marijuana possession arrests (1.7x) than states where marijuana has not been legalized (3.2x) ...” Connecticut and Hartford are heading in the right direction of making our state and our city a more equitable place for our friends, family, and neighbors. While there are studies which indicate even after the legalization of marijuana there are still disparities in arrests of individuals who are non-white, through further decimalizing, we can continue to provide business opportunities for the residents of our city and turn a historical injustice into economic revitalization.

While there are fears that creating dispensaries in the city will lead to more crime, according to research from 2021 by the University of Hawaii analyzing data from the three largest cities in Washington state, “... Results show that dispensaries have no significant impact on the overall rate of local crime. Additionally, [they] provide evidence over a broad range of crime types to assess the effect on property, violent, and drug crime. [They] find no evidence of an overall increase or decrease in any aggregated crime type adjacent to dispensaries. However, robberies experience a small statistically significant rise around the lottery-winning dispensaries within a 100 meters radius.” Research analyzing dispensaries in Los Angeles published in 2017, from the Journal of Urban Economics, also states... “Empirical evidence to support any link (positive or negative) between marijuana dispensaries and crime is quite limited.” Therefore, we have the opportunity to start building opportunities for our residents instead of denying opportunities for job creation and the revitalizing downtown and disadvantage impact areas.


It is important for us to view the applications requesting permits to operate recreational marijuana dispensaries in Hartford on 89 Arch Street and 1396 Park Street not only an issue of equity and supporting local businesses and young entrepreneurs, but also as an opportunity to stimulate much need economic development. While dispensaries and the sale of recreational adult use marijuana is a new frontier, studies from markets which have had the legal sale marijuana for a number of years suggests there are no negative effects on a community. Therefore, we would like to welcome young entrepreneurs and businesses owners to our city.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank this commission along with others who have worked diligently to look at was in which we can spur economic development, address systemic inequality and create more equitable future for the residents for the city of Hartford.

Sincerely,



Majority Leader Thomas J. Clarke II



Councilwoman Shirley Surgeon