

COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL PERMITS
AUGUST 20, 2018 at 7:53 p.m.
WOBURN CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Voting members present: Chairman Richard Gately, Alderman Edward Tedesco, Alderman Mark Gaffney, Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen, and Alderman Joanne Campbell

Non-voting members present: Alderman Lindsay Higgins, Alderman Michael Anderson, President Richard Haggerty, and Alderman Michael Concannon

Also present: Woburn Police Chief Robert Ferullo

Sanctuary Medicinals Inc. for a special permit to allow for 1. A Medicinal Marijuana Treatment Center, and 2. Reduction in required parking at 130 Commerce Way: Appearing for the petitioner were Attorney Mark Salvati, 10 Cedar Street, Woburn, MA; Jason Sidman and Michael Allen, Sanctuary Medicinals Inc., 234 Taylor Street, Littleton MA. Attorney Salvati presented a copy of an email from Woburn Fire Lt. Keith Peary, Fire Prevention Officer, to Attorney Salvati, stating the following: “In reference to the plans for 130 Commerce Way, the proposed parking lot changes do not appear to limit our apparatus access. WFD is OK with this proposal, based on the plans you presented. Any questions, please contact Fire Prevention.” Motion made by Alderman Tedesco and seconded by Alderman Mercer-Bruen to receive and make part of the permanent record the aforementioned email from Lt. Peary, all in favor; 5-0. Chief Ferullo said he attended the Special Permits Committee meeting at the request of Attorney Salvati. Chief Ferullo said in the last 24 months there have been 19 motor vehicle crashes in the general area of 130 Commerce Way. He said the majority of the crashes are at the intersection of Commerce Way. He said there have been only 1-2 crashes involving vehicles going north on Presidential Way. He said there was a fatal accident in the area 7-8 years ago. Chairman Gately said his concern is vehicles going north on Presidential Way by cutting across two lanes of traffic. Chief Ferullo said the petitioner may need to post a sign. He said his bigger concern is drivers turning left toward Wilmington. He said the business is looking at 15 trips per day. He suggested drivers will take the path of least resistance to access the site. He suggested posting right turn only or do not enter signs. He said those restrictions will be hard to enforce, but the signs will definitely help cut down on traffic. Chairman Gately said there is a loading dock at the corner of the building and he thinks it will be difficult for a tractor-trailer to back into the loading dock. Attorney Salvati said the petitioner will be mostly using box trucks. Alderman Campbell asked about parking on the easterly side of the building. Attorney Salvati said his client considered no parking on the easterly side of the building, but he would prefer to reserve that side for employee parking and make it one way. He said his client can afford to lose one or two parking spaces, but not five. Alderman Concannon said it appears there is a lot of space near the loading dock that could be used for employee parking. Attorney Salvati said his client would certainly entertain that suggestion. Alderman Campbell said she is worried about pedestrian safety in the parking lot. Chief Ferullo said there will be a maximum of 3-4 cars per hour. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said the business will not attract customers like a Dunkin’ Donuts. Alderman Campbell reiterated she is concerned about parking, especially if the business in the

building grows. Attorney Salvati said his client will be allotted 20 parking spaces out of 36. Alderman Anderson suggested creating marked “safe zones” for pedestrians. Chief Ferullo suggested designating parking spaces for customers. Alderman Anderson suggested limiting trucking to certain hours. Attorney Salvati said he does not think there will be a problem with that. Alderman Higgins asked if any tractor-trailers deliver to the other business in the building. Alderman Anderson said he was referring to the other business in the building. President Haggerty said the parking requirement does concern him. He said the zoning ordinance requires 52 spaces and the petitioner is only providing 35. Attorney Salvati said the landlord runs the other business in the building and only has three employees. President Haggerty referenced a commercial building on Salem Street and said he does not want 130 Commerce Way to have similar parking and traffic problems. Attorney Salvati said if the other company in the Commerce Way building changes hands, his client would be back before the council. Alderman Concannon said he would like to see some sort of barrier. Chief Ferullo said the Woburn PD has become increasingly concerned with vape stores in the city. He said the location of the medical marijuana treatment center is such that kids will not ride their bicycles there, like they could to a vape store in Central Square or Woburn Center. He said the medical marijuana treatment center will have no impact on WPD’s operations. He said there will not be instances of kids trying to sneak in to buy weed. Alderman Anderson agreed the petition is not for a typical retail store, like a Target. Alderman Gaffney asked how the business is advertised. Alderman Anderson said there are very specific regulations with which the petitioner will have to comply. Attorney Salvati said there will be no signage on the Atlantic Avenue side of the building. He said there will be a sign that can be seen from Presidential Way. Mr. Sidman said the windows will have to be blacked out. Alderman Campbell said she continues to be concerned about parking and the notion the business will become really busy. She said she is worried people will travel to the site from New Hampshire. Mr. Sidman said the site will be the only business of its kind between New Hampshire and Somerville when it opens, but another dispensary is expected to open in Methuen. He said there currently is a dead zone that needs to be serviced. He said the Woburn site is a terrific location for his business. Attorney Salvati the business is designed to service clients within a 5-mile radius. Chairman Gately said he is concerned about how the business will fit in with the two new developments at Fitzgerald Tile and the Woburn Mall. Attorney Salvati said he has talked to the owners of those two properties who he said are in favor and would like to see the property cleaned up. He said the medical marijuana facility will not be a deterrent. He acknowledged there is a stigma to marijuana but added the business will be extremely regulated. President Haggerty said he does not take exception to the use, but his preference would be that it is located farther down Presidential Way. He said he thought the Fitzgerald Tile project would be a show place. He said medical marijuana uses are going to go somewhere. He reiterated he does not take exception to the use. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said it sounds like President Haggerty does take exception to the use. President Haggerty said he does not want to see a Dunkin’ Donuts or a gas station go in there. Alderman Concannon said this is the one section of the city where a medical marijuana facility is allowed. Alderman Mercer-Bruen said in her view, this is a pharmacy. She said the petitioner is not carrying opiates. She said it is not a head shop. President Haggerty said he does not want to see a McDonald’s go there. Attorney Salvati said there are very few lots where his client’s business can go. Alderman Anderson asked Mr. Sidman what type of trucks will make deliveries. Mr. Sidman said the trucks will be little. Alderman Campbell said she is still concerned about parking. Attorney Salvati said he will confer with the landlord and the Woburn Fire Dept. about reconfiguring the parking lot. Alderman Concannon suggested

the petitioner could come up with some different options for parking. Alderman Tedesco asked if there is a break in the island near Raytheon. Attorney Salvati said when he was there recently, the traffic patterns were working. Alderman Tedesco said the only time there is bad traffic is at 5 p.m. Chief Ferullo said the other use in the building was an orthopedic shoe store. Alderman Campbell said she would like to see a sidewalk. Attorney Salvati suggested a designated striped area for pedestrians. Alderman Campbell said she wants something that allows pedestrians to walk safely. Motion made by Alderman Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Alderman Tedesco to leave the matter in committee; approved, 5-0. Attorney Salvati asked when the next committee meeting will occur. Alderman Tedesco said the next committee meeting will likely be on September 10.

Motion made by Alderman Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Alderman Tedesco to adjourn, all in favor, 5-0. Chairman Gately adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Attest: _____
Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees