



Town of Brookline

CANNABIS MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Miriam Ashkenazy
Chair

Cannabis Mitigation Advisory Committee MINUTES – Thursday, September 9, 2021 12:00 – 1 pm

Attendees

Committee Members: Bruce Levin, Ana Otero, Amy Newell, Miriam Ashkenazy, and Danny Stone

Staff: Monique Baldwin, Dr. Lesley Craft

The CMAC public meeting was held virtually via Zoom and was recorded.

Monique Baldwin, Cannabis Licensing & Mitigation Coordinator, began the meeting with an overview of the agenda.

Dr. Lesley Craft, on behalf of the Health department, mentioned that Dr. Jett tendered his resignation last week. She will provide more updates regarding the Health department at a later date.

Erin Gallentine, Commissioner of Public Works, provided an update regarding support and services in the Brookline Village area in terms of litter and trash removal, graffiti, etc. She mentioned all the support being provided (traffic, parking and transportation) and her desire to get additional funding as part of the next fiscal year's budget.

Committee Member Amy Newell asked for clarity regarding the oversight and enforcement provided by DPW.

Ms. Gallentine stated uniformed park rangers patrolling in the parks which added a presence during the evenings and weekends specifically surrounding areas situated near marijuana retail dispensaries.

Ms. Baldwin displayed the previously approved budget from spring Town Meeting along with the priorities that CMAC voted. She noted it would be a great time think about new priorities for next year's budget and the process to determine CMACs priorities. She noted that each department receiving mitigation money should present what their funding requests are, what they were currently doing, etc.

Ms. Gallentine asked if they were discussing May Town Meeting or November.

Ms. Baldwin stated that there could be budget changes in November. However, she was talking about the spring.

Ms. Gallentine noted that DPW already provided a presentation for the current fiscal year and that there were services that were ranked highly by CMAC but were not funded the current budget cycle. She stated the Department will be coming back with the same requests.

Ms. Baldwin added that Melissa Goff, Deputy Town Administrator, and Justin Casanova-Davis, Assistant Town Administrator, make the final decision. Some considerations were that positions funded one year could potentially not be funded the next. They wanted to avoid a situation where someone was out of a job.

Chair Ashkenazy stated that the Town has two new establishments that will open which will increase mitigation funds.

Ms. Baldwin noted last the fiscal year, the money had not been able to accrue and fell to free cash. Ms. Baldwin explained that Melissa created stabilization funds so that funds could accrue. She added that if the Town is generating more funding than it needs, CMAC can do some forecasting further out than one year and use the money in more thoughtful ways that don't just address immediate concerns.

Ms. Ashkenazy asked what the racial equity line meant (outlined in the priorities spreadsheet).

Ms. Baldwin stated she wasn't the Coordinator at the time the committee discussed its priorities. However, she explained the Racial Equity Fund. She then promoted Committee Member Ana Otera who stated the previous committee wasn't sure if those were appropriate or an allowed use of the funds per the State.

Ms. Gallentine agreed. She noted public art and beautification was a request from the Committee to enhance places feeling clean, safe, and welcoming. Lighting was also discussed.

Chair Ashkenazy stated it might be an opportunity to come together with the Select Board's topic surrounding innovative pedestrian lighting. She stated lighting has a lot of public benefits.

Finally, Ms. Baldwin provided an overview of the Select Board's office updates. She mentioned that the Select Board is sponsoring a warrant article regarding an increase in retail licenses (2) subject to an equity policy that the Select Board voted on last week.

The Chair provided a more in-depth overview of the proposed warrant article.

Amy Newell asked what other cities and towns have done that has been successful to recruit and retain equity applicants.

Ms. Baldwin stated that some cities and towns have a technical team to help with site plan review. They find that equity applicant's applications generally need more time technically, as they might not have the resources to provide a complete and well done application. Ms. Baldwin stated that the Town has one point of contact who is an expert on marijuana and marijuana-related issues and can identify barriers to entry for that particular community (the Cannabis Coordinator). She stated that not enough communities have a point of contact.

Committee Member Danny Stone asked if there could be a study to determine the number of hours or time that would need to be spent so that the Committee could reserve another line item for a team of some sort to make sure that this is funded.

Ms. Baldwin stated the review process has to do with the Planning Department and site plan review and that she can look into what that looks like.

Committee Member Otero asked if that was an appropriate use of the funds via the State. Ms. Baldwin stated she can ask Town Counsel, and that another avenue could be utilizing the Racial Equity Fund to provide mentoring or support for these types of applicants.

Committee Member Levin asked if the proposed retail licenses would first come first served or if there would be a mechanism to determine which entity is the best applicant for the Town.

Ms. Baldwin stated the Town is working tightening the process. She added that Brookline residents will receive a higher priority as public opinion desired an applicant with a local presence.

The Chair also addressed legal ramifications regarding setting criteria.

There was further discussion regarding other communities and their success metrics.

Ms. Baldwin continued with her update, noting that the Delivery Operator and Courier Host Community Agreements were approved by the Select Board.

Committee Member Levin stated that the Couriers the Town has are delivery more and more product. He asked how many potential Delivery Operators had expressed interest in locating in Brookline.

Ms. Baldwin clarified that the Town does not have Host Community Agreements with the Couriers operating at NETA and Sanctuary. She also clarified that at this point the Town is not taking any requests for Host Community Agreements for delivery until AG approval.

Regarding the Committee's questions from the previous meeting, Ms. Baldwin stated that she had received answers from each Department and she will send it out via email.

The Committee discussed accommodating its schedule for Committee Member Otero.

Dr. Lesley Craft noted that there are two additional marijuana warrant articles; one regarding rounding down and another to create a study committee. In total there will be three marijuana docket issues.

There was further discussion regarding how the existing licenses would be affected with the regarding for rounding down.

Finally, Ms. Baldwin stated she would distribute all warrant articles once they have been filed.

Meeting adjourned.

CMAC meetings are usually on the first Thursday of every month at noon.

Website: <https://www.brooklinema.gov/1725/Cannabis-Mitigation-Advisory-Committee>