

Proposed Marijuana Retail Shop In Brookline Meets Community Opposition

Ascend Cannabis CEO Andrea Cabral Dodged Questions At Community Meeting

BROOKLINE, Oct. 25, 2018 -- More than 120 local residents and business owners turned out Thursday evening to oppose what would be one of the largest retail marijuana stores in the country. Ascend Cannabis CEO and former Suffolk County sheriff and public safety secretary Andrea Cabral failed to answer fundamental questions about her company's business and lacked transparency that concerned the crowd.

“You couldn’t find a worse place to put a marijuana shop,” said Paul Warren, a Brookline resident, father of two and spokesperson for the opposition. He cited one of the highest concentrations of K-12 children in the commonwealth and the transformation of a neighborhood commercial district into the Cannabis Corridor for Brookline and Boston. Limited parking is already under strain from Red Sox games and concerts. The store anticipates 80,000 customers in the first year, most of whom would travel from surrounding communities.

“This store is not something that’s going to serve people from the neighborhood,” said Aaron Mehta, local business owner of The Wine Press, which is two doors down from the proposed pot shop. “It’s going to take away from the residents’ ability to enjoy the neighborhood,” he said.

The small commercial district at St. Mary's is zoned to serve the neighborhood, not destination stores. The community resources would be at risk of buckling under the additional pressure from this proposed store, which would be in direct contradiction of the overall zoning scheme.

In a dramatic moment, Precinct One’s Town Meeting Member, Sean Lynn-Jones faced off with Cabral and asked her to withdraw Ascend’s application for location. She refused.

The proposed store would take over a former restaurant at 1032 Beacon Street in Brookline and at 6,200 square feet it would be the “Walmart of weed” according to Warren.

As the largest player in the neighborhood, Boston University announced at the meeting that it opposes the store, which would sit between its Charles River and new Fenway campus.

“As a federally funded institution, Boston University has an obligation to maintain a drug-free environment. The proposed location, with its close proximity to our academic campus and residential communities, is at odds with that obligation, and for that reason we oppose it.”

At the first of three community meetings hosted by the company, Cabral struggled to answer fundamental questions about her company’s business plans including who the target market was and how the proposed store could benefit the community. She also refused to share the memo of understanding that she has with the property owner. The crowd gathered at the event shouted, “Be transparent!”

At Thursday’s meeting, only the building’s landlord and the Ascend board were in favor of the store. Residents and business owners in attendance unanimously condemned the proposal.

Community members will hold additional opposition rallies at 5 pm on October 30 and Noon on November 1. The rallies will be followed by additional meetings hosted by Ascend at the proposed 1032 Beacon Street location.

Media Contacts

Paul Warren, resident and spokesperson

paulwarren@no1032pot.com

M 617-869-5430

Nick Barber, resident and media relations

nick.j.barber@gmail.com

M 908-507-6745

Recent Media Coverage

WCVB, *Brookline residents express outrage over pot shop proposal*

<http://bit.ly/WCVB-potshop>

Boston Herald, *Brookline pot plan not 'good fit' for area, opponents say*

<http://bit.ly/Herald-potshop>

Daily Free Press, *Brookline residents clash with marijuana retailers over potential opening of dispensary*

<http://bit.ly/freep-potshop>

Brookline Tab, *Brookline neighborhood rallies against proposed recreational marijuana shop*

<http://bit.ly/Tab-potshop>