

3/10/26

Council of Neighborhood Associations – March Meeting. Agenda:

Attendance:

Michael Dalton, Shawn Woodford, Michael Sanchez, Ellen Berger, Anthony Fiorenza, Martins Gaujenieks, Bob Kahn, Ken Kristal, Evelyn Santiago, Robert Santiago, Valerie Simmons, Matthew Cochardo

1. Cannabis Dispensaries - 101

Pres. Dalton introduced the guest speaker, Matthew Cochardo of Fluent Dispensary. Mr. Cochardo is a pharmacist and the medical director at the Fluent Cannabis dispensary on Mamaroneck Avenue. Matthew gave a detailed presentation about the cannabis industry in New York. He explained the difference between medical and recreational cannabis. Matthew described the regulatory compliance requirements applicable to all dispensaries. He explained that in New York State... the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) is the NYS government agency responsible for the safety & testing of all cannabis products for sale in NYS. The OCM is the government body responsible for regulating Cannabis marketplace in NYS. He explained that the OCM has now implemented “Metric”, which is an inventory tracking system which tags each cannabis seed with a bar code that allows the OCM, dispensaries and law enforcement to track all cannabis products for sale in NYS from “seed to sale”. Matthew discussed Fluent Cannabis's store operations on Mamaroneck Ave, including customer experience and product offerings.

Overview of the Marijuana Laws:

-Medical Cannabis:

- Legal Requirements
- types of marijuana
- Taxes
- Pharmacist for patient education

-Recreational Market:

- 21+ age
- Types of marijuana

-2025 Revenue Recap:

- \$1.5 Billion total adult-use retail sales
- \$95 Million Medical retail sale
- OCM & Law Enforcement closing illegal dispensaries

-Industry Opportunities and Challenges:

- Rapid Market Growth
- Opportunities in retail, delivery, cultivation, branding (lots of jobs)
- NY is one of the largest cannabis markets in the country

-Fluent Cannabis:

- Founded 2015
- Fluent Dispensary:
 - upon entry all customers present ID documenting they are over 21
 - 2nd ID check upon purchase
 - All products kept in a vault
 - Two ways to pay (cash, debit card)
 - Loyalty Program that has rewards for money spent
 - The sales tax on cannabis products is 13% (9% to the State, 1% to the County, 3% to the City, Town or Village)

Q & A:

Ellen Berger cited a Harvard Medical School study reporting that long term marijuana use resulted in memory loss and negative cognitive effects. She asked Matthew if he was aware of the study. Matthew responded by saying that consuming excessive amounts of anything that we put in our bodies will have a negative effect on our bodies.... whether that is alcohol, food or cannabis. Matthew explained that his guidance to Fluent clients is “use the product in moderation...too much of anything is bad”. In NYS there is a daily limit on how much an individual can purchase for both recreational and medical cannabis.

Ken Kristal asked questions about per-capita number of dispensaries that can open in an area, and how many customers are going to dispensaries. Matthew expects the licensing of new dispensaries will slow down over the next few years and you will see less dispensaries. He reported that Fluent’s same store sales have declined over the past several years.... most likely because of saturation, less travel, and promotions (competition).

Michael Dalton asked Matthew to explain the role of the OCM in NYS. Matthew explained that the OCM (Office of Cannabis Management)-controls all matters related to the growth, distribution, and sale of cannabis products in NYS. Applying for a license to operate a cannabis dispensary can take up to a year for approval.

Bob Friscia inquired whether customers are allowed to use cannabis inside the stores or on the property. Matthew said that using cannabis products is prohibited on the dispensary premises. Bob expressed concerns about the presence of cannabis shops along Mamaroneck Avenue, citing issues with odor and potential deterrence of families and businesses.

Shawn Woodford described how the Strain Dispensary in the Rosedale neighborhood had posted signage that was over 3 feet tall on the front of its building. He asked, “aren’t there guidelines and laws limiting signage at dispensaries?” Matt explained that there are many restrictions on signage a dispensary can display. It is up to the OCM to make dispensaries follow the signage laws and the dispensaries must be careful how they advertise.

Evelyn Santiago asked why does White Plains have so many cannabis dispensaries? Matthew explained that dispensary locations are approved by the OCM and the local municipality...that led to a discussion about the role of the Mayor, the City and the OCM in how many dispensaries can exist in any given area. Also discussed why certain businesses get expedited approval.

Ellen Berger asked if there were health warnings on the products? Are people aware of cognitive issues that might be a side effect? Matt said yes, and that he recommends the lowest dose for anyone that is starting for the first time. Michael Dalton showed a cannabis gummies product package. The product package does have a health warning and a QR code allowing the product package to be tracked. Matthew said that Fluent does provide health & safety information to its customers, but people need to do their own research as well.

Mike Sanchez asked how the marijuana is tracked. Matthew explained that each product has a barcode and can be tracked to the specific dispensary and grower.

Valerie Simmons stated that she felt that cannabis dispensaries change the culture of a city. Her concern was similar to Bob Frisca’s question/comment. She asked Matthew to explain the difference between CBD and THC. CBD has more medical use and THC products are more recreational, though THC does have some medicinal use.

Howard Waldman asked if he was driving in his car after just purchasing a cannabis product at the Fluent Dispensary...and the cannabis product was on the passenger front seat of his car...and a police officer pulled him over for some reason and the officer found the cannabis product in his car... could he be arrested? Matthew replied that he would not be arrested in NY for simply owning the cannabis product that he legally purchased at a dispensary. That said...if you appeared to be “impaired” the officer can ask you to perform a sobriety test...and if you failed that test you could be arrested for driving under the influence. Cannabis consumption is not legal at the Federal level. Matthew recommended not taking cannabis products on a plane when traveling domestically or abroad.

Evelyn Santiago asked if there is a physical saturation point when consuming cannabis products? Matthew did not have an answer. She asked if there is metric which measures how much THC is too much and defines when you are impaired.... like the “blood alcohol level” that is used to decide if someone has consumed too much alcohol to be driving a vehicle? The answer is “No.” Police would have to conduct a sobriety exam if there is suspicion that a vehicle operator is under the influence.

Mr. Cochardo concluded his presentation and Q&A at 8:15. President Dalton thanked Matthew Cochardo for being the CNA’s guest speaker.

2. CNA voted to approve funding a \$300 Scholarship for a White Plains High School Student at the February meeting.

Pres. Dalton suggested that a small committee of CNA members be formed to review the scholarship candidates provided by the WP High School and then recommend one of the candidates to be the recipient of the scholarship. M. Dalton asked the attending CNA members for 3 volunteers to serve on the selection committee.

Mike Sanchez, Anthony Fiorenza & Shawn Woodford volunteered to serve on the selection committee.

M. Dalton will send the candidate information supplied by the WP High School to the selection committee.

3. CNA Website

a. There have been no changes made to the website at this time.

b. MD has asked Amy Geiger (High School Community Service Coordinator) to recruit a student to help manage, maintain, and update the CNA website.

-Amy Geiger is going to get back to us in 1-2 weeks with recommendations.

4. The CNA voted to approve increasing the member dues from \$25 to \$50 for 2026. Please mail your Association’s 2026 dues payment to:

a. Tom Osbeck 48 Rockledge Ave White Plains, NY 10601

5. St. Patrick's Day Parade – Noon to 1pm

a. What CNA members plan to march in the Parade this coming Saturday?

M. Dalton, S. Woodford, B. Kahn & M. Lalloo

b. 8 Students from the High School community service program have signed up to march with the CNA.

M. Dalton will provide anyone who walks in the parade with a baseball cap embroidered with a shamrock.

6. Downtown Revitalization Projects – Train Station Clocktower

a. Requests for proposals and ideas to reimagine the clock tower at the Train Station.

-Howard gave us a description of what he would like to see in terms of its revitalization.

- The city is seeking ideas for the Clock Tower redesign by March 18th. Howard has been championing this project.

b. Flyer from the City will be distributed by M. Dalton.

7. April Meeting

a. Galleria Project Update

i. Capelli Organization

- Plans to invite Capelli Organization to discuss the White Plains One development project in a future meeting.

ii. Planning Dept

b. New Cultural Institution in White Plains

i. LMHA – the Living Museum of History & Art

8. May Meeting

a. Board of Education

i. School Budget Presentation

b. Mayor's office Report on Parking Garages

i. Private Parking facilities update – Building Dept ii. Public Parking facilities update – Parking & DPW Dept's

Pres. Dalton thanked all the attendees...and closed the meeting at 9:02pm.