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**TOWN OF CHESTER
CANNABIS CONTROL BOARD MEETING
April 30, 2024, Minutes**

Board Members Present: Arianna Knapp, Barre Pinske, and Tom Diak at Town Hall; and Charles Baird via Zoom. Absent: Reisa Alexander.

Staff Present: Julie Hance, Town Manager, at Town Hall; and Susan Bailey, Recording Secretary, via Zoom.

Visitors Present: Scott Blair at Town Hall.

Call to Order

Arianna Knapp called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and thanked everyone for attending and noted it was their first gathering since last year.

Agenda Item 1, Approve minutes of August 10, 2023, LCCC Meeting

Barre moved and Tom seconded a motion to accept the August 10th minutes. There were no changes. A vote was taken, and the minutes were approved as written.

Agenda Item 2, Old Business

Arianna said a couple of interesting developments had taken place since they last met. She said they had closed any future applications for tiers 4 and 5 cultivators. They are the largest cultivation groups with 10,000 and 20,000 square foot canopies. The reason they were doing it was so there wasn't over production, and they could continue to support the smaller businesses and growers. The eight larger tier cultivators who have been licensed will continue to operate but they have closed level 4 and 5 to keep the maximum quantity that can be cultivated in a season in Vermont to match what is being bought and consumed. They have not indicated when they will reopen them. Barre asked if they allowed it to be imported from other states and Arianna said everything sold in Vermont must be grown in Vermont. Barre thought they would open it up if someone went out of business or there was more demand and Arianna agreed. Arianna said many people said years ago that it would be like the market for Vermont craft beer where you're willing to pay more because it's better. They are encouraging the philosophy to support small growers. Today the federal government announced via a press release said they are considering moving marijuana from Class 1 to Class 3, which has been high on the list for many people for years. That move for the people in the cannabis business indicated an appetite to improve the banking situation for those people in the industry and removing massive restrictions. Arianna said there were 75 licensed retail establishments listed with Burlington hosting the most. Chester has 1 retail cannabis establishment. Most towns in Vermont that are opting in have 1 or 2. They are tracking density at the CCB and whether they are doing anything about it. They are publishing it so people who are considering entering the business are aware of the competition. Arianna said the fears of 18 months ago about taking over the state had not been realized. Tom asked if there had been any inquiries in Chester. Arianna said this evening they would consider the only two applications that have come in since

1 August 10, 2023. Arianna said they let them know when an application has been submitted for the
2 town. The email only went to Arianna and Julie and when they received it, they wondered why
3 they needed to meet because it wasn't for retail. Arianna discovered if a local cannabis commission
4 exists, any application for the municipality must be reviewed by the local commission. The
5 commission has no power over the application unless something in it is a violation of a zoning
6 ordinance. The only information they have about the application is the address. Arianna said it was
7 still a rubber stamp and even more so than when the commission was formed.
8

9 Arianna asked if there was any further old business and there was none.
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11 **Agenda Item 3, Update on Cannabis Control**

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13 Arianna had just incorporated it into old business.
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15 **Agenda Item 4, Review Manufacturing Application for Down to the Roots**

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17 Arianna said they had a manufacturing application for Down To The Roots on Pineview Drive and
18 is the current retail cannabis establishment and are applying to add manufacturing on-site at the
19 same facility. She noted Scott Blair, proprietor of the business, was present. Arianna reached out
20 to the Chief of Police and the Zoning Administrator to officially ask if there had been any concerns,
21 complaints, or issues with the address or the business operating there. Both said there had been
22 none. In reviewing the application and the limited information it provides, there was nothing of
23 concern that it would violate any ordinances. Arianna said there was nothing for them to vote on,
24 only that it had been considered in the meeting. They could simply say they had reviewed it and
25 had no concerns. Before she made the statement, she asked Scott what they were looking to do
26 with the license. Scott said the company is under the parent company of Goldmill Group and it
27 would allow them to do infused pre-rolls and edibles and make them on-site and allow them to sell
28 them in-house and lower the cost and make them available to other dispensaries so they can
29 wholesale them in Chester and partner with local farms and can sell them to any dispensary in
30 Vermont. Arianna remembered from the tour she took that they had anticipated manufacturing, so
31 the building was already laid out for it. Scott said they had the fire and safety inspection and
32 received a conditional use. Arianna asked if anyone had concerns. Barre asked if they tested the
33 potency so there was consistency. Scott said they send it out to state approved labs for testing
34 before it's put on the market. Scott said it was a certain amount per batch that must be tested.
35 Arianna said it was robust and knew there was discussion about lab shopping and the CCB has
36 been cracking down on labs that were lenient. The CCB has been doing enforcement and those
37 labs are on the website. Arianna then apologized for going off the agenda. Scott added that their
38 business would provide more opportunities for employment. Arianna said she should have said
39 during old business that Down To The Roots in Chester had only been open since last year and
40 had their first 420 which is a big day for the cannabis industry and they had over 700 folks come
41 into Chester with no issues or consumption on site and it provided a great business opportunity
42 and brought business into Chester. It was a new industry and the commission wanted to celebrate
43 the fact that the folks there were doing well.
44

45 Arianna concluded the Local Cannabis Control Commission had no concerns about the application
46 from Goldmill at Pineview in Chester and was the official statement that would appear in the

1 minutes and be submitted to the state.

2
3 **Agenda Item 5, Renewal Application for Ferngully**
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5 Arianna said they had a renewal application for Ferngully Farm located on Route 11 and had been
6 operating for a year. Arianna didn't know much about their operation but said they were licensed
7 a year ago and this was their renewal. Their address has had no issues with the police or zoning.
8 Arianna saw no concerns with renewing the Ferngully application or at least allowing the CCB to
9 renew it. She has not met them but at this point, they follow all the rules. Barre asked where they
10 were located, and Arianna said it was 1824 Route 11 East. Julie said it was the old nursery and
11 greenhouse. Barre didn't think it looked like much was going on there and Arianna said they were
12 Tier II so there wouldn't be a lot of activity. Arianna said around 64 people had rescinded their
13 licenses in the year Vermont has given licenses, many people have decided to say never mind.
14 Polling has indicated that it has been for personal reasons or that banking is too difficult. Arianna
15 said that could change because of movement on the federal side. Barre asked if banking being too
16 difficult meant loans, or they had to keep cash. Arianna said you couldn't operate across federal
17 lines or use a federally insured bank and limited the business owner to what banks they could use.
18 She added that the press release from today could mean they were going to shift that. Barre
19 mentioned that in Colorado, it was cash. Arianna thought there were people still choosing to
20 operate that way. Scott said they found a banking partner in the cannabis industry.

21
22 Arianna asked if there were any concerns with the Montpelier Cannabis Control Commission
23 moving forward with Ferngully's Tier II manufacturing and there were none, so Chester had no
24 concerns.

25
26 **Agenda Item 6, Citizens' Comments**
27

28 Scott said they are thankful for the community they're in and a lot of their customers are cancer
29 patients who travel to Dartmouth daily or Burlington and have stopped in Chester where they enjoy
30 food and speak well of their experience in Chester. Scott said they have a close relationship with
31 their farms, and some even have exclusive deals for their flowers because they're such a small
32 grow. Scott was happy to announce, and the farmer had given him permission to do so, that they
33 have requests for the flower in-house. People travel from Burlington to Chester because they can't
34 find it elsewhere. Arianna congratulated him. Scott said it was nice that other businesses around
35 them were able to piggyback off each other's customers. Arianna said it was a lovely business to
36 have in town.

37
38 **Agenda Item 7, New Business/Next Agenda**
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40 Arianna announced that Reisa Alexander had submitted her resignation. Arianna put her
41 Selectboard hat on and suggested dropping from 5 members to 3 and said she would reach back
42 out to them. She would email the commission members before they moved forward on anything.
43 If they don't do that, the Selectboard will advertise for a new member. Arianna thanked them for
44 continuing to serve.

45
46 Last time they talked about meeting if an application came up. She suggested two meetings per

1 year, and they would know if there was something out there, they needed to address and push it
2 towards two meeting dates. She asked the other members how they felt about having two meetings
3 on the calendar and calling another one, if needed. Barre asked if they needed to reorganize
4 annually. Julie said they were, and she had forgotten. She suggested they meet in April or May
5 and have another meeting in the Fall. Barre questioned the number of members. Arianna said they
6 had 5 members and they needed to invite another member or drop to 3 members. There couldn't
7 be 4 because it was an even number and settling ties would be impossible. Barre pointed out that
8 with three members, it would be difficult to have a quorum. Arianna asked if they should have 5
9 members. Tom didn't see why they would need to go to five. If they had 3 members, 2 would be
10 a quorum which would mean 2 members could never discuss anything cannabis related. They
11 decided to consider it and email Arianna their thoughts. Barre said scaling down would allow him
12 to step away.

13
14 Arianna said the next agenda would be establishing two meetings, reorganizing, and likely
15 confirming they would stick with 5 members. Arianna asked if anyone wanted to add anything.
16 Charles wanted to piggyback off Barre's comments about getting involved and said it was a
17 gateway commission. Arianna agreed and said it was her gateway.

18
19 **Agenda Item 8, Adjourn**
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21 Charles moved and Tom seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed
22 unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.