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James Freas, AICP  
Director

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 16, 2021

**To:** Select Board

**FROM:** James Freas, Director of Community & Economic Development  
Marijuana Establishments Staff Review Group

**RE:** Supplemental Retail Marijuana Recommendations and Ranking

**Meeting Date:** April 21, 2021

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The following memo provides the second round of the Staff Review Group (Review Group) recommendations and respondent ranking based on supplemental information submitted relative to the Adult-Use Marijuana Establishments Request for Information (RFI) for Retail Marijuana establishments. The RFI directs the Review Group to offer recommendations as to which respondent(s) meet the minimum criteria to be recommended to the Select Board for negotiation of a Host Community Agreement. The Select Board makes the final decision on the companies.

### **Review Group Process**

The Select Board established the review process for potential marijuana establishments in Natick in the Marijuana Establishment RFI. For adult-use retail establishments, the deadline for submission was June 6, 2020. The Review Working Group completed its work and submitted its recommendations to the Select Board on October 14, 2020. The process established by the Select Board in the RFI allows the Select Board to accept supplemental submission materials and presentations from respondents to help inform the Board's decision making process. The Select Board approved a supplemental submission process and requested materials on February 10, 2021 with a submission deadline of March 31, 2021.

Following community meetings by the retail companies done in April, the Review Group met to begin a detailed review of the submitted supplemental materials. Once again, the Review Group relied on the RFI criteria as well as reviewing the previously submitted materials and Review Group rankings. The Review Group is providing below their resulting recommendations and ranking.

## Recommendations

The RFI directs the Review Group to recommend, “whether a Respondent has met the minimum criteria to be recommended to the Board for negotiation of a Host Community Agreement. The Select Board requested supplemental materials from the top ranked companies of the first round of review.

In making its recommendations, the Review Group considered the experience and quality of each company, their proposed location, and the benefits they offered to the Town. Consistently, the experience and quality of the company, as represented by their direct experience operating retail marijuana stores among other factors, rose to the top as an important consideration for the review group such that this score was given an extra 50% weighting. From the Review Group’s perspective, many of the Towns objectives and concerns with retail marijuana would be best addressed with a company that understands first-hand the challenges of operating such a facility as well as a company that would be responsive to working with the Town when or if an issue arose.

## Complete Rankings

Retail Establishment	Address	Oct 2020 Rank	Oct 2020 Score	Scoring			Apr 2021 Rank	Apr 2021 Score	Scoring		
				XP & Quality*	Loc.	Town Goals			XP & Quality*	Loc.	Town Goals
Cypress Tree	321 Speen	1	30.5	7	10	10	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
C3 Industries	42 Worcester	2	30	8	8	10	1	31.5	9	8	10
Revolutionary Clinics	6 Worcester	3	28	8	6	10	3	28	8	6	10
Justice Grown	95 Worcester	4	24	8	6	6	5	24	8	6	6
ReLeaf Alternatives	291 Worcester	5	23	4	8	9	2	29.5	6	10	10
Phytotherapy (w/ Rev Clinics)	45-61 Worcester	6	20.5	5	8	5	4	28.5	7	8	10

The review criteria presented by the Natick Adult Use Marijuana Establishments RFI have been placed into three categories – 1. Experience and Quality of the Company (weighted at x 1.5); 2. Suitability of the Location; and 3. Consistency with Town policies and goals. The scoring uses a 1 to 10 scale, with 10 being the higher score.

Most scoring remained the same, with some notable changes. Releaf added new staff to their team and Phytotherapy partnered with the experienced team at Revolutionary Clinics and so both companies received higher scores for the Experience and Quality rating. In addition, the

Review Group reconsidered its rating of C3 in this category and decided to add a point in recognition of the experience, and potential value to Natick, that comes with a multi-state operator. The locations are all the same so the scores in the Location category remained the same with the exception of the Releaf location, which the review group credited for changes in their design that addressed concerns raised in the first review. All of the proposals now rate as a 10 in terms of the Consistency with Town Goals category. Note, Justice Grown did not submit new materials so the Review Group carried forward their previous scores in all categories.

### **Next Steps**

The Select Board has the responsibility of selecting one more respondent with which to open negotiations of a Host Community Agreement. Consistent with the process in each of the previously negotiated HCAs, the Select Board would vote to authorize the Town Administrator to establish a negotiating team for each selected retail marijuana establishment. The Select Board would also vote to identify one member of the Board to be a member of a team. A negotiating team would then bring draft Host Community Agreements to the Select Board for review and approval.

The Select Board may choose to invite one or more of the respondents that submitted supplemental materials to present before the Board in order to have more information on which to base their decision.

Upon completion and execution of a Host Community Agreement, each company will need to obtain a special permit from the Planning Board per the Natick Zoning Bylaw. The Planning Board's review process focuses on the land use issues typical of special permit review, including traffic, landscaping, lighting, and parking. In addition, this special permit process reviews the project details for such items as the security plans, energy use, and sustainability. The special permit process will allow for additional public comment to inform the Planning Board's decision on whether to grant a special permit or on what conditions to place on the project in order to mitigate potential impacts.