

# The Hyde Park Bulletin

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## Hyde Park residents express deep concerns over new cannabis shop

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Staff Reporter

Representatives from Sugarloaf Boston Cannabis presented on Wednesday, Sept. 8, their plan for a new marijuana dispensary at 1174 River St. in Hyde Park during a virtual community outreach meeting where over a dozen local residents and business leaders expressed concerns about the company's proposed plan.

While the conversation was primarily civil and professional, there were times at which the discussion became tense and contentious, particularly when the topics of parking, security and a nearby daycare program were part of the exchange.

"I just want to say that this proposal is crazy," said one attendee who said they lived on Arlington Street in Hyde Park. "It should not be approved."

Jeff Drago, an attorney representing the company, led participants through a 20-minute presentation that highlighted the store's configuration, safety measures and the organization's plans to assist with community philanthropy and neighborhood improvement efforts.

"Sugarloaf Boston wants to be active in the community with boards of trade, Main Streets, and local charities," Drago said. "We are looking for recommendations for how we can be an active partner."

Drago shared how the operation will be appointment-only for the first month, that additional security details will be in place and that there will be no signage indicating that a cannabis shop is in business. There will be indoor and outdoor cameras, all visitors to the building must be over 21 years old and license scanners will be used to ensure the person entering the building matches the photo on the government-issued identification. There will even be a vault onsite to protect the company's products and cash from theft.

Despite Drago's attempt to reassure attendees that many

### Child safety and traffic concerns dominate the discussion

of the anxieties that residents have "just don't happen" at other Boston marijuana dispensaries, many appeared to remain skeptical and worried, particularly regarding the possible impact on youth and traffic.

Maureen Myers, an employee at a Little Voices Early Education and Care at 1179 River St., expressed concern that Sugarloaf's proposed location would violate a law requiring any cannabis store to be over 500 feet away from a school; Drago disagreed, noting that Little Voices is a childcare center and not officially a school. Although some attendees did acknowledge that Drago may be correct, it was more the spirit of the law that was in question, especially since there is also a YMCA and a playground nearby.

"I see little kids getting dropped off for kindergarten at the Muni every morning," said Mark McKinnon, senior vice president at Commonwealth Cooperative Bank, located at 1172 River St. "I know you are saying the letter of the law says [Little Voices Early Education and Care] is not technically a kindergarten. That's just legal talk."

With respect to traffic, a good portion of the meeting was devoted to the problems

that delivery trucks, patrons and Sugarloaf workers could add to what many described as an already congested area. Parking concerns were also presented as were Sugarloaf's plans to mitigate any negative impact to the area by collaborating with other local businesses on the issue. Drago noted that over 50 percent of current customers at other Boston cannabis locations order ahead online, thereby reducing the time they occupy a parking space.

The next step in the process is for Sugarloaf to meet with other civic organizations, go before the Boston Cannabis Board and eventually work through the zoning and formal approval process.



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Most holy apostle, St. Jude Thaddeus, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the name of the traitor who delivered your Beloved Master into the hands of His enemies has caused you to be forgotten by many, but the Church honors and invokes you universally as the Patron Saint of Hopeless cases and of things despised of. Please pray for me who am so miserable. Make use I implore you of that particular privilege accorded to you to bring visible and speedy help where help is almost despised of. Come to my assistance in this great need that I may receive the consolations and help of Heaven in all my necessities, trials and tribulations, particularly (here make your request) and that I may bless God with you and all the elect forever.

I promise you, O blessed St. Jude, to be ever mindful of this great favor and I will never cease to honor you as my special and powerful patron and to gratefully encourage devotion to you.

In thanksgiving for many answered prayers.

—S.G.H.

