

VILLAGE OF SARANAC  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING  
June 23, 2021

The Planning Commission Public Hearing Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Shaw at 7:06 p.m. at the Saranac Village Office, 27 N Bridge Street.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Klutman, Shaw, Tlappek, Trierweiler

Absent: None

Guests: Malcolm Culmer, Du'Jon Love, Jeff Harwood, Jennifer Mitchell, John Thorp, Daniel Williams, Meghan Spivey, Tina Vroman, Jeanne Vandersloot, Sharon Darby, Becky Straubel

Motion was made by Klutman, supported by Tlappek, to approve the Public Hearing Agenda of June 23, 2021. All yeas.

At 7:07 p.m., Chairperson Shaw opened the Public Hearing to consider a Special Use Permit application submitted by Malcolm Culmer, to operate a recreational marihuana establishment at 75 N Bridge Street, Saranac.

Public Comments

Daniels Williams, a resident of the Village, spoke in favor of having a marihuana establishment in the Village of Saranac. Williams read a lengthy statement he composed for the public hearing, in which he provided his opinion on the many benefits of marihuana.

Jeff Harwood, Architect for Culmer, shared his opinion on Culmer's character and intentions. Harwood has worked with approximately 40 provisioning center start-ups and has never met an owner so sincere and enthusiastic about giving back to the community.

Du'Jon Love (Culmer's fiancé) introduced herself and spoke about her experience in marketing. Love also wanted to address an email received by the Village Office, from a Bridge Street property owner. In the email, the property owner states, "given that our clientele is primarily young children, we believe that approval of this permit would have a negative effect on our business...this approval would likely force us to close down for good." The property owner was not in attendance at the public hearing, due to being out of town. Love emphasized that she and Culmer want to help neighboring business, not hinder them.

John Thorp inquired whether Culmer intended to be a retailer or microprocessor, as his pre-qualification at the state level listed both. Culmer explained that he completed the paperwork in that manner as he didn't know at the time which route he was going to go. He has since decided to be a retailer only. He may look into starting a grow-op in the future, but that would not be located in the Village.

Tina Vroman inquired how many marihuana businesses are allowed in the Village. Straubel explained that per Village Ordinance there is no limit on how many or the distance between locations. Due to the size of the Village, council felt that the number would limit itself. Thorp argued that the State of Michigan has regulations on the distance between dispensaries that would supersede the Village Ordinance. Straubel will confer with the Village attorney.

Jennifer Mitchell, owner of 75 N Bridge Street, shared her thoughts on the benefits of having a variety of businesses in the Village. She stated that her business, Revival Café, and others downtown have been featured on television news programs. The exposure has brought people to the Village of Saranac, that otherwise would not have visited. Mitchell also stated that the Village of Saranac is a great middle-ground location, being between Lowell and Ionia, and on a bigger scale, between Grand Rapids and Lansing.

Hearing no further public comment, Chairperson Shaw closed the Public Hearing at 7:31 p.m.

PC member Trierweiler stated that there was an outpouring of support tonight, in favor of Culmer's recreational marihuana establishment being approved. Also, it speaks volumes to him that Culmer has relocated his residence from Kentucky to Grand Rapids so he can be involved on a daily basis with his business and the Saranac community.

PC member Klutman stated that Culmer provided everything the PC asked for, and he is comfortable with the SUP application and with Culmer himself. Klutman stated that it's unfortunate that a Bridge Street business will not be happy if Culmer's application is approved, however, 100% support is not feasible.

PC members Tlappek and Shaw echoed the sentiments of Trierweiler and Klutman.

Motion was made by Trierweiler, supported by Tlappek, to approve the Special Use Permit application submitted by Malcolm Culmer, to operate a recreational marihuana establishment at 75 N Bridge Street, Saranac.

Roll call vote: yeas – Klutman, Tlappek, Trierweiler, Shaw; nays – none; absent – none.

It was noted that final authorization for the establishment will be granted by the Village Treasurer when all materials from the state and county have been approved and submitted (see Ordinance #110, page 6, attached).

#### Public Comments

Thorp inquired about the number of staff Culmer anticipated having and whether he intended to make home deliveries. Culmer stated that he would have approximately 7 staff members and that they would make home deliveries.

Culmer stated that he hopes to be open by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Also, he intends to have a "Meet & Greet" event prior to opening, the date of which has not been set.

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.



Becky Straubel, Acting Secretary

- (b) *Treasurer action upon receipt.* The Treasurer will accept and receive any complete application that includes the information and documents required by Section 3(a). Upon receiving a complete application, the Treasurer will time- and date-stamp the application.
- (c) *Final authorization.* The Treasurer will grant final authorization for the establishment if the applicant:
  - (1) Submits the paperwork for the establishment-specific step of the application for a state operating license to LARA within 60 days after receiving a certificate of occupancy for the facility;
  - (2) Submits an application for special use authorization pursuant to the Village Zoning Ordinance within 30 days of submitting the application;
  - (3) Obtains special use authorization within 6 months of submitting the application; and
  - (4) Receives all required operating licenses and approvals from LARA within 18 months of submitting the application; and
  - (5) Otherwise complies with all Village rules and regulations.
  - (6) The Village Council may extend any of the deadlines upon a showing of good cause.
- (d) *Equivalent Licenses.* Equivalent licenses may be operated at the same location within Village, subject to this Ordinance and to the extent permitted by state law.
  - a. When a licensee holds equivalent licenses for a single property, each facility or establishment counts as a separate facility or establishment.
  - b. Each licensed facility or establishment must meet all other requirements of this Ordinance, other Village ordinances, and the Village Zoning Ordinance. A separate application, application fee, and annual fee are required for each proposed licensed facility or establishment with equivalent licenses.

#### **Section 4. Relocation of Establishments, Transfers of Licenses, and Expansion of Grow Operations.**

- (a) An existing establishment may be moved to a new location in the Village, subject to applicable zoning regulations, prior Village Council approval, and approval by LARA. In deciding whether to approve a new location for an existing establishment, the Village Council shall consider the following nonexclusive factors: