

March 20, 2020

To members of the Martha's Vineyard Commission,

I am writing as an abutter to express our concerns regarding the Patient Centric proposal for a recreational marijuana shop at 210 State Rd. in West Tisbury. My cousin Leslie Pearlson and I are co-owners of the business Tea Lane Associates and the property at 504 State Road. We speak for the thirteen people who work at Tea Lane Associates. We are year round residents of Martha's Vineyard, including every town on the island. Three of us have chosen to raise our families in West Tisbury.

We are opposed to a recreational marijuana shop in this location because we believe strongly that it will have a negative impact on the town of West Tisbury and, as an abutter, on our business. Our concerns include parking, traffic, hours and security. **We are not opposed to a medical marijuana dispensary but the lot next door is too small to support the recreational use Patient Centric is proposing.**

We have summarized our major concerns below:

**Parking: Capacity**

- The proposal calls for an increase from the **9 parking spaces** currently permitted by the ZBA for medical marijuana to **23 parking spaces** for recreational marijuana.
- This is a small .4 acre lot. The parking design for 23 spaces is extremely tight.
- When Tea Lane Associates went before the MVC in Aug 1999 the MVC decision granted 15-21 parking spaces on a .9 acre lot. That's fewer parking spaces on a lot that is more than twice as large as the lot in question.
- We understand that Patient Centric needs 23 spaces if they are to expand into the recreational business but that's why this is not an appropriate location.

**Parking: Landscaping/Layout**

- The Patient Centric parking plan includes parking directly along State Rd. This will change the character of the neighborhood.
- In the past, the MVC has discouraged this practice. When Tea Lane Associates applied to build in West Tisbury twenty years ago, we were required by the MVC to provide a landscape plan so that our parking area was screened from neighbors and from State

Road. The goal was to have an attractive property that contributed to the neighborhood.

- When the Martha's Vineyard Savings Bank expanded more recently they also had a landscape plan to lessen the impact of additional parking and they did not put parking in front.
- Over the last twenty years, there has been significant effort to lessen the visual impact of commercial development on this section of State Rd. The Patient Centric plan reverses this trend. It includes parking directly along State Rd. and will change the neighborhood's character. There is no landscape plan in the Patient Centric proposal, just a total use of all available space.

**Traffic: The potential for serious traffic congestion and accidents on State Road.**

- We question the methodology of the Hayes Traffic Impact Statement. We are not engineers but rely on logic and common sense.
- First, they average traffic over a full year. They do not take into consideration the nature of traffic in seasonal economies. During peak season, traffic will be much higher and in the winter, of course, it will be lower. For example, Colorado dispensaries may see more traffic in the ski season but put the numbers together into a yearlong average and the number of trips per hour should go down. In a normal summer, traffic on Martha's Vineyard may well be higher than the average yearly numbers predicted in the ITE study.
- Second, we are not sure why certain locations were considered for this impact statement and others, perhaps more similar to the Vineyard, were not...Colorado and Lynn, MA were considered but not Wareham, Northampton, Salem other?
- **Third, the traffic statement in the proposal predicts parking needs and traffic based on the size of the facility. Demand is not a function of the size of the facility. It's a function of the number of sources for recreational marijuana on the island and the number of people who want to purchase it. There is a strong possibility that demand will be far higher than this impact statement predicts.** It would be useful to look at comparable communities and see what happened when recreational shops opened and what the demand is today.
- That said, we looked at the Hayes traffic study in this proposal and tried to work with their numbers. They are suggesting that a worst case scenario would be 51 vehicle trip ends on Saturday per hour.
- **Going in and out that's a car entering or leaving the facility almost every minute from a single lane entrance/exit.**
- Note that other large retail businesses with significant traffic flow have both entrances and exits. Up Island Cronigs, MV Savings Bank and Conroys Apothecary all have at least two ways to get in and out. In addition, each of these ways are double laned, not single.
- Drivers will often have to navigate across a lane to make their turn on State Rd.

- It is already challenging when you exit MV Savings Bank or Cronigs onto State Rd. during the peak summer months. This proposed facility will generate a huge amount of additional traffic, just based on their own numbers.
- Our concern is the potential for serious traffic congestion and the potential for traffic accidents. This should worry all of us.
- As an abutter it is a crucial concern, made even worse because curb cuts between the two properties are so close.
- **To sum up, the issue is not simply whether there is enough parking for these cars. It's about traffic...congestion and safety.**
- **The Hayes traffic impact statement does not deal with traffic. It is a parking study. Nowhere does it address the issue of 51 trips an hour to and from this facility onto State Road and what that impact on traffic will be.**

**Hours/Security:** The medical dispensary was granted hours of operation from M-F, 9-6, Sat. 10-5, Sunday—closed. The recreational dispensary expands the hours of operation hours from 9 am to 8 pm during Daylight Savings (which is 8 months of the year, including the peak summer season) and 7 PM during winter months. In addition, they do not specify days. Do they plan to be open on Sunday?

- Tea Lane is open from 9-5 but individual agents work late; tenants arrive at night and we meet them at our office; cleaners, caretakers, builders and all the other people we work with drop off items in our mailbox outside. Many of us are women. It is important to our business that the parking lot feel safe to us and to all the people we work with. A recreational marijuana facility next door with hours after dark makes this challenging.
- Our concern is that Patient Centric customers will use the Tea Lane parking lot (especially during the summer evening hours) to access the Patient Centric facility. Our lot is often quiet after hours but it is a place where our agents, clients and those we work with feel comfortable. While this after hours use is essential to our business, there is not a steady flow of traffic in and out. If the queue is long what is to stop Patient Centric customers from parking in our lot while they wait? Or driving to our lot afterwards to use the product? How do we control what happens in the Tea Lane parking lot as a result of this new business?
- A point of information: When the art gallery was next door at 510 State Road they occasionally asked to use our parking area for their opening receptions to augment their own parking. They always gave us advance warning and we were happy to accommodate them. A recreational marijuana shop next door is a much harder situation to control. We anticipate that it will be very difficult to keep people out of our parking area.

- This gets back to our original point: the location proposed is a very small .4 acre lot. It's not appropriate for this new use. Creating this new use puts undue burdens on us as an abutter as well as on the community.

For all the reasons above, we strongly urge the Martha's Vineyard Commission not to approve this change of use. It is the wrong location for a recreational marijuana dispensary and, if passed, one that most of our community will come to regret. Our objection is not about the product. It's about demand. We would feel the same about any high volume retail business in that location.

Those of us at Tea Lane Associates feel strongly about this because we come to work here every day. We love this area. As Vineyard residents, we do not want to see the standstill traffic we experience down island. Nor do we want to lose the beauty that careful planning has maintained. Twenty years of careful review can be quickly undone with the wrong decision.

Thank you for holding this hearing and giving us the opportunity to be heard. We ask that, after careful consideration, you deny this application.

Sincerely,

Abby Rabinovitz and Leslie D. Pearlson

Tea Lane Associates