the Whistler

Newsletter of the Baldwin Neighborhood Council | April/May 2023

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BNC News

NOTES FROM THE APR 11 BNC MEETING

Retail Cannabis Update

Arish Halani, owner of Herbwell Cannabis, updated Baldwin Neighborhood Council on the three years-long process and next steps to open the store at 1686 Massachusetts Avenue.

At the time of the April 11th meeting, he anticipated completing construction and receiving a certificate of occupancy in mid-June. The store will need to pass an inspection by the State Cannabis Control Commission before officially opening for business. Mr. Halani said he anticipates the entire process will conclude in late June or early July at the latest. His next steps also include attending community meetings and hosting educational seminars on cannabis.

"The neighborhood will be the majority of our customers and we want the neighborhood to be educated," Mr. Halani said.

Mr. Halani also introduced himself and his vision for the business to the council. He said he is local to Massachusetts, having attended Babson College, and has years of experience in the cannabis business. With Herbwell, he explained that he wants to provide a boutique, small neighborhood dispensary feel and is not looking to have lines out the door.

Q&A

Q: What does vertically integrated mean? - Ruth Goodman

A: It means managing all aspects of the cannabis production, including growing, packaging, product making, and selling. All of our products are made in Massachusetts.

Q: Where are your locations elsewhere? - Joel Bard

A: I have managed retail locations in Worcester and Northampton. I have also managed a cultivation facility in Douglas.

Q: What is your understanding of the status

NEXT BNC MONTHLY MEETING

June 13th, 7:30 PM

ZOOM - RSVP by visiting https://bit.ly/bnc-rsvp

AGENDA

- *New Logo for BNC*
- *Lesley University Updates*
- *Herbwell Cannabis presents consumer education presentation regarding forms and uses of cannabis*

of potential competitors in the area? - Joel Bard

A: At this point we are an approved operator and moving on to construction. There are two other approved operators closer to the Porter Square MBTA station, and another permit at 1730 Mass. Ave. That particular candidate will be a competitor. Not all the businesses given permits will open. It's a tricky business.

Q: Are the two companies, Resinate and Halani, connected? - Peggy Kutcher

A: They are separate. I am an investor and part owner in Resinate, where I served as retail director and ground manager. I branched off from that company and own Herbwell on my own. I use Resinate as a reference point to show that I have done it before and will do it correctly. Resinate will also be one of many sources of wholesale product for Herbwell.

Q: How will the space look inside? - Phoebe Sinclair

A: The front will have a clear window space with a barrier wall with a mural, instead of glazed windows. The mural is by the interior designer, which will be printed instead of painted. We are also interested in talking to local artists to paint inside the dispensary. The basement space will be used for administra tive functions.

Q: Do you have a plan for equitably reaching out to artists? - Peggy Kutcher

A: In relation to equity, that's the purpose of reaching out to the neighborhood groups. We want to reach leaders of the community so they can direct us where to do this equitably.

Learn More

https://www.herbwellcannabis.com
https://masscannabiscontrol.com

Proposed Use for 815 Somerville Ave

Representatives of KS Partners, the new owners of 815 Somerville Avenue, shared the proposed

plans for the three-story building previously owned by Lesley University. They plan to retain the building's existing footprint and most of its facade, largely focusing on interior changes to retrofit it for lab use. The developers were represented by Johanna Schneider, attorney from Hemenway & Barnes, Jim Rohnstock, architect from EMBARC, and Scott Thornton, a transportation consultant from Vanesse & Associates.

The plans also include reducing the occupancy of the building from 150 to 55 and the number of onsite parking spaces from 18 to 5, aiming to reduce traffic impact in the area.

"This site is in a great confluence of transit facilities, bus service, Red Line, commuter rail, and great bike facilities. We hope to encourage tenants to commute in these sustainable and alternative transportation modes," said Mr. Thornton.

Among the exterior changes are rooftop mechanicals to support lab use in the building, which will be obscured by a screen wall to minimize noise, and infilling alcoves in the front of the building. Ms. Schneider shared that the building will be fossil fuel-free, all electric, and that the developers will be pursuing LEED silver certification.

Q&A

Q: Who will be the residents and what will they be experimenting with? - Skip Schiel

A: No specific tenants are lined up. Likely a smaller sized biologics, chemistry, or biology

lab that is making the transition and ramping up to its next space. There are state regulations that they need to adhere to and can't exceed.

Q: What kinds of people are interested in these smaller labs? - Joel Bard
A: A lot of these groups are coming out of lab shares, which is essentially a co-working space but for labs.

Q: How is this different from the one in Kendall Square? - Joel Bard
A: It's similar. There's a lot of demand for these smaller spaces, looking for 7-10,000 square foot spaces and a home as they make a go at whatever their product is. Ultimately that's the market we're catering to.

Q: Has there been discussion yet as to why build lab space rather than housing - given how great the access is to public transportation? - Ruth Ryals
A: KS Partners, the owner of the property, is a lab developer. Housing is not within their repertoire. In terms of retrofitting a commercial building for housing, it can be really difficult to create housing that people would want to live in. To convert anything or create housing, there are certain requirements about natural light, and this building is bordered on two sides with no access to create windows. It's much more suitable for a commercial renovation.

Q: If there are any issues, who should residents reach out to? - Phoebe Sinclair
A: We've not selected a contractor or engaged in a construction process yet. We will post contact information at the site when construction starts.

Q: When did Lesley put the building up for sale? - Joel Bard
A: We bought it in September of 2022 and they were selling 11 buildings at the time.

To learn more visit:

Community

HIP HOP FESTIVAL RECAP

Thursday, April 20th marked the return of the Hip Hop Festival!

We welcomed hip hop lovers of all ages, including groups from Community Arts and King Open, to the backyard to enjoy performances by Bakari JB, KHANscience Wisdom, The Floor Lords, Zakiyyah and King Open Dance.

Naheem Garcia returned as emcee and Motivate Merren DJ'ed. This year, performers celebrated both the rich history and limitless future of the genre, blending with other genres such as Zakiyyah's "hip hopera" and the Floor Lords' multigenerational dancing. To paraphrase Naheem Garcia as he closed out the event, it was one of the best hip hop shows, and it happened right here in our own backyard!

The Little Crêpe Café, 102 Oxford Street, sponsored the event, raffling free crêpes for the audience and providing crêpes to all the

performers. Thank you so much to Jean Dany Joachim and the rest of the staff for your support!

View more photos from the event by visiting https://bit.ly/hiphopfest2023photos

MAUD'S HANDMADE MAY MARKET AND LWN SOCIAL PHOTOS

Enjoy photos and memories from our first ever Maud's Handmade May Market and the return of the Living Well Network social! Despite the rain, we had a great time doing tai chi, painting mushrooms and shopping handmade goods created by our staff. We also unveiled a new mural designed by our middle school art students.

View more photos by visiting https://bit.ly/mhmmlwnsocial2023

THANK YOU 2022 DONORS

Additional donations come through Maud Morgan Arts and the Living Well Network. We're also grateful for the many hours of time donated by volunteer food pantry delivery cyclists and drivers.

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Support Our Organization

Donations provide valuable funds to support our community programs and services. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Agassiz Baldwin Community, 20 Sacramento St., Cambridge, MA 02138 or made online at: http://bity.ly/donate-to-ABC.

STAFFING UPDATES

At the end of May, we said a bittersweet goodbye to 1st-2nd Grade Site Director Jamie McCann. He has been part of our programs since he attended them as a child, and is leaving us to head back to school in a pediatric physician's assistance program!

We are excited to officially announce that Evan Caldwell has taken over as 1st-2nd Grade Site Director. Evan has been a teacher in our kindergarten program since 2020 and has always led with so much care and enthusiasm. Evan graduated from Bennington College where he studied community engagement through the arts with an emphasis on accessibility in theater. He is passionate about cooking, music, plants, dogs, and the power of silliness and kindness as educational tools.

Children's programs also has a new 3rd-5th Grade Site Director, Liana Chow, who will be starting on Tuesday, June 20th.

We have hired an interim Registration Coordinator, Sadun Yapa. Sadun is originally from Sri Lanka and grew up in Italy. He graduated in business administration and management. Sadun has always had a passion to work in the educational services sector. From a very young age, he has tried to help others through various volunteer activities that take care of helping children with their homework. In his previous position, he worked at Hult International Business School as a learning assistant, where he ensured all students felt connected and part of one learning community. In his spare time, Sadun loves to travel, learn new languages, and get to know different cultures by exploring museums and various historical and archaeological sites.

We have other exciting staffing news to share soon, as well as the official announcement of our organization's new name. Stay tuned!

City Wide

RISE UP CAMBRIDGE

Reprinted from Cambridgema.gov

Rise Up Cambridge is a $22 million commitment from the City of Cambridge to provide assistance to families with kids using funds received by the City from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. It provides direct cash to low-income Cambridge households with children at or under 21 years of age, earning at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level. Rise Up Cambridge will enable these households to receive $500 per month for 18 months.

This program is being run in partnership with the Office of Mayor Siddiqui, Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee, and the Cambridge Community Foundation.

For more information or questions, contact:
The Rise Up Support Team
(617) 812-5124
support@riseupcambridge.aidkit.org

Read the full description at:
https://www.cambridgema.gov/riseup

Community Calendar
June/July 2023

Monday, June 19th	ABC offices and children's programs closed in observance of Juneteenth
Thursday, June 22nd	Last day of 2022-23 school year
Monday, July 3rd	First day of Outback 2023
Tuesday, July 4th	ABC offices and children's programs closed in observance of Independence Day

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